



**Presented by Kate Hooven, MS**  
**Justice Project Coordinator, ASERT Collaborative**



# INTRODUCTION





# Role and Purpose of ASERT



Bring together local, regional, and statewide resources

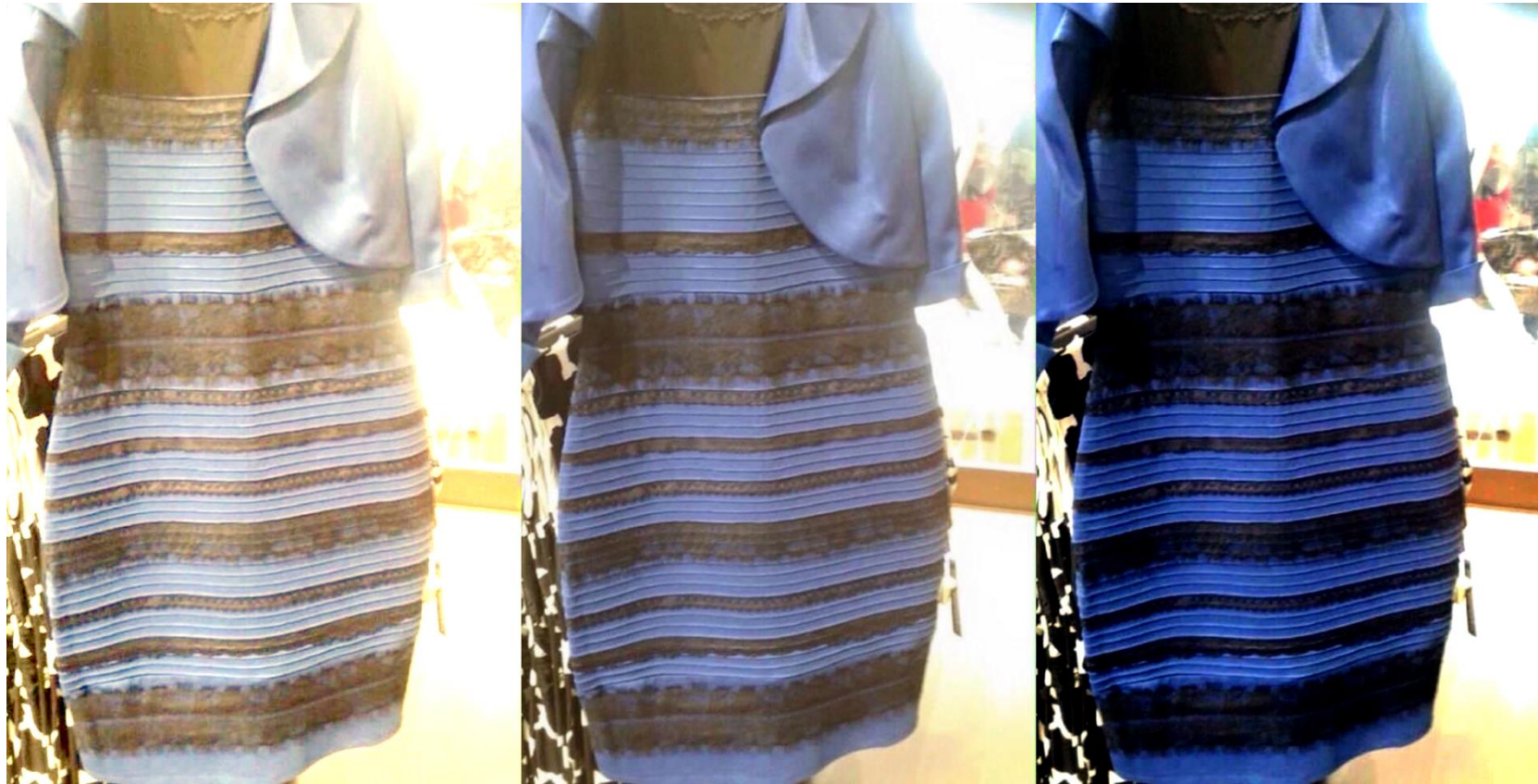


Support (not replace) existing community efforts and activities



Develop innovative projects based on data, community need, and commonwealth priorities

