PRESENTATION NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Understanding Autism
Professional Development Curriculum:

Strategies for Classroom Success and
Effective Use of Teacher Supports

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PRESENTATION NOTES

These facilitator notes are intended to support your presentation of the material. You, as the facilitator, can use it to the degree you find helpful. You may wish to use it word for word or expand upon it with your own examples.

Session Information:

This session should take about 1½ hours to present.

Facilitator:

Facilitators should have knowledge of autism and experience with students on the spectrum. Facilitators should be comfortable presenting information in groups and tailor delivery based on the knowledge-base and experience of participants. Pairs of facilitators can present a session together. Potential facilitators include: district/school autism consultants, special educators, school administrators, and other knowledgeable professionals.

Facilitator Preparation:

Preparation prior to delivery of this training could take up to one hour. Facilitators should perform these steps a few days prior to the training:

☐ Read through PowerPoint Notes

☐ Prepare your own examples of key points

☐ Check each video clip to make sure it is working

☐ Make copies of the participant handout (double-sided)

☐ Make copies of Handouts – Notes Pages & At My School

☐ Learn about your participants – roles, experience, etc.

Group Activities:

• Complete group/individual activities based on the energy and knowledge needs of participants. Reduce number or include all as relevant to the group.

• Assist groups actively in completing activities.

• After completing activities, provide opportunities to share out with the large group. For example, "share one idea you and your partner came up with."

Suggested Breakdown of the Session:

0:00 – 0:03	Introduction
0:04 – 0:09	Why Secondary School Environments are Challenging – Intro and Discussion
0:09 – 0:11	Objectives
0:12 – 0:18	Intro/Videos for "Key Structure" & "Hypersensitivity"
0:19 – 0:24	Learning Activity - Classroom Structure
0:25 – 0:30	Intro to Key Supports, Priming, and Academic Modifications
0:31 – 0:35	At My School – Academic Modifications
0:36 – 0:43	Intro/Video of Visual Supports
0:44 – 0:55	Learning Activity – Priming/Visual Support
0:56 – 1:01	Intro Reinforcement & Home Base
1:02 – 1:08	Learning Activity – Reinforcement/ Home Base
1:09 – 1:20	Supports for Teachers/At My School
1:21 - 1:30	Conclusion/Resources

Video Clips:

If you experience problems accessing video clips or have other technology-related questions, please refer to the "ReadMe" (.txt) document.

SLIDE 1

Welcome participants. Introduce yourself if you are new to the participant group. Ask participants to introduce themselves (name/role) to you and each other as appropriate.

Say: This presentation was developed in partnership between the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) and The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA). The purpose of this presentation is to describe supports you can integrate in your classroom for students with ASD. We will also talk about supports available at your school for you as you work with students with ASD. The other presentation in the series focuses on the characteristics of ASD and how general education teachers can support students who exhibit behavioral challenges.

First, let's talk about what ASD is and why secondary school can be such a challenging environment for students on the spectrum.

SLIDE 2

Read: ASD is a developmental disorder that impacts the way a person perceives and communicates, often resulting in challenges with social interactions and processing information. Although in this session we will talk about supports specific to the needs of students with ASD, you will find that many support strategies may benefit all students.

If you are interested in more information on the characteristics of autism, review the Understanding Autism Manual at: http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/sites/csesa.fpg.unc.edu/files/UnderstandingAutismSecondaryTeachersGuide.pdf

SLIDE 3

Say: More specifically, this is the definition of ASD in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is the criteria psychologists and psychiatrists use when evaluating individuals for ASD.

Summarize criteria.

SLIDE 4

Say: People with autism have been our friends, neighbors, co-workers throughout the years. There is speculation whether or not some famous people had ASD, we often see people with autism portrayed in the media as having Autism, Asperger Syndrome, or ASD. These have been used to describe people who have some of the characteristics and behaviors we will be talking about today.

Images:
Miss Montana 2013 (Alexis Wineman was diagnosed with autism at age 11)
Temple Grandin (professor in animal science, author who has autism)
John Elder Robison (author who has Asperger Syndrome)
Darryl Hannah (self-identified as having Asperger Syndrome)
"Max" on TV show Parenthood has Asperger Syndrome (portrayed by Max Burkholder)
Rain Man (portrayed by Dustin Hoffman)
Mozart (speculated)
Andy Warhol (speculated)
Albert Einstein (speculated)

SLIDE 5

Say: Let's begin with a discussion of classroom supports for students with ASD.

SLIDE 6

<u>Say:</u> Even when teachers devote their efforts to providing structure and predictability, transitions and changes are a part of life for every middle and high school student. Transitions by definition are difficult for students with ASD because it requires them to stop what they are currently involved in and refocus on a new activity.

Teachers can alleviate some of the anxiety that comes with transitions by having a clear agenda and making it accessible to all students. However, no amount of planning can prevent sudden changes from disrupting a classroom or routine.

It is during the unpredictable transitions (e.g. fire drill, parent dropping in, pep rally, early dismissal) that we should use all that we know about a student to provide necessary supports.

By the time students with ASD get to the classroom, especially during the first days of school, there is a good chance they are stressed, unsettled, and preoccupied with one main thought: How can I figure out what it is I'm supposed to do?

They are trying to pick out the important information from the environment, which can be very difficult.

SLIDE 7

<u>Say:</u> Think about aspects of your school that may make it a challenging environment for students with ASD. Think about classrooms, hallways, assemblies, expectations, and so on. Share these examples with someone sitting next to you.

Allow about 3 minutes.

Ask group to share one or two per pair (depending on size of group) that they felt were particularly important to be aware of in their school.

SLIDE 8

<u>Say:</u> During this session we will discuss ways in which you can support students with ASD in your classroom and school. These supports will not only help students on the spectrum, but are likely to help other students who struggle with organizing their work, maintaining attention, completing assignments, and so on. I hope you find information that will be useful in practice with multiple students you teach.

SLIDE 9

Review the session's objectives.

<u>Say:</u> During this session we will look at elements of classroom structure, talk about five key supports you can use in the classroom, and identify supports for you within your school.

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 10

<u>Say:</u> Structure is key to supporting most students, and especially those with ASD.

Teaching students with ASD requires creating a supportive learning environment. This begins with making information accessible and explicit.

To provide adequate support for students you have to understand their perspective. Think of your classroom as another country with a different culture. The student with ASD is a tourist in that country. Your job is to help the student navigate and understand what is important to pay attention to.

A well-structured, predictable classroom can provide comfort for students with ASD and help them, and their peers, better attend to learning.

SLIDE 11

<u>Clip 2:00 – 2:42</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> This clip shows a teacher laying out expectations for all her students using specific classroom supports.

<u>After the video, ask:</u> What are some of the instructional supports you noticed?

SLIDE 12

<u>Clip 2:44 – 4:05</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> In addition to general structural elements that help students with ASD know what to pay attention to in a classroom, some classroom environments make it difficult for students to focus. Many students with ASD have reactions to sensory input from their environment, often auditory and visual. This video describes some of these sensitivities and ways that teachers can help.

SLIDE 13

<u>Say:</u> How many of you know that you have students with hypersensitivities or suspect that you have students with hypersensitivities? Limiting these hypersensitivities may allow students with ASD and others to better attend to learning.

As you think about ways to support students with ASD in your classroom, consider what you can do to address your students' hypersensitivities. What are the auditory and visual challenges in your classroom?

Review examples on the slide.

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 14

<u>Say:</u> Consider ways to rethink your classroom. This diagram lays out a high school science classroom. Using a tool like this one a teacher could think of ways to make the classroom clear to all students, and especially students with ASD. Additionally, the teacher could consider addressing hypersensitivities, such as storing chemicals far from the student who is sensitive to their smell or putting the computers together so that their flashing screens are not distracting to students as they do in-seat work.

Example seating chart from: https://sites.google.com/site/amandaedit2000/productivitytools

Potential alternative link:
http://www.longolabs.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Westwood-Science-Classroom-Design.jpg

SLIDE 15

<u>Say:</u> Take a few minutes to write down and share with a colleague 2-3 elements of a well-structured classroom you currently have in place and 2-3 elements you'd like to add.

Allow about 5 minutes.

SLIDE 16

<u>Say:</u> We've talked about general classroom elements that can be helpful to all students, and in particular students with ASD. The following 5 strategies – priming, academic modifications, visual supports, reinforcement, and the use of home base – can also be effective supports for students on the spectrum. We will discuss each of these and give you an opportunity to think about ways you could incorporate them into your classroom.

SLIDE 17

<u>Say:</u> Priming exposes students to materials or tasks before formal instruction on the content begins. Through priming, we familiarize students with concepts in order to help them be successful. Through priming, we can pre-teach course content and decrease anxiety about new material.

Priming works best when it's a part of the routine of your classroom, or a routine for a particular student whenever you are preparing to present new course content. Consider how to build in priming for particular students, or for your whole class. For example, after a lesson, you may want to briefly introduce the big ideas of the next lesson and how they're connected to what was just taught.

Also, consider how you might encourage other sources of support, including parents, to use priming when you are about to present new content or a new learning activity. For example, you might send home an agenda of the next week's plan on Friday.

Priming can also be used to remind students of expected behaviors. If there's a large assembly happening soon, you might prime a student who struggles with loud noises by saying: "Let's remember what you can do if it becomes too loud. Some things we've talked about are: putting on your head phones or sitting close to the exit so you can walk into the hallway if you need to. Is there anything else you could do?"

SLIDE 18

<u>Clip 4:52-6:15</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> This video clip shows examples of priming for students with ASD. Think about ways you could incorporate these strategies or modify them for your classroom.

SLIDE 19

<u>Say:</u> Other examples of priming include the following:

• Providing class notes in advance

• Giving students questions ahead of time

• Sending home the PowerPoint slides you'll be using for the next lesson

Each of these provides students with a preview of the work ahead, which can greatly help them be ready to effectively learn what you're about to teach.

Examples from:

http://info.lecturetools.com/user-blog/?Tag=interactive%20classroom%20technology

https://www.toolsforschool.com/shop/7-science/42-life-science/1543-cell-organelles-and-processes-bundled-unit-powerpoint-and-all-handouts

SLIDE 20

<u>Say:</u> Academic modifications are another effective support for students on the spectrum. Modifications include the many ways in which class content, assignments, assessments, etc. can be adapted to meet the student's specific needs.

These can include:

• Reading directions out loud

• Extended time on assignments

What are some modifications you have used to help a student? Allow a few minutes for brainstorming

Many schools find it helpful to have modifications from the IEP listed on an IEP "cheat sheet" or "IEP at a glance" page so teachers can keep track.

<u>Ask:</u> "How does your school share information about modifications across teachers and related service providers?"

Photo from:
http://shoplocalappleton.com/7-test-taking-tips-to-help-with-every-test-to-come/

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 21

<u>Clip 6:16 – 7:01</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> This video clip gives some examples of academic modifications and how they're used to promote student success.

SLIDE 22

<u>Say:</u> Let's talk about how academic modifications are handled at your school. Take out your "At My School" sheet. Go to the "Academic Modifications" section of the worksheet.

Get together with a small group to answer the questions. Make sure everyone in the group clearly understands how to learn about academic modifications that a student may need and where that information is found in the IEP.

Allow about 5 minutes.

SLIDE 23

<u>Say:</u> Another key support for students on the spectrum is the use of visuals to help clarify information and promote comprehension. Students with ASD tend to be visual learners. Visuals can take many forms and should be developed based on the student's needs and preferences. This slide includes a list of visual supports.

Review list on slide.

<u>Say:</u> What are the types of visuals you are currently using for your whole class? What types of visuals are you using for specific students?

Allow a few minutes for sharing.

<u>Say:</u> We will talk about various types of visuals and how these can be used effectively.

SLIDE 24

<u>Say:</u> Visual supports can be an effective tool for all students in your classroom.

What examples of visual supports have you already noticed from the videos that teachers use to support their whole class?

Allow time for discussion.

Examples – homework written on the whiteboard, labeled areas, etc.

<u>Say:</u> One way to use visuals for all your students is to highlight relevant information. Teachers can enhance learning by providing study guides that highlight the key points of a lesson. Also, many students with ASD have difficulty understanding the most important part of a paragraph, or even a sentence. You can assist them by providing highlighted text or fill-in-the-blank study guides.

Text example:
Collaborative Strategic Learning, Sharon Vaughn, University of Texas- Austin 2013

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 25

<u>Say:</u> Visual supports can take many forms.

Visual supports can be used as self-management tools that help the student stay focused. These tools generally outline the steps needed to complete a task, and the student checks off each step as it's completed. For example, clock times can be written next to the activity so the student can monitor where he is at any given time. If a student has difficulty mastering a routine or understanding what it is about their behavior that isn't working, the teacher can make a short video.

Graphic organizers present material in a way that makes it easier for students to understand. Graphic organizers not only highlight important information and facts, but illustrate the relationship between them.

Social scripts tell the student what to say in a particular situation. A teacher can write the scripts and the student can have them on notecards in their notebook. Sometimes the script includes appropriate responses or initiations. It will vary depending on what the student needs.

Let's look at some examples…

SLIDE 26

<u>Say:</u> In the picture on the left, there is a list of expectations of a quality story. The student assesses their work and checks off the elements of quality that they feel they have met. This is an example of a student managing their own learning. On the right, the student has an unobtrusive post-it note on his desk. He is working on asking less questions during the class period. He marks off when he has asked a question. On this particular day he has 10 opportunities (the 10 circles) to ask a question. He is managing his own behavior. A teacher can easily take this note at the end of the class period and use it to collect data on the behavior that the student is working on shaping.

Example on left from:
http://www.qualityprimaryresources.co.uk/Story-Writing-Checklist

Example on right from:
CSESA Goal Attainment Scaling training PowerPoint

SLIDE 27

<u>Say:</u> These are examples of two graphic organizers. On the left is a simple graphic organizer for breaking down the content of a paragraph. On the right is an organizer for taking notes during class, reviewing these notes, and expanding on understanding. Again, these are supports that all students can benefit from using, but will be particularly helpful for your students with ASD.

https://sites.google.com/site/mlindquistsresourceguide/homework/comicstripconversations

http://www.qualityprimaryresources.co.uk/Story-Writing-Checklist

http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/free-graphic-organizers-w.html

SLIDE 28

<u>Say:</u> Visuals can also be used to help students better understand their behavior and it's impact on others. As is the case in this social script example, a student can be reminded of what behavior is effective and not effective.

SLIDE 29

<u>Say:</u> Remember that visuals can be helpful to all of us. When eating at a restaurant, most of us can remember the meals available to us better when we see them on a menu than if they're said aloud by a server. People with ASD are particularly likely to benefit from frequent use of visual supports.

In a moment we'll consider ways that you can embed visuals in your classroom – for the whole class and for students with ASD.

SLIDE 30

<u>Clip 8:54-11:05</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> The following video shows examples of students using visuals. Think about which types of visuals you would like to incorporate in your classroom.

SLIDE 31

<u>Say:</u> I'm going to give you some time to think about and plan for using one of these supports we've discussed. Think about which one you'd like to focus on. Remember that they are related to each other; you can use visual supports to prime students. Questions to consider will be on the next slides.

Optional:

1. Participants can work on their own and share with a colleague working on the same support (about 5 minutes total)

2. Participants can have 2-3 minutes to think about ideas and then talk about these in two groups (one for priming; one for visual supports) for about 5-10 minutes

SLIDE 32

<u>Say:</u> The directions on the top are for those of you working on priming and the ones on the bottom are for those of you working on visual supports.

SLIDE 33

<u>Say:</u> Another key support for all students, including those on the spectrum, is reinforcement. Reinforcement is what we do to increase the likelihood of a behavior (e.g. turning in homework on time, engaging in class discussions). Reinforcement may take the form of saying "well done!" or giving the student more time with tasks he likes, getting a pass on homework, or being allowed to chose a role in the next group assignment. These should be things that the student shows a clear preference for. It is important to reinforce students consistently to maintain productive behaviors.

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 34

<u>Clip 11:06-11:50</u>
Use video entitled "Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom"

<u>Say:</u> This video provides more examples of how reinforcement can be used.

<u>After the video:</u> That last part is very important to remember. We may need to reinforce students with ASD for behavior or skills we wouldn't worry about reinforcing other students for, such as: handling difficult transitions, talking with friends, asking for help and so on.

SLIDE 35

<u>Say:</u> Home base is a strategy that helps students remain calm when they are overwhelmed by their environment. The purpose of using a home base is to give students with ASD an exit strategy to get out of stressful situations in a safe way, without distracting the class and without their behavior escalating in such a way that it could be stigmatizing in front of peers. Make a plan for having the student return to the classroom through ways such as: setting a timer, working through a task, etc.

Pictures from:
http://www.a2schools.org/stone.mediacenter/media_center
http://justathought.edublogs.org/2010/07/

SLIDE 36

<u>Say:</u> As we did with priming and visual supports, I'm going to give you some time to think about and plan for using one of the supports we just discussed. Think about which one you'd like to focus on. Questions to consider for each will be on the next slide.

Participants can work on their own and share with a colleague working on the same support (about 5 -10 minutes total).

SLIDE 37

<u>Say:</u> Those of you thinking about reinforcement, talk with a colleague about reinforcers you wish to use with your class and with specific students.

<u>Say:</u> Those of you thinking about home base, talk with a colleague about home base options for a particular student who may need one. A home base does not necessarily have to be a special education setting.

Picture from:
http://www.a2schools.org/stone.mediacenter/media_center

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 38

<u>Say:</u> In addition to these five key supports, the National Professional Development Center on ASD has identified other evidence-based practices. These links will bring you to websites with detailed descriptions of the five supports we covered and how to incorporate them.

SLIDE 39

<u>Say:</u> We have talked about specific supports that can be integrated into your class structure to support all students, but especially students on the spectrum. Let's now consider the supports you have available at your school to do this work well.

SLIDE 40

<u>Say:</u> There are three primary supports that may be available to you as you teach students with ASD. Each school utilizes these supports differently. Use the <u>At My School</u> page to help you identify your supports and be clear on the roles of others. If you have a student who is not currently receiving services, contact the person at your school who would initiate that process.

Remind the group that another key support is the parent of the student with ASD.

You can assist the group in clarifying these roles within their school.

SLIDE 41

<u>Say:</u> First, let's talk about the Individualized Education Program, or IEP.

SLIDE 42

<u>Say:</u> The IEP is the contract that the parent has with school district.

The IEP lays out the child's present skills, and the skills that you should be working on with that child, across the board, both academic and non-academic. This includes vocational skills. It also makes clear the supports that the student needs to ensure that this happens.

The IEP is created when the student qualifies for special education services and it is updated annually. Developing the IEP is a collaborative process between parents, general education teachers, special educators, and other key specialists. Sometimes a representative from the school or district will also participate.

The IEP team will discuss progress and areas where there are difficulties, and ideally they come prepared with set goals for the next year. The process includes a discussion about what is the least restrictive environment for this student. In other words – is he in the right environment and is it the one that is closest to his peers?

If the student's learning takes place primarily in the general education setting, what, if any, modifications does he need?

What strengths and needs does the student have? What do the proper supports look like?

These types of questions are discussed at the meeting and before any decisions are made. Simply put, the end product of the IEP meeting is a comprehensive and flexible document that structures the student's learning program, goals, and needed supports.

Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum:
Strategies for Classroom Success and Effective Use of Teacher Supports

PