Neurodiversity & the College Campus

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Lorre Wolf, Ph.D.
College Autism Spectrum
Neurodiversity

- neuro·di·ver·si·ty
- /ˌn(y)o̅ orōˈdəˌvərsədē,ˌn(y)o̅ orōˈdīˈvərsədē/
- noun
- the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population (used especially in the context of autistic spectrum disorders).
“Imagine if society had put off the issue of civil rights until the genetics of race were sorted out, or denied wheelchair uses access to public buildings while insisting that someday, with the help of science, everyone will be able to walk. Viewed as a form of disability that is relatively common rather than as a baffling enigma, autism is not so baffling after all”.

College Autism Spectrum 2019
Silberman – Con’t

Designing appropriate forms of support and accommodations is not beyond our capabilities as a society, as the history of the disability rights movement proves. But first we have to learn to think more intelligently about people who think differently.”
The autism spectrum looks more like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic Language</th>
<th>Social Awareness</th>
<th>Monotropic Mindset</th>
<th>Information Processing</th>
<th>Sensory Processing</th>
<th>Repetitive Behaviors</th>
<th>Neuro-Motor Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social communication including body language, eye contact, small talk, andturn-taking in conversation.</td>
<td>Ability to pick up on etiquette, social norms, taboos. Ability to form and maintain relationships.</td>
<td>Narrow but intense ability to focus, resulting in “obsessive” interests and difficulty task-switching.</td>
<td>Ability to assimilate and apply new information quickly or to adapt to new environments or situations.</td>
<td>Challenges interpreting sensory information, hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to stimuli.</td>
<td>Tendency to &quot;stim&quot; in response to varying emotions. Can be beneficial or harmful in nature.</td>
<td>Ability to control body movements. Ranges from clumsiness to complete loss of ability to move with intention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.theaspergian.com
What is ASD

- A neuro-developmental disorder ranging from mild to severe that is characterized by core features of social/communication deficits, repetitive/restrictive behaviors, and a lack of emotional reciprocity.
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today announced results of its biannual review of the incidence rate of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the United States. According to the latest analysis, the prevalence rate jumped to 1 in 59, up from 1 in 68. The Autism Society responded by calling for greater focus on reducing wait lists for services, transition planning, improving job readiness resources, and increasing home and community-based supports and services.
Two Core Features

- Cognitive/Behavioral
- Communication/Social
Other Associated Features

- Motor & sensory
- Depression & anxiety
- Self-regulation
Neurocognitive Disability

- Widespread neurointegrative deficit (Rosenn, 2005)
- Piecemeal vs. gestalt
- “Theory of Mind”
- Executive dysfunction (Ozonoff)
Self-Regulated Individuals
(see Wolf & Kaplan, 2008)

• Use strategies
• Monitor & allocate resources
• Direct own behavior
• Ask for help
• Exercise personal choice
• Believe tasks are important
• Value self imposed goals
Dys-Regulated People Do Not
(see Wolf & Kaplan, 2008)

• Direct
• Sustain
• Follow through
• Strategize
• Evaluate
• Modify
• Behave
Regulatory Functions

• 2 parallel systems:
  • Cognitive
  • Social Emotional
• Work together to achieve life tasks
(Adapted from Wolf, Kaplan 2008)
Executive Functions

“Mental operations which allow an individual to disengage from the immediate context in order to guide behavior by reference to mental models or future goals” (Hughes, Russell, Robbins, 1994)
Self regulation

• Self-regulation is the ability to manage your emotions and behavior in accordance with the demands of the situation. It includes being able to resist highly emotional reactions to upsetting stimuli, to calm yourself down when you get upset, to adjust to a change in expectations and to handle frustration without an outburst. It is a set of skills that enables children, as they mature, to direct their own behavior towards a goal, despite the unpredictability of the world and our own feelings.

• The Child Mind Inst. 2018
STRATEGIES
Supporting Executive Functioning

- Teach Routines
- Demonstrate… in your office, in your language
- Visual, Visual, Visual
White Board Strategy

- 3 White Boards
  - Bedroom
  - Kitchen
  - Door to go out of house/apartment
# Prioritizing Maintains Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good outcome</th>
<th>Bad outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High motivation</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Happy Face" /></td>
<td><img src="" alt="Sad Face" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low motivation</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Blurry Face" /></td>
<td><img src="" alt="Whatever" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Organizing My Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things I Need</th>
<th>Things I need to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folders</td>
<td>Sort papers by course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files</td>
<td>Sort course by topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels</td>
<td>Label and make folders for topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File cabinet</td>
<td>Label and make files for courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling or Trash</td>
<td>Put in file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recycle scrap papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 3 x 3 Matrix: Training Self Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>1. Thinking</th>
<th>2. Acting</th>
<th>3. Being with others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Co curricular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation or Issue</td>
<td>Step 1: Identify Problem</td>
<td>Step 2: Determine Solutions</td>
<td>Step 3: Who can help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am lonely</td>
<td>I don’t have friends or know how to join groups</td>
<td>Find a club or organization I would like to join (research on school website)</td>
<td>1. My counselor 2. My pastor 3. Student activities office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Causal Thinking

- Situation
- Action
- Outcome
Task Analysis for Behavior

- Peers bother me
- Got in Trouble
- I don't know what happened
- Didn't do HW
- Forgot lunch
- Skipping class
- Failed test
- Smell annoyed me
Train Self Monitoring

1. **STOP** (why am I doing this?)
2. **DEFINE** (what is the main task?)
3. **LIST** (what are the steps?)
4. **LEARN** (do I know the steps?)
5. **DO IT** (executive the steps)
6. **CHECK** (am I doing what I planned?)

  • (Sohlberg, Mateer, 2001)
Sensory Rooms
Sensory Strategies

- Proprioceptive – sense of what the muscles and joints feel
- Vestibular – sense of overall movement and gravity
- Deep Pressure,
- Deep muscle work,
- Oral
- Tactile Activities
- Sensory
- Guided Imagery
Improving meetings

• Use a common visual – Ipad, book, etc.
• Structure – make it visual
• White Board – picture with phone
Verbal Communication

• Say it
• Repeat it
• Write it. Twice.
Clear Communication

• “I am scheduling another appointment for us to meet…”
• Know and use the student conduct code “disrupting my class means…..”
• Create rules sheet: “you may ask 3 questions each class”
• Create social reminders, time lines
• BE SPECIFIC, concrete: “if you_____ then_____”
• Don’t be afraid to impose: “You must shower every day”
A Word about Stress

- Stressful situations
- What precipitates crises
- How stress manifests itself
- Behaviors
- Interactions with others
- Calming methods
- Medications
Look for information that provides insights on students’ ability to:

- accept feedback
- identify/perceive an issue once it has been pointed out
- problem solve independently
- handle stress
  - types of things that are stressors
  - coping strategies

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Anxiety

- Deeply routed in ASD
- Meds
- Structure, routine, predictability
- Schedules……
- SENSORY ROOM/MEDITATION ROOM
Scripts for Behavior Management

- In the classroom
- In the residence hall
- In the library
- In extracurricular activities
Social Behavior Scale

- 5 = Physically hurtful/ threatening
- 4 = Scary behavior
- 3 = Odd behavior
- 2 = Reasonable behavior
- 1 = Very informal social behavior
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Likely Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>This will get you kicked out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is not OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is risky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is expected dorm behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the specifics of the situation, break down the issue into 5 concrete Parts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Likely Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Walking naked in the hallway for any reason.</td>
<td>You will be asked to move out of the dorm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Holding a towel in front of yourself and running for the bathroom.</td>
<td>Not O.K. This is offensive and could look upsetting to other students. Someone is likely to report you to Residential Life staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wrapping a towel around your waist and tucking it into one side securely.</td>
<td>This is risky because towels are not always secure. The towel could fall open and upset someone. It is an option if you have no other option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Buying and wearing a large robe in the hallway on the way to the bathroom. The robe should cover your body completely.</td>
<td>This is O.K. and might seem a little more reasonable. Remember that the robe should only be used to walk to and from the bathroom. It is not O.K. to wear the robe in the TV lounge or down to the cafeteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walking to the bathroom or in the hallway fully dressed.</td>
<td>This is expected dorm behavior. This is considerate of other people’s space and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Deal Breaker. I will move out!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very upsetting. Serious meeting needed!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Irritating. Need to talk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bothers me. I can overlook this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No Worries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Behavior and Self-Management

5-Point Scales for Adolescents and Adults

This award-winning tool now expanded for adults!

Kari Dunn Buron, MS
Jane Thierfeld Brown, EdD
Mitzi Curtis, MA
Lisa King, MEd

Foreword by Stephen Shore, EdD
Successful Students

- Understand and accept their disability
- Know what does and does not work
- Possess good regulatory skills
- Are internally motivated
- Excellent self-advocates
THANKS YOU!
Questions and Comments

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WWW.COLLEGEAUTISMSPECTRUM.COM