# #thedress





# AUTISM 101



# Autism is a Complex Spectrum Disorder







# Autism Has No Physical Characteristics



# MALE VS FEMALE\_PREVELANCE



↑  
1 in 44

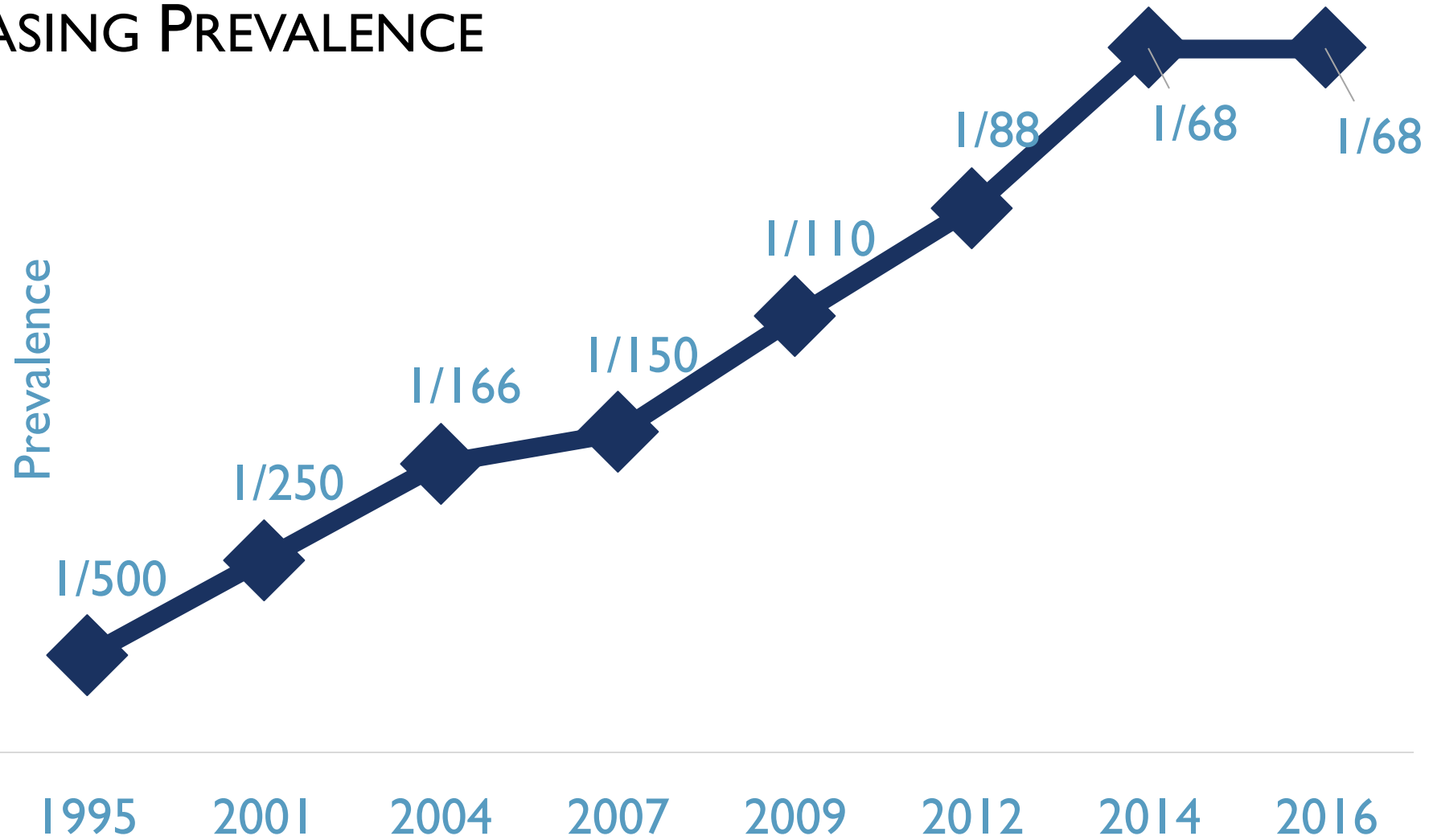


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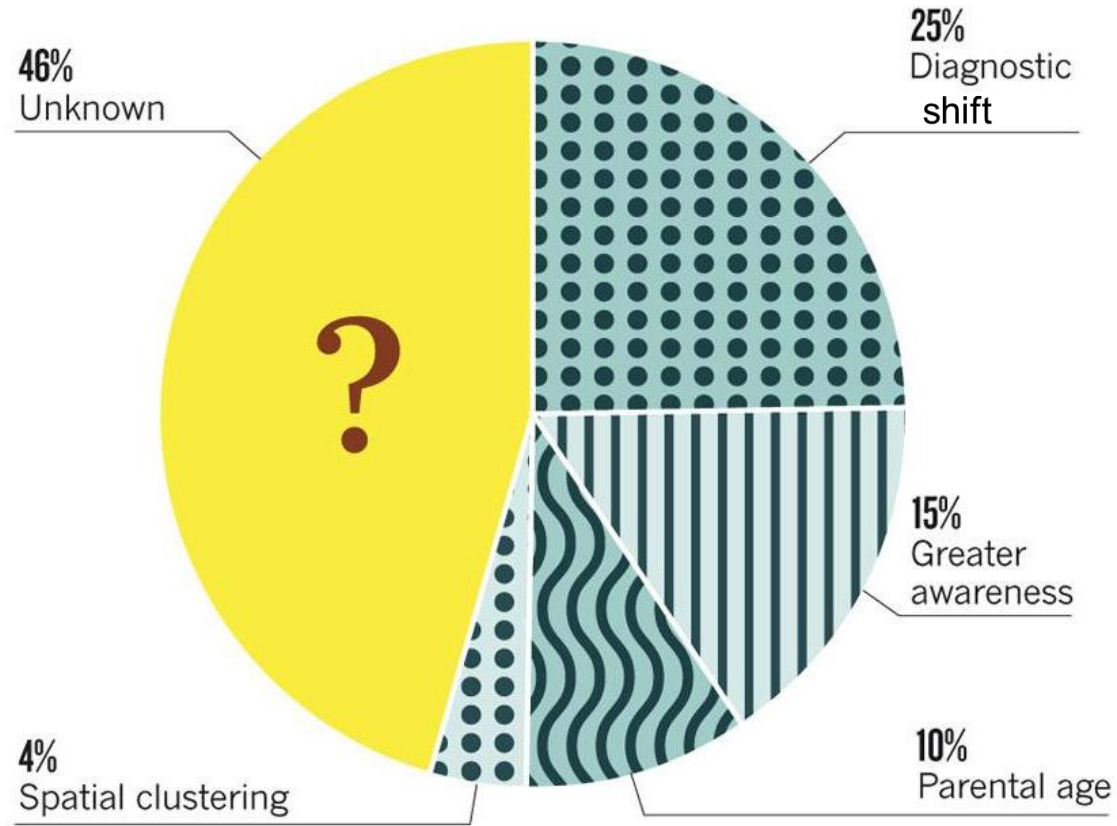
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# INCREASING PREVALENCE



# WHY IS THE PREVALENCE INCREASING?

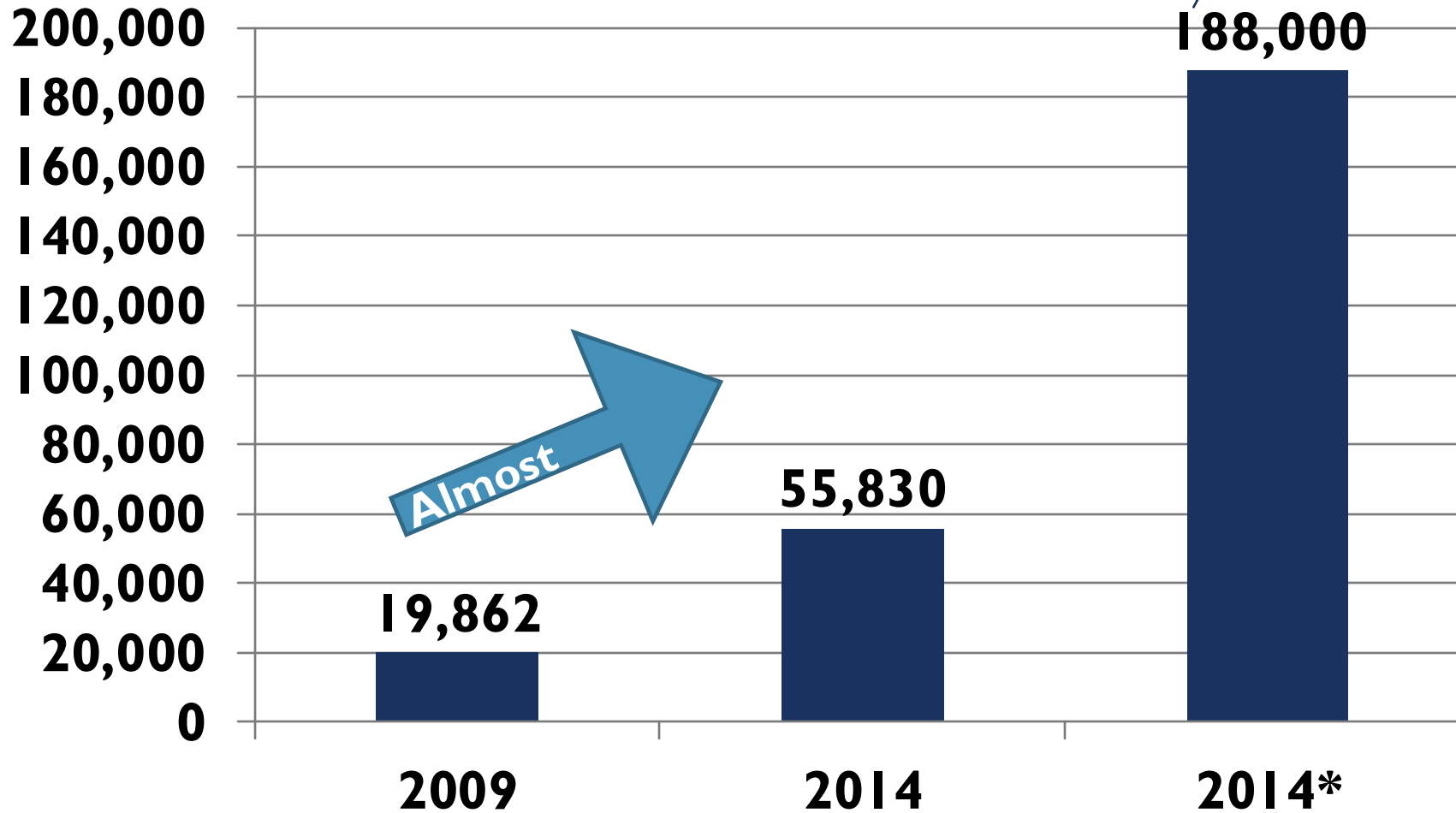
*Reasons: unclear*



Source: nature.com

# AUTISM PREVALENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Applying CDC  
Prevalence



# AUTISM IS A LIFESPAN DISORDER



*Autism is not a childhood disorder and does not go away in adulthood, though the symptoms and presentation may change.*

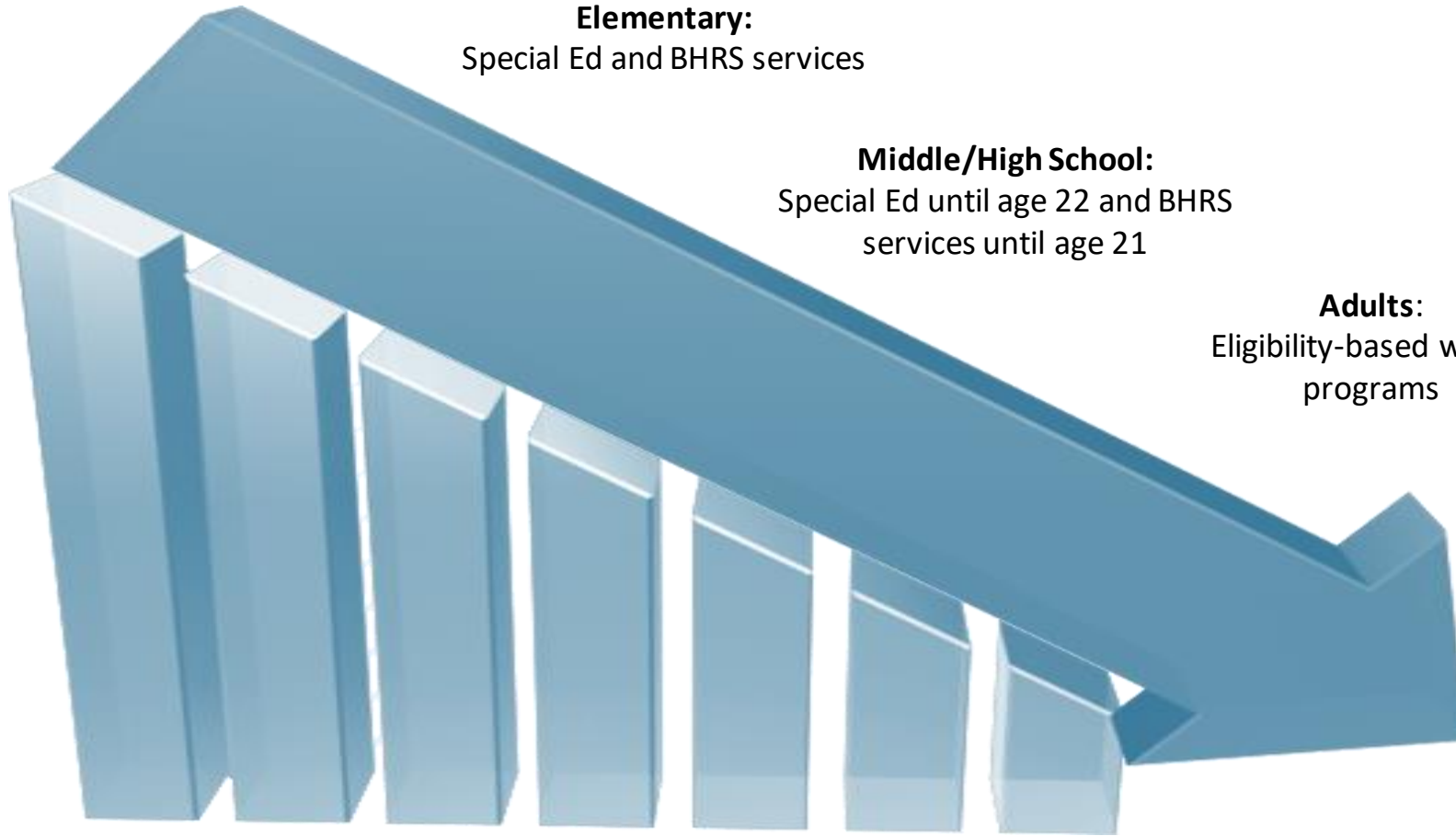
# SERVICE SYSTEMS ACCESS BY AGE: PENNSYLVANIA

**Pre-Elementary:**  
EI services are available until age 5

**Elementary:**  
Special Ed and BHRS services

**Middle/High School:**  
Special Ed until age 22 and BHRS  
services until age 21

**Adults:**  
Eligibility-based waiver  
programs



# SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

01 Lack of  
Attention to  
Faces

02 Reduced Eye  
Contact

03 Lack of Social  
Reciprocity

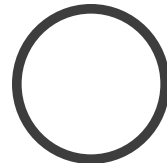
04 Difficulty in  
Receiving and  
Expressing  
Emotions

05 Difficult in  
Developing Peer  
Relationships

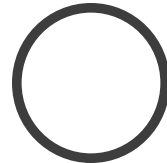
06 Difficulty in Using  
Nonverbal Social  
Communication



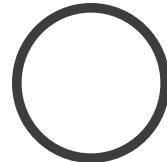
# COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES



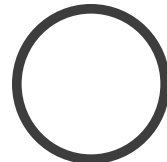
**Absence or Delay** in Language



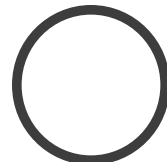
**Stereotyped or Repetitive** Use of Language



Difficulties in **Initiating or Maintaining** Conversation



Deficits in Voice **Tone**



Lack of **Social Play**

# LANGUAGE

Speak clearly and concisely

Speak in a calm, quiet voice

One command at a time

Ask if they understand

No slang or abstract language

Give them time to respond

Repeat or rephrase

One person talks at a time



# RESTRICTED OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

01 Stereotyped,  
Repetitive Motor  
Mannerisms

02 Restricted Interests

**STRATEGY**

03 Inflexible  
Adherence to  
Routines or Rituals

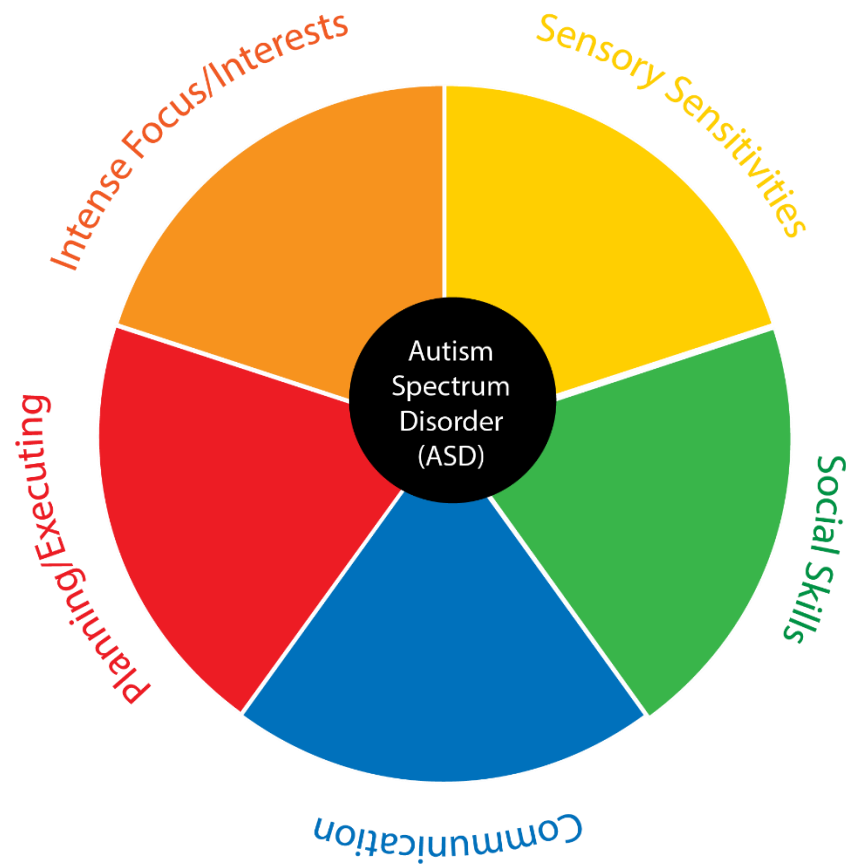
04 Preoccupation with  
Parts of Objects

Quiet



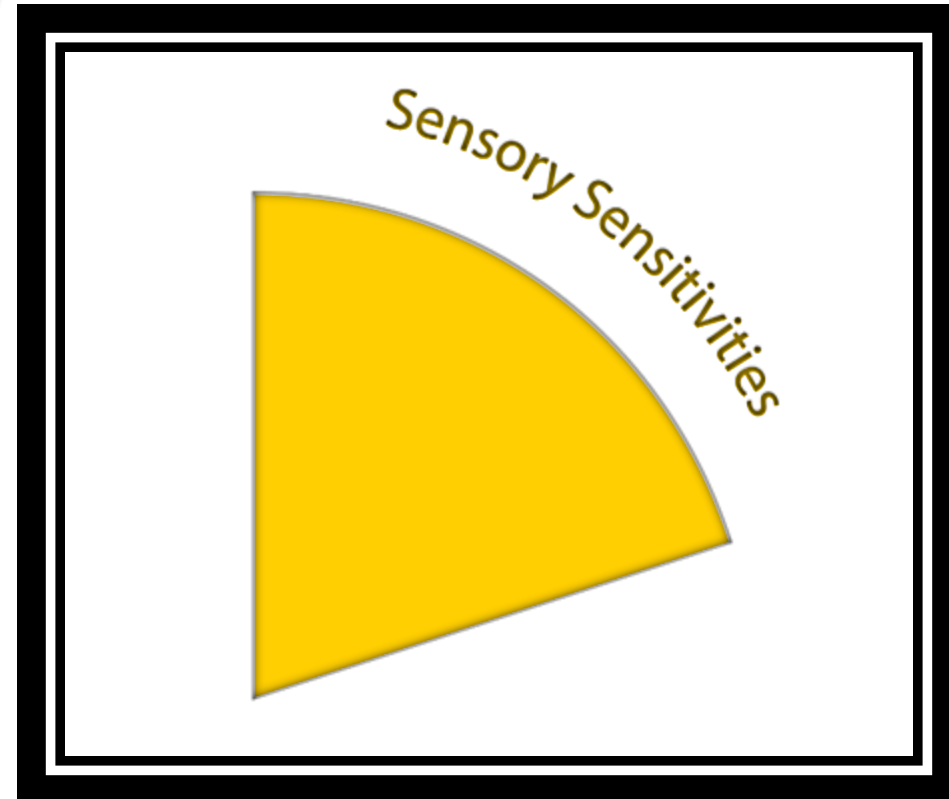
Not  
autistic

Very  
autistic



# Sensory Sensitivities

How does someone process everyday sensory information present in their environment(s)?

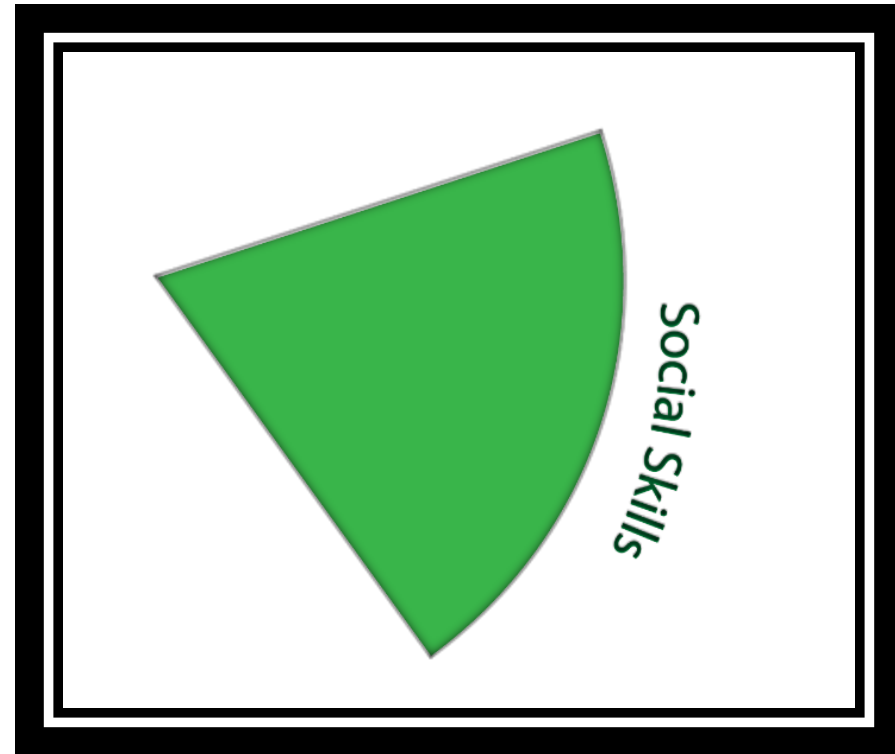


## Activity

- Volunteer to read a short story
- One person to listen to story and answer questions

# Social Skills

How does someone interact with others in the environment(s) where they work, live, and play?





# Social Requisites

- What are some unspoken social rules in the following settings:
  - Using a public restroom
  - Eating at a Restaurant
  - Meeting someone new for the first time
  - When with someone you have known for 20 years

*How did you learn these social rules?*

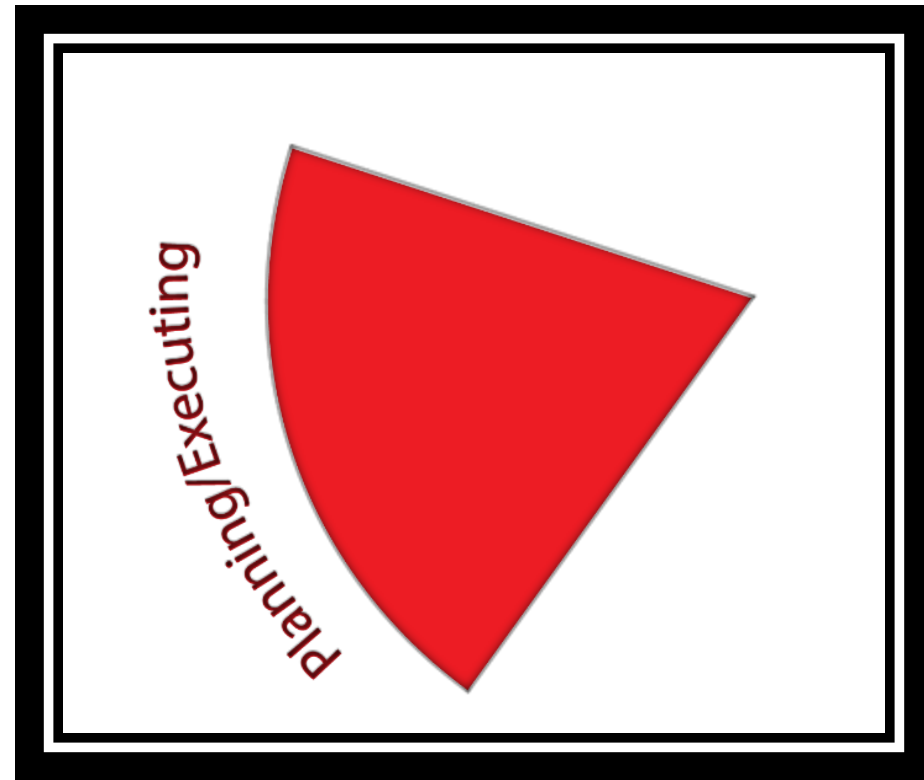
# Communication

How does  
someone  
communicate to  
get their wants  
and needs met?



# Planning/Executing

How does one keep themselves together to get through the requirements of their day?

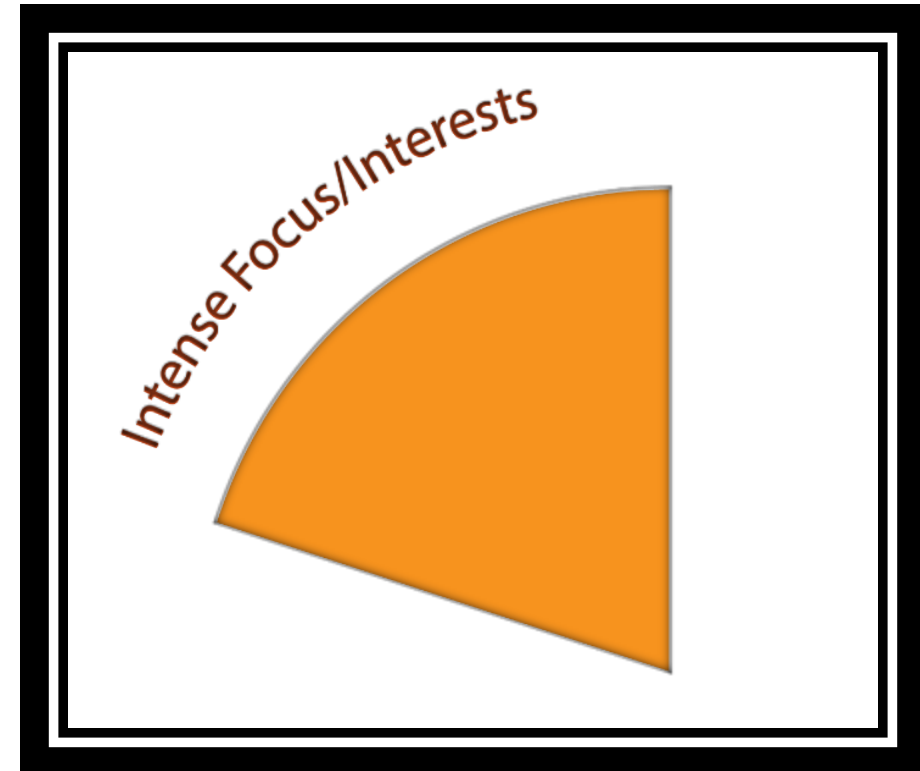


## Activity

- What steps did you take to get here today? Be specific? What were your responsibilities
- Next to each step, make note if you relied on someone else to make that happen or if someone else relied on you.
- Did everything go as planned? Or were there curveballs thrown?
- How did you address the curveballs? And if there were none, think hypothetically.

# Intense Focus/Interests

How does  
someone navigate  
their desires and  
interests as they  
relate to others  
and when alone?



## SIGNS OF POSSIBLE OVERSTIMULATION

Flapping

Pacing

Rocking

Scripting

Loud  
Verbalizations

# OVERSTIMULATION CAN LEAD TO...

- Meltdowns (e.g. yelling, flapping)
- Eloping (running away)
- Self Injurious Behavior (biting self, hitting head)
- Aggression

# SENSORY SENSITIVITIES & SUPPORTS

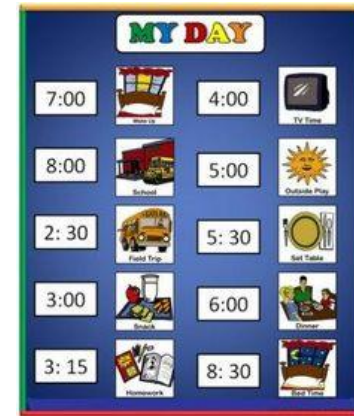
## Sensory Sensitivities

- Temperature
- Lighting
- Noise levels
- Physical boundaries
- Scents or odors
- High tolerance for pain



## Tools & Supports

- Visual schedules
- First- then boards
- Sensory objects or fidget toys
- Avoid quick movements and loud noises
- Do not touch, unless absolutely necessary



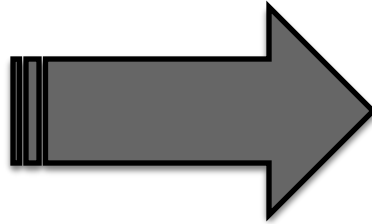




# TOOLS AND STRATEGIES



# SAFETY IS THE GOAL



A better understanding will help prepare you for interacting with individuals with autism to better support them and their families.

# HOW TO APPROACH SOMEONE WITH AUTISM



Slowly and cautiously



Give verbal warnings



Keep your voice quiet and calm



If possible, do not put your hands on the individual



Ask if they understand what you are saying



Ask to repeat back what you said

# Be

S.

Stay  
calm

A.

Ask  
clearly

F.

Facilitate  
Understa  
nding

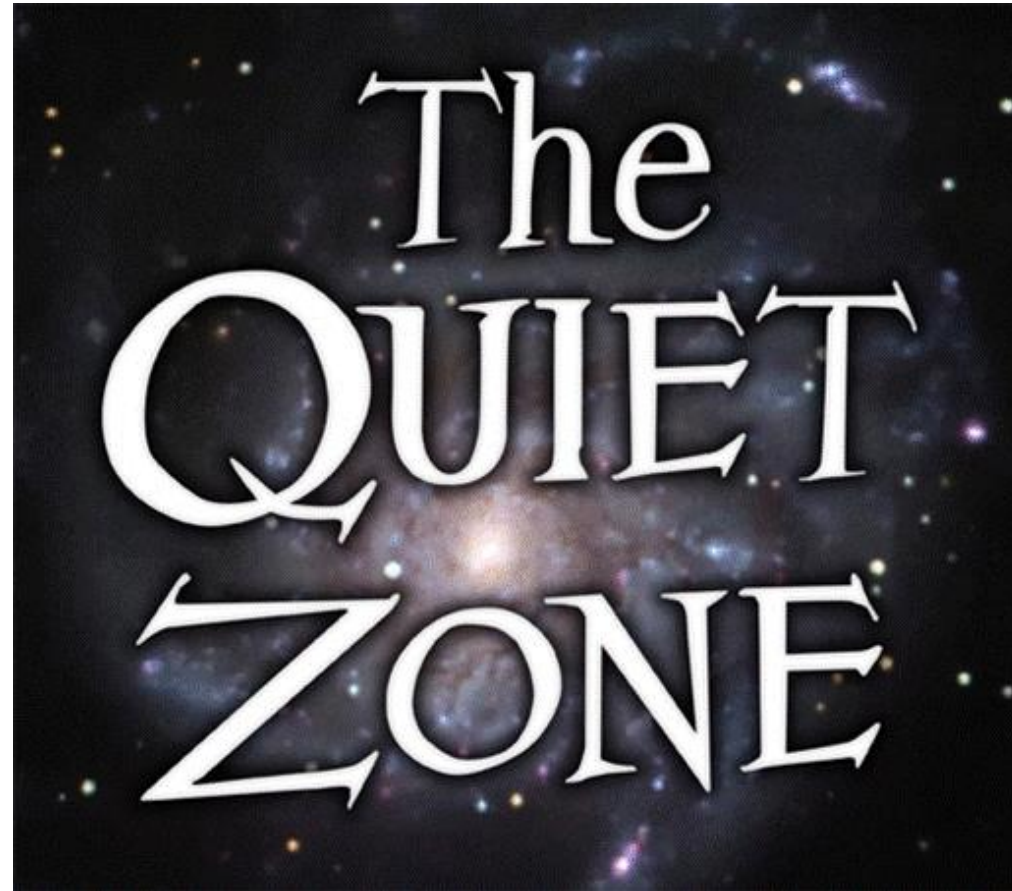
E.

Explain  
the  
Process

R.

Repeat  
commands

# STRATEGY TO DE-ESCALATE



# SEARCHES

Provide adequate  
warning and  
thorough  
explanation

Sensitivity to touch  
make body search  
difficult

Disrupting property  
in searches may upset  
need for routine

## SEARCHES (CONT.)

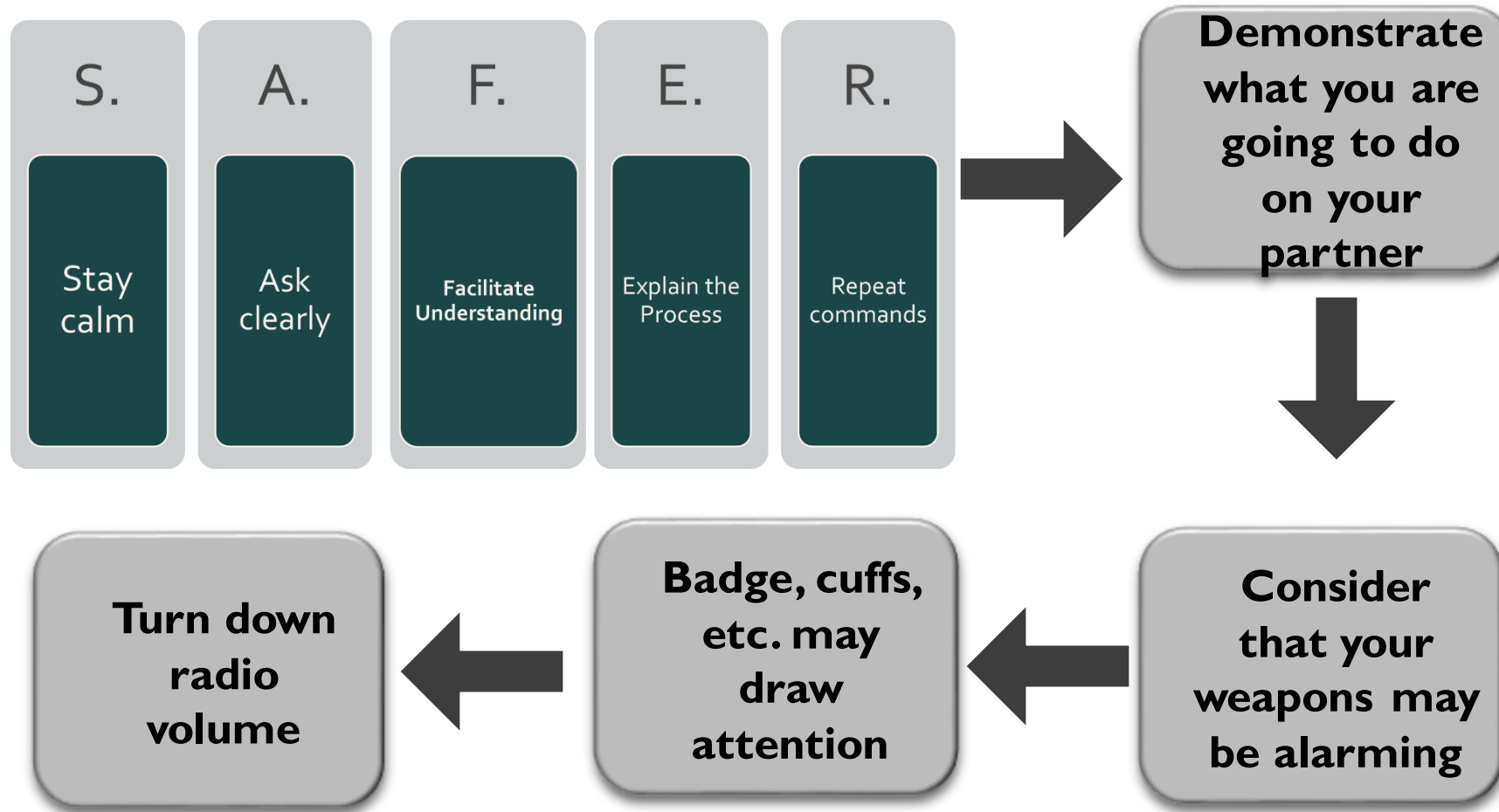
# Additional Considerations

Language  
Difficulty  
May Play a  
Role

May Need  
Extra Time  
to Process  
Information

Consider  
Item  
Fixation

# CUSTODY/ARREST





# TRANSPORT



## TRANSPORT (CONT.)

Do not be alarmed if you witness the following coping mechanisms:

- Spinning
- Flapping
- Scripting
- Atypical body or facial movements

# PROCESSING



Fingerprinting/swabbing  
may present sensory issues for an individual with autism

# RULES OF PROBATION

- Be specific
  - Provide examples
  - Be literal
- Provide Visuals
  - Next to each rule
- Sensory issues
  - Electronic monitoring bracelet may be a challenge
  - Consider community service options



# UNDERSTANDING AUTISM IN INTERVIEWING

Do not dismiss non-verbal individuals

Do they use a communication device

Presume competence

Include someone who is familiar with them in interview

# Interviewing Continued

Determine how the individual communicates  
(verbal/gestures/device)

Use the individual's words (especially if they use a communication device)

Build trust and rapport/caring attitude

Use visuals

Take breaks

Timing of the interview is important

Ensure the physical space is conducive to sensory needs

Avoid Infantilization

Use same interviewer every time

# P.L.A.N.

P

Prepare

L

Learn

A

Advise

N

Notify

If called to the home, help parents understand the importance of PLAN for future incidents.

# WANDERING

## Types

- Goal-Directed Wandering
- Other
- Fleeing/Bolting

## Strategies

- Alert local law enforcement/EMS about individual's wandering
- Alert neighbors and local businesses
- Enroll child/adult in swim lessons
- Explore areas of fascination in a safe, supervised way
- Create visuals such as stop signs by all doors





# RESOURCES



# Additional Resources

**ASERT**

[www.paautism.org](http://www.paautism.org)

**ASAT Online**

[www.asatonline.org](http://www.asatonline.org)

**CDC**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**PaTTAN  
(education)**

[www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

**Autism Society**

<http://www.autism-society.org/>

**CAR Autism  
Roadmap**

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/>

**NIMH**

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

**Autism Speaks**

[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

## Are you looking for resources about autism and justice system?

Justice Resource Collection



Like 6 Tweet Pin It email Share



[paautism.org/justice](http://paautism.org/justice)

**ASERT Justice Trainings**

**Social Stories**

**Other Resources**



*Pennsylvania's leading source of  
autism-related resources and information.*

**877-231-4244**

*Website: [www.PAautism.org](http://www.PAautism.org)*

*Email: [info@PAautism.org](mailto:info@PAautism.org)*

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Department of Human Services*