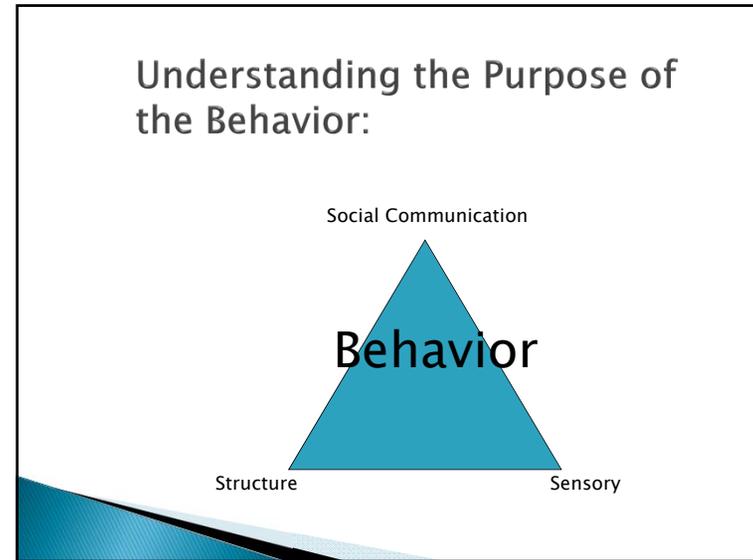


*Communication Supports
for Clients on the Spectrum*
Structuring the Interview Environment

Integrated Behavioral Systems Inc.
Chris Simler, CEO



How to Aid Understanding

Teachable moments/natural experiences

How to Aid Understanding

- ▶ Visual supports
- ▶ Social stories
- ▶ Talk less
- ▶ Give wait time (use silence)
- ▶ Keep it concrete and straightforward
- ▶ Do not use sarcasm or abstract phrases

Interview Preparation

- ▶ For individuals with autism, there are two major considerations when setting up the initial interview:
 - Communication style
 - Environment

Communication Style

- ▶ Receptive language skills
- ▶ Echolalia
- ▶ Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- ▶ Sign Language
- ▶ Augmentative Communication Devices
- ▶ Assisted technology
- ▶ Gestures

Interview Environment Considerations

- ▶ Does the participant have sensitivities to light, noise, smells, certain fabrics?
- ▶ How does the participant “typically” react to new environments?
- ▶ Does the person utilize schedules in other environments?

Interview Environment Considerations

- ▶ How does the individual understand the passage of time?
- ▶ What environmental supports are used to help learn and understand?

Modifying the Interview Environment

- ▶ Consider meeting the individual in a familiar place
- ▶ Use visuals
- ▶ Develop a mini-schedule for the flow of the interview

Modifying the Interview Environment (cont.)

- ▶ Insure clear beginnings and ends
- ▶ Attempt to block out environmental distracters
- ▶ Respect sensory sensitivities

- ▶ Take notes
- ▶ Have questions to ask
- ▶ Know what questions will be asked
- ▶ Have written answers to questions

Conduct Interviews:

- ▶ In different environments
- ▶ With different people
- ▶ Different times of the day
- ▶ Different lengths of time

Set up for success by understanding strengths and weaknesses

Perform and Analysis of the Environment

- ▶ Hierarchy of Management
- ▶ How are instructions created in visual formats
- ▶ Turn taking systems
- ▶ Interaction
- ▶ Work and break routine
- ▶ Sensory issues
- ▶ Function of jobs (know the job)
- ▶ Clear beginnings and endings
- ▶ Time management
- ▶ Verbal and non-verbal communication
- ▶ How is new information communicated
- ▶ Natural supports

Know the Style of Interview and Environment:

- ▶ Group: If so who will be there?
- ▶ One on One
- ▶ Can the job coach be present?

- ▶ Tour the place
- ▶ Visit several times
- ▶ See if you can see where the interview will take place
- ▶ Meet the people

What to Bring:

- ▶ Resume
- ▶ Supports (Visual, communication, sensory, etc)
- ▶ Portfolio
- ▶ Questions to ask/notebook
- ▶ Watch
- ▶ References
- ▶ Cover letter
- ▶ Business cards
- ▶ Information on Community Gatepath
- ▶ Dress for success
- ▶ ID
- ▶ Social Security card
- ▶ Etc.....

What Not to Bring:

- ▶ Create a list with the participant
- ▶ This should be based on the individual
- ▶ An always age appropriate

Conversational Speech Strategies

- . Basic rules of conversation
- . Starting a conversation
- . Paying attention during conversations
- . Indicating levels of understanding

Conversational Speech Strategies (cont.)

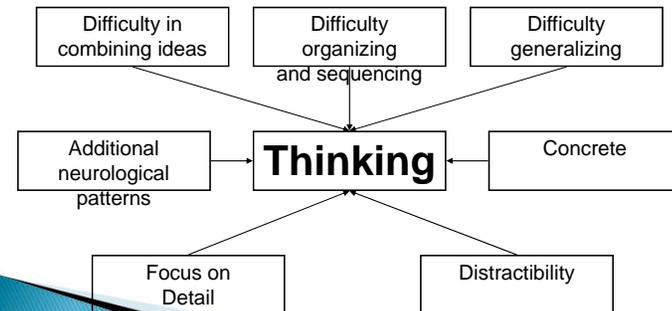
- . Topic maintenance
- . Topic shift
- . Topic interruption
- . Turn taking

Asking Questions

- Recognizing the function of questions
- Making appropriate requests
- Questioning strangers
- Questioning authority figures
- Seeking information

The “Culture” of Autism: Being a Cross-cultural Translator

(adapted from Mesibov)



Listening Strategies & Perspective Taking

- The importance of listening
- How topics are made interesting or boring
- How listeners prejudge before listening to the speaker
- Identifying external factors that interfere with listening

Listening Strategies (cont.)

- Identifying internal factors that interfere with listening
- The characteristics of good and poor listening
- How to prepare to listen
- Listening for main ideas

Social Support Strategies (cont.)

Role Play:

- Specific text with instructor
- Specific text with peer
- Improvise entire interaction
- Practice in natural environment

Social Support Strategies (cont.)

- **Scripting:** Write the “play” together
- **Board Games:** Concrete practice
- **Direction Instruction:** Class style
- **Peer Tutoring:** Helping each other
- **Incidental Teaching:** Reinforce when it occurs in natural environment

Social Support Strategies (cont.)

11) Rehearsal: Acronyms, practice
Accepting Help:

GETT

- Greet
- Express appreciation
- Tell how to help
- Thank the person

Social Support Strategies (cont.)

- Modeling
- Visualization
- Rule Cards
- Immediate Feedback
- Self-Management
- Organizational Chart
- Social Communication Groups

Non-Verbal Behavior

- Eye contact
- Body posture
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Space
- Appearance
- Effective use of time

Receptive Language

- Typical challenges
- Implied messages

Things to Consider

How our language affects comprehension of our clients?

What speaker factors affect comprehension of our clients?

How does context affect comprehension?

Do you hear routine responses?

Does client understand messages when said by different speakers or in different settings?

Environmental Supports

Are the materials that assist the individual taking into account?

- Their sensory needs
- Their need to understand the passage of time
- The ways they learn based on their strengths
- Their need for accurate consistent information

Why Is It Important?

- So they can make sense of their world
- So they can become flexible
- So they can be independent

Time

Supports that organize sequences of time and time frames

- Schedules
- Mini schedules
- Completion guidelines
- Waiting supports
- Accepting change

Space

Supports that provide specific information about the organization of the environment

- Location
- Sensory overload supports
- Personal space
- Relationship to others

Events

Supports that connect the steps of an activity to the people/objects

- Routines
- Rule cards
- Task completion
- Mini schedules
- Possessions
- Privacy

Expressions

Supports that allow the client to initiate interactions and have control

- Making choices
- Self-control
- Improving expressions

Practice, Practice,
Practice