Peer Supports Training

CSESA
The Center on Secondary Education
for Students with Autism
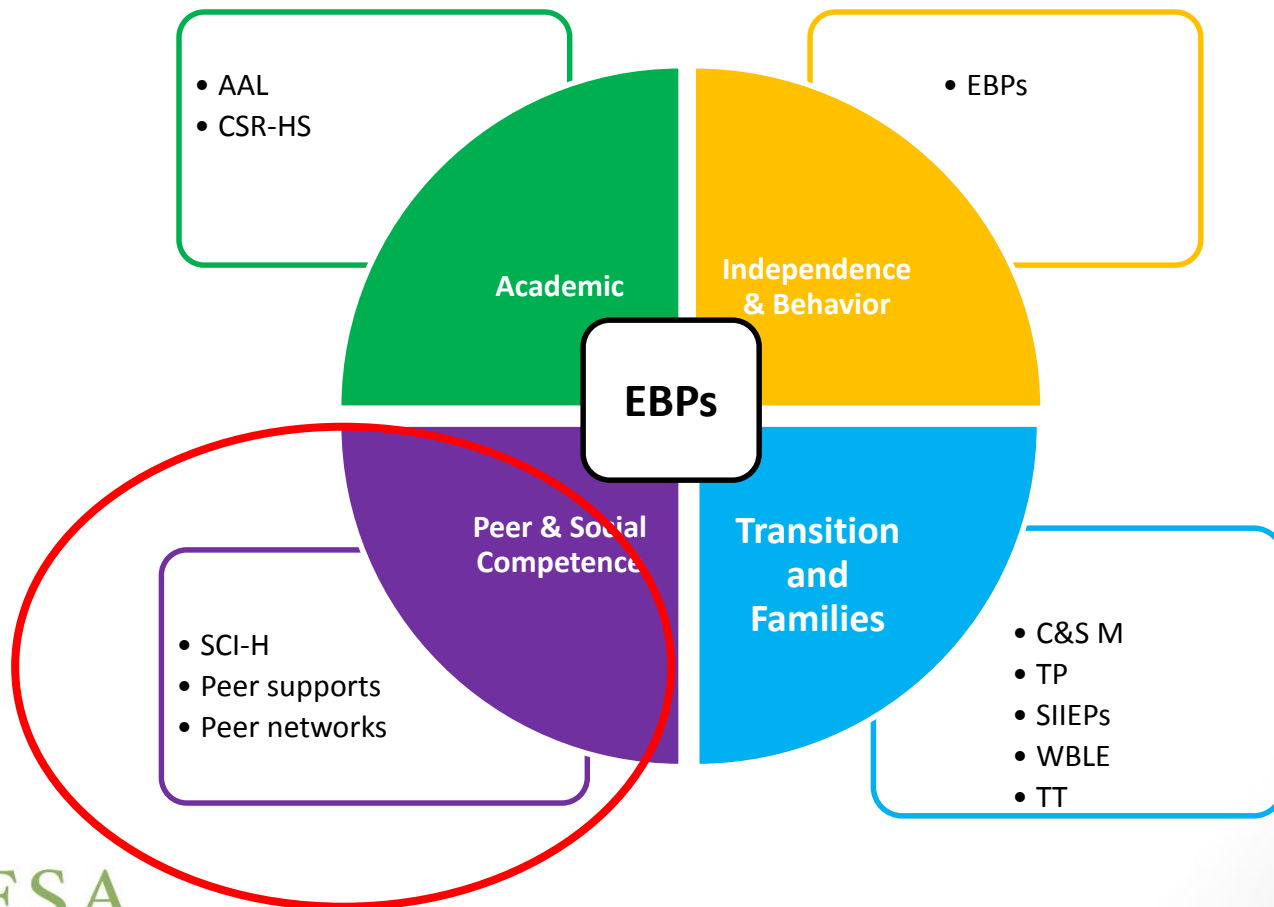
Reminder of the CSESA Process
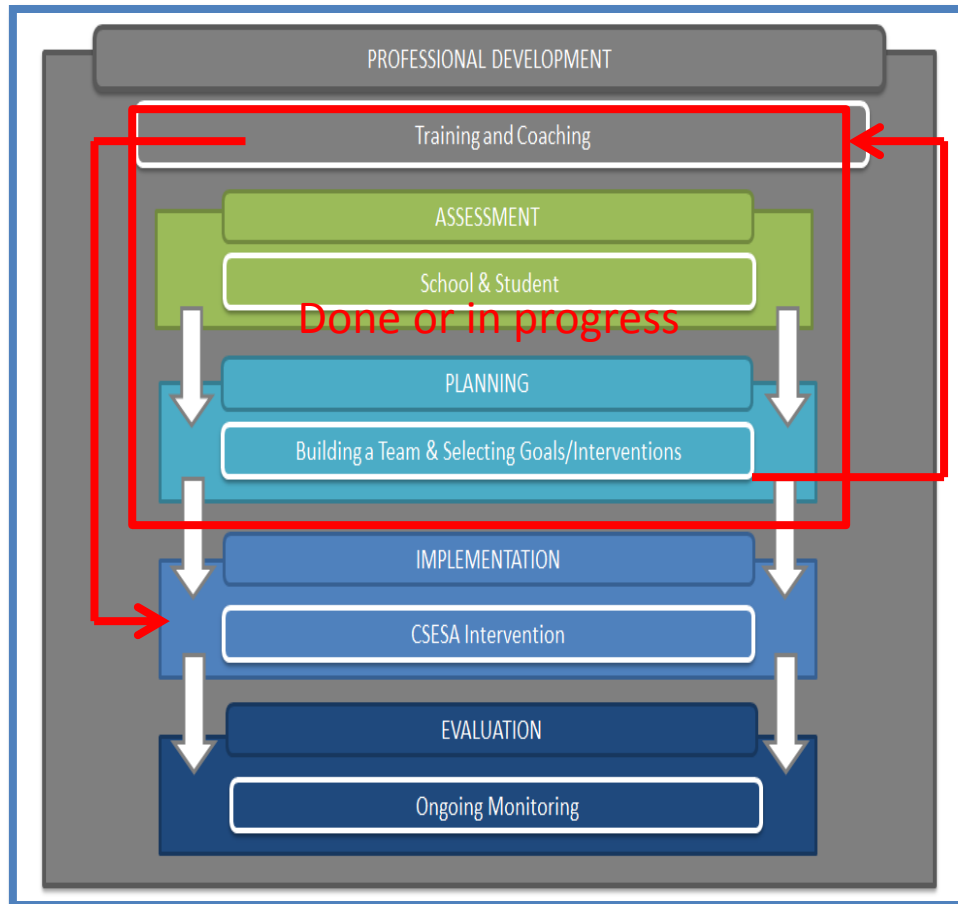
- We've already assessed and started planning
  - Used SSS-C, IEPs, current data

- We already have social related GAS goals for students

- Now, it's time for some training related to implementing interventions!

CSESA Domains

CSESA Interventions/Components

- AAL
- CSR-HS

- EBPs

Academic

Independence & Behavior

EBPs

Peer & Social Competence

Transition and Families

- SCI-H
- Peer supports
- Peer networks

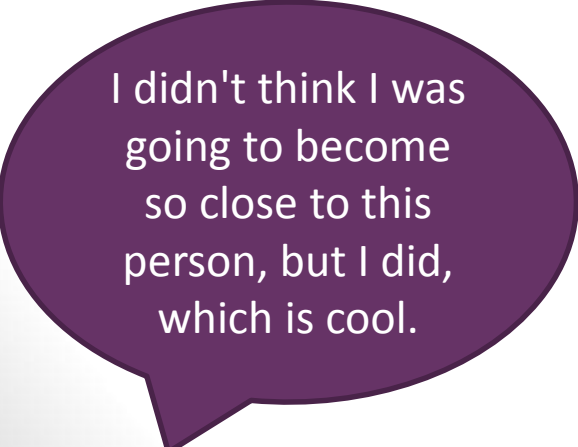- C&S M
- TP
- SIIEPs
- WBLE
- TT

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Option 2: Peer Supports

- *What is it?* One or more peers without ASD providing ongoing social and academic support to classmates with ASD within the classroom
- Peers receive guidance and support from teachers, special educators, and/or paraprofessionals
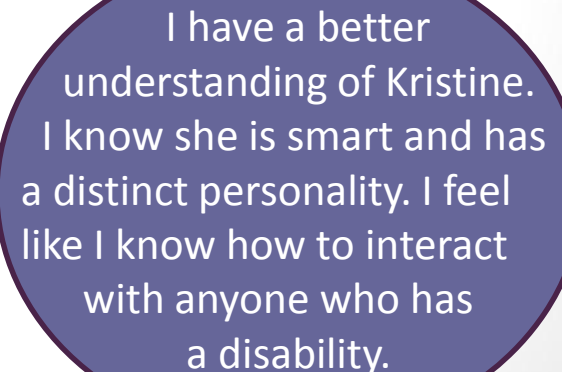
Goals of Peer Supports

- Students with disabilities who are supported by peers have been found to:
    - Have more interactions with classmates
    - Be more actively engaged in class activities
    - Gains in social skills
    - Increases in friendship connections
- Peers providing support to classmates with disabilities have reported:

I didn't think I was going to become so close to this person, but I did, which is cool.

I never understood how social students with disabilities really are. Getting to know Justin has really opened my eyes to my peers with disabilities.

I have a better understanding of Kristine. I know she is smart and has a distinct personality. I feel like I know how to interact with anyone who has a disability.

Identify and Provide Training to Facilitators

- Identify adults (e.g. special educators, paraprofessionals, school staff, community staff) who will facilitate the network.

- Facilitators should know the student(s) well, have the time to implement the intervention, and ideally, know other students in the school who might participate as partners.

- Facilitators receive a manual, view a PowerPoint, and ask questions in the training meeting (with subsequent meetings if necessary).

- The CSESA team provides ongoing coaching to facilitators throughout the intervention.

- Groups can have co-facilitators if desired.

Implement the Social-Focused Intervention(s)

The following sections include step-by-step guidance for establishing peer support arrangements in a variety of school settings.
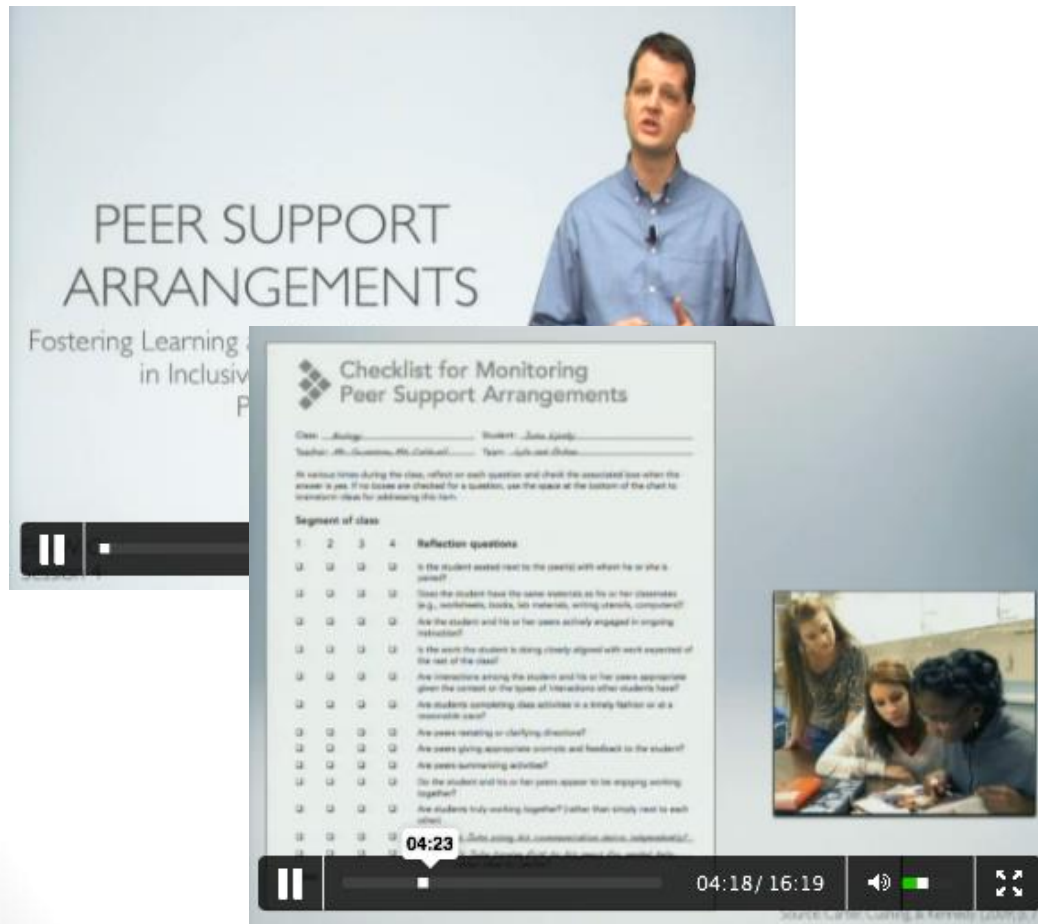
Peer Support Arrangements

Steps for Getting Started

Some Additional Resources

http://www.pattan.net/Videos/Browse/Training%20Series/Starting+Points+and+Possibilities+Promoting+Inclusion+Learning+and+Relationships+for+Students+with+Complex+Needs/Single/?code_name=starting_points_and_possibilities_-_peer1

How to Implement Peer Support Arrangements

1. Identify and ask peers
2. Create a peer support plan
3. Hold an initial orientation meeting for the peers
4. Implement peer supports by:
   - Having peers sit in close proximity to the student with ASD
   - Having peers interact with the student with ASD in class
   - Having peers assist the student with ASD academically (as appropriate)
   - Supporting peers and the student with ASD as they work together in the classroom

1. Identify Peers

- Identify **two or three** peers in the classroom to provide ongoing support to the student with ASD
- Look for potential peer supports who are:
  - Interested and excited to interact with and help support the student with ASD, may already interact with the student with ASD or help others in class
  - Motivated to develop a social relationship with the student
  - A positive peer model for the student with ASD
  - Have shared interests or experiences
  - Likely to stay involved through the semester – good attendance
- Think creatively!

How to Identify Peers

- Ask the student with ASD for ideas
- Ask the teacher for input
- Look around
- Talk to the class

How to Ask Peers

- Talk individually with students

- Approach a couple of students

- Speak generally to an entire class

- Ask for recommendations from students

2. Create a Peer Support Plan

- Planning is needed to:
  - Identify strategies peers can use to successfully support the student with ASD during class
  - Determine what strategies and support is needed for both the peer supports and student with ASD in order to encourage interactions and increase class participation
- Write down ideas on the plan
  - Review and finalize plan with coach

Peer Support Plan

- Use information about classroom activities, peer strategies, and facilitation strategies to create a peer support plan.

- This plan will be finalized with support from the project coach, general education teacher, and special educator.

- This is the plan for how you will implement peer supports in the classroom.

Peer Support Plan

At the beginning of class….

The student could…	Classmates could…	The facilitator could…
•	•	•

When there are lectures or whole group instruction…

The student could…	Classmates could…	The facilitator could…
•	•	•

Example One of Peer Support Plan

The Biology class is a great place for Brad to work on goals related to developing social and conversational skills, as well as expanding his typing and writing skills. Below are some ideas for how Brad might become more involved in class activities during Biology, as well as some ideas for how the peers at Brad's table could support him.

At the beginning of class….

Brad could…	Peers could…	The facilitator could…
• Talk quietly with his peers (when it is okay with the teacher) • Pass out worksheets or other materials to the class (if there are any that day) • Listen and respond to Ms. Hale as she does attendance • Boot up his laptop, if he will be taking notes in class	• Ask Brad about his day or upcoming school events • Help Brad pass out any worksheets • Make sure Brad has all of the same materials for class, such as a book, worksheets, lab materials, etc. • Help Brad get out his notebook, pen, paper, etc. for class	• Try to draw some of the peers at the table into conversation with Brad—you may have to do some modeling or give them some ideas of things they could ask about or prompt Brad to ask questions of his peers • Make sure Brad has the same materials as his classmates, such as a book, any worksheets, paper, pencil, lab materials, etc. • Look through the materials quickly to see if there are any things that could be adapted readily

When there are lectures or whole group instruction…

Brad could…	Peers could…	The facilitator could…
Listen to Ms. Hale as she presents information to the class • Quietly ask his peers questions about the material Ms. Hale is presenting • Take notes by typing important specific key words or phrases that are being written down by a peer (preferably) or the facilitator • Copy by hand those same key words or phrases with the facilitator's help or highlight notes • Turn off/on the lights when Ms. Hale is using the overhead projector	• Make sure Brad has all of the same materials for the activity as they do • As you are taking your own notes, copy down on a separate piece of paper some of the important words or ideas from the class discussion; Brad can then type these as his own notes or copy them down with the facilitator's help. Write fairly large so Brad can see clearly. • Periodically check to make sure Brad is doing okay with typing or writing his notes • Occasionally lean over and quietly summarize a key point or interesting fact for Brad, or ask him simple questions that help him follow along • Encourage Brad with lots of positive feedback such as "Wow, you take really good notes!"	• Make sure Brad has the same materials as his classmates • Always brainstorm ways Brad can be engaged in the discussion: Can he answer a question? Can he share an idea? • Help Brad to take modified notes by typing key words/ phrases on the laptop (preferred) or writing them out by hand • Encourage Brad to look at Ms. Hale or the whiteboard as instruction is taking place • Let the peers know when they are doing a great job interacting with or supporting Brad • Prompt Brad to ask his peers to double check his notes

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Reflect on Classroom Activities

- Watch
  - Classroom routine
  - What are students expected to do during different times in class (lecture, small group, etc.)?
  - What does the student with ASD do during these times?
- Consider
  - How can students work together?
  - What can the student with ASD do on his/her own, with a classmate, and with your support?
  - When are there opportunities for students to talk socially?
- Record ideas on the plan

Strategies for Students with ASD

- Consider how the student with ASD could interact more with classmates and be more involved in class activities
- Some examples include having the student
  - Say "hi" or wave
  - Ask to work with a peer
  - Work with peers on class assignments
  - Offer ideas or answers to assignments
  - Compare her answers with her peers
  - Ask peers questions (about social or academic topics)

*Adaptations for Students Across the Spectrum

- Students with HFA may prefer the intervention to be framed as a collaborative group rather than peer support arrangement.

- Peers may need additional support to understand and accept the student's individual needs.

- Students with complex communication needs may need additional supports such as visual aides or a communication device to interact with peers.

- Peers may need additional training to be able to use the student's communication system or help the student participate in class

- Be very cautious about implementing without an adult available to provide ongoing support to the group

Strategies for Peers

- Consider how the student could interact more with classmates
- Some examples include having peers
  - Share notes
  - Brainstorm answers together
  - Say "hi"
  - Give a high five
  - Work together in small groups
  - Ask clarifying questions when the student makes a comment

The Role of Facilitation

- Facilitation is a key role in successful peer supports.

- Facilitation looks different in every peer support arrangement.

- It can be tricky determining when to step in to support interactions and when to step back.

- The coach's role is to support the facilitator to be as effective as possible and talk through issues.

Facilitation Strategies

- Consider how to facilitate more interactions between the student and his/her peers.
    - Model ways to interact
    - Highlight similarities
    - Identify varied strengths and differences
    - Teach interaction skills
    - Interpret behavior
    - Redirect interactions to student
    - Redirect interactions to peers
    - Ask peers to help
    - Physical proximity

CAN A STUDENT DO IT..
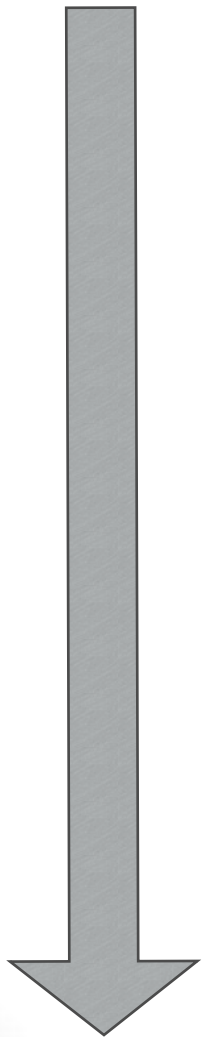
☐ On his or her own?

☐ If given the right technology or adaptive equipment?

☐ If given just a little instruction?

☐ If taught self-management strategies?

☐ With a little help from a friend or peer?

☐ With occasional help from a teacher or other staff?

☐ With constant help from a teacher or other staff?

3. Hold the Initial Meeting

Peer Support Orientation Meeting Checklist

Student: _____   School: _____
Facilitator: _____ Coach: _____ Date: _____

Peer Supports Present: _____

Return this completed form to your intervention coach.

Topics covered:
- ☐ Rationale for peer supports strategies
- ☐ Background about focus student
- ☐ General goals
- ☐ Confidentiality and respectful language
- ☐ Expectations specific to the classroom (drawing from Peer Support Plan)
- ☐ Peer support strategies relevant to the student, including communication system (if applicable), promoting class participation, promoting interactions with classmates and student motivation and feedback
- ☐ Guidance on when to seek assistance from educators or paraprofessionals
- ☐ Additional roles and responsibilities for peer support:

- ☐ Questions or concerns raised by peer supports:

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Key Points to Remember

- Ask peers about any ideas they have about ways they can support the student with ASD.

- Ask peer supports about their interests – you may discover that they have similar interests as the student with ASD (e.g., video games, music).

- Let peers know what next steps are: when they will start saying hi and bye to the student with ASD, when seat changes will happen, etc..

4. Implement Peer Supports

- Before starting:
  - After peers have been identified, talk with the teacher about seating arrangements.
  - Talk with the student with ASD about starting to work with peers in class.
  - Right before peer supports begin, remind the teacher, student, and peer supports of new seating arrangement.
- On the first day:
  - Introduce students and use facilitation strategies to support interactions.
- Once a week:
  - Complete weekly checklist

A Glimpse at Peer Support Arrangements

Facilitator Weekly Checklist

Peer Support Weekly Meeting Checklist

Student: _____   School: _____
Facilitator: _____   Coach: _____   Date: _____

Peer Supports Present: _____

Circle Y (yes) or N (no) based on whether or not these behaviors occurred during the observation.
Complete one time per week and provide to your intervention coach.

1. **Y   N**   Are peer supports in **close proximity** to the student during class?
        Y   N   Do the students sit next to each other?
   N/A   Y   N   Do the students remain in close proximity during out-of-seat class activities?
   N/A   Y   N   During group activities, do the students join the same group?
        Other notes about proximity? _____
When does proximity occur during class (circle all that apply): Beginning   Middle   End

2. **Y   N**   Are peer supports **interacting** with the student in class?
        Y   N   Do they greet the student (e.g. "Hi" or "see you later")?
        Y   N   Do students engage in conversation?
        Y   N   Do peer supports include the focus student in interactions with other peers?
        Other notes about interactions? _____
When do interactions occur during class (circle all that apply): Beginning   Middle   End

3. **Y   N**   Are peer supports assisting the focus student **academically**?
        Y   N   Do the peer supports help the student participate in class activities?
        Y   N   Do peer supports repeat or rephrase instructions for the student?
        Y   N   Are peer supports appropriately prompting the focus student?
        Y   N   Do peer supports provide appropriate feedback to the focus student?
        Y   N   Do students work together on classroom activities?
        Y   N   Do students share work materials?
        Other notes about academic assistance? _____
When do support behaviors occur during class (circle all that apply): Beginning   Middle   End

4. **Y   N**   Are **you (facilitator) supporting** peer supports and the target student?
        Y   N   Do you facilitate interactions during class when appropriate?
        Y   N   Do you provide reminders/feedback to peer supports before, during, or after class?
        Y   N   Do you provide praise and feedback to students during or outside of class?
        Other notes about supporting students? _____

        Examples of feedback to give peer supports:
        • "Matt really appreciates it when you ask him about his weekend."
        • "Lily might not always respond to your questions, but she loves connecting with you and other
          students in the class. If you give her a bit of time to answer and she still doesn't, you can ask her the
          question again."
        • "You do a great job always sharing your notes with Kelsey."

Feedback you gave, or will give, to peer supports: _____
_____
_____

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Checking-in and Supporting Students

- Checking-in and supporting students is needed to:
  - Monitor and provide ongoing support to students in class
  - Determine how current strategies are working and what may or may not need to be changed about peer support strategies
  - Keep students motivated and feeling confident

Checking in with Students

- Ask the student with ASD
  - What things are going well? Not so well?
  - What support do you like receiving from peers?
  - Is there other support you need?
- Ask the peer supports
  - What things are going really well?
  - What things have not been going well?
  - Are you enjoying serving in this role?
  - What support do you need to do this well?
- Providing feedback
  - Positive feedback can be given to students verbally or by writing notes

Shifting Adult Support

- Our goal is to increase interactions and supports from peers and to use adult support in different ways.

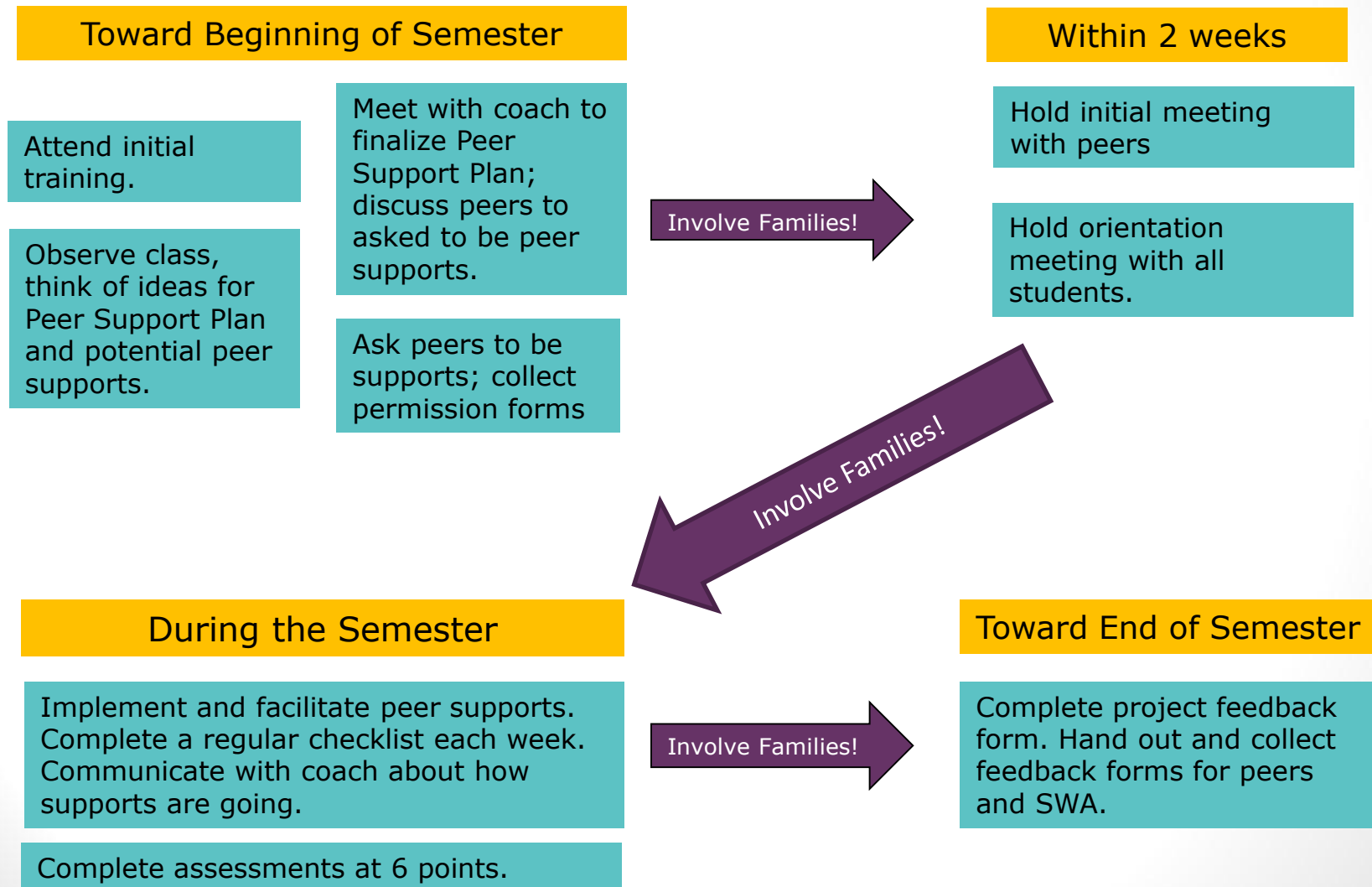- This process may occur more quickly for some students and may take longer for others.

Peer Support Summary

- Remember the goal...
  - Increase interactions between the student with ASD and peers in the classroom
- Build on success -- it will not happen in one day.
- Ask questions!

Potential Timeline for Facilitators

Toward Beginning of Semester

Attend initial training.

Observe class, think of ideas for Peer Support Plan and potential peer supports.

Meet with coach to finalize Peer Support Plan; discuss peers to asked to be peer supports.

Ask peers to be supports; collect permission forms

Involve Families!

Within 2 weeks

Hold initial meeting with peers

Hold orientation meeting with all students.

Involve Families!

During the Semester

Implement and facilitate peer supports. Complete a regular checklist each week. Communicate with coach about how supports are going.

Complete assessments at 6 points.

Involve Families!

Toward End of Semester

Complete project feedback form. Hand out and collect feedback forms for peers and SWA.
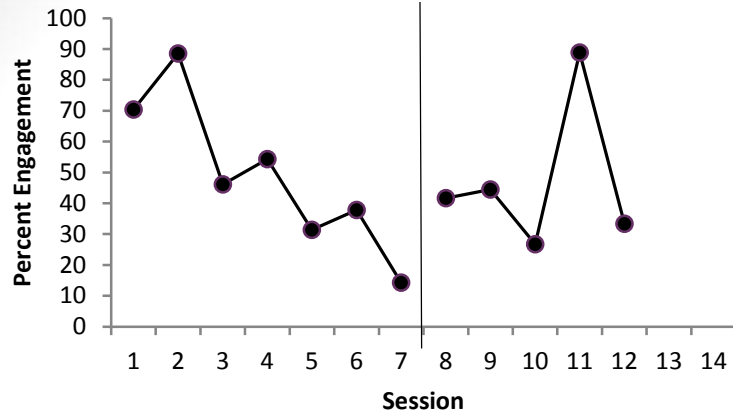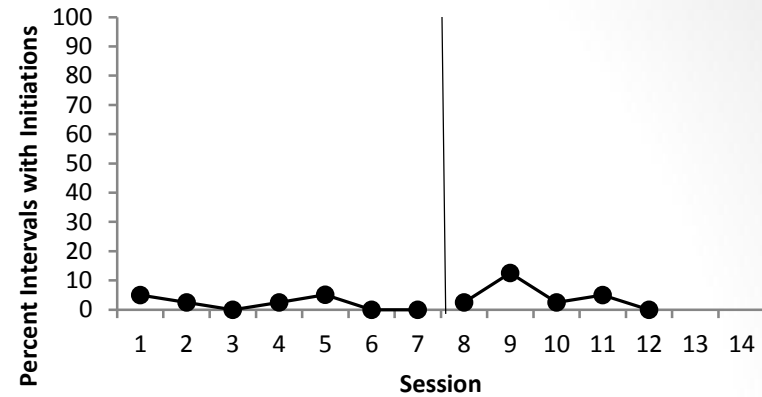
Peer Supports- A Case Study

- African-American male student, age 18 (ASD)
- Included in 2 general education classes (business, guitar) Peer support arrangement set up in business
  - 3 peers (2 Caucasian males; 1 Hispanic female)
  - Graduate student as facilitator
- GAS goal (social):
  - "When asked an open-ended question, student will give an appropriate verbal reply of at least 1 word in 50% of daily opportunities for 3 consecutive data days."
- General social goals addressed in this peer support arrangement:
  - Appropriately greet peers
  - Join group activities
  - Initiate conversation with peers
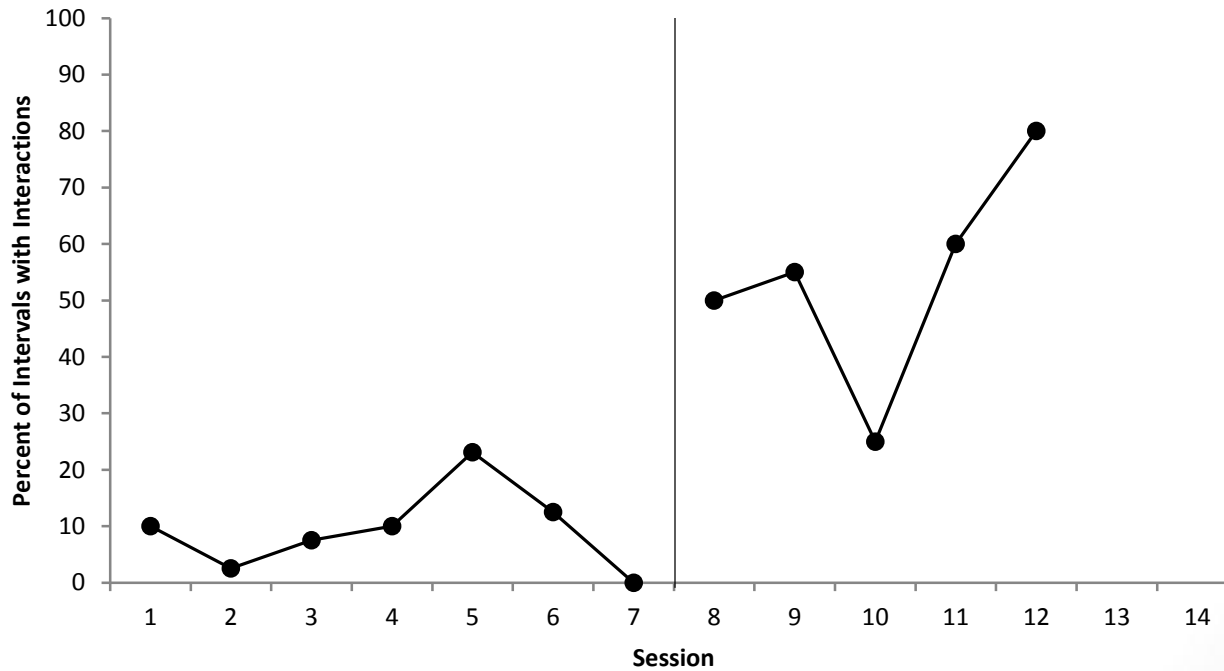 - Maintain conversation with peers

Academic Engagement

Percent Engagement vs *Session*

Initiations

Percent Intervals with Initiations vs *Session*

Peer Interactions

Percent of Intervals with Interactions vs *Session*

Positive outcomes reported by peers and facilitator:

Peers

- "He talks a lot more and communicates well."
- "He has made more friends throughout the school."
- "He is more comfortable around us."

Facilitator

- "I saw the effectiveness of this intervention! He is more comfortable interacting with peers in his business class now."

Family Involvement

How will the students' families be involved?

- Complete initial assessments and post-assessments
- Complete social contact forms 6 times per year
- Reinforce social-related skills
- Promote interactions that extend outside of school
- Communicate with educators about social connections

7. Data Collection

The CSESA team will collect the following data:

- Pre-intervention Assessments (school staff, parents)
  - Various assessments before the intervention begins
- Meeting Checklist (facilitator)
  - During the initial meeting and all subsequent meetings
- Social contact forms (school staff, parents, students)
  - ___ times throughout the year
- Goal Attainment Scale (school staff)
  - ___ times throughout the year
- Post-intervention Assessments (school staff, parents)
  - Various assessments after the intervention ends

Data Collection

- What additional data might the facilitator collect to gauge the acceptability and impact of the peer-mediated interventions?
- Observations of:
  - Nature of student's interactions with peers
  - Types of conversational skills
  - Modes of communication
  - Persons involved in interactions
  - Time in which students are engaged academically
  - Time in which students work on activities aligned with the general curriculum
  - Time in which students are working with one-to-one adult support

Data Collection

- Feedback from Students with ASD:
  - What help do you find most helpful? Least helpful?
  - What have you learned from working with _____?
  - Do you consider _____ to be a friend?
  - Would you like to continue working with _____? Why or why not?
- Feedback from Peers:
  - How would you describe your experiences?
  - Did you enjoy serving in this role? In what ways?
  - What things have been going really well? Not so well?
  - In what ways have you benefited from this involvement?
  - What changes have you noticed in your partner, if any?
  - Has this been a beneficial experience for your partner?
  - What additional help would you like to be effective in this role?

Conclusion

- Potential areas for overlap with other components
  - SCI-H and Peer Networks/Peer Supports
  - Peer Networks/Peer Supports and Academic or PRISM components?
  - Peer Supports during IEP curriculum
  - Peer Supports during WBLE
- Your materials (flash drive)

Discussion

- What questions do you have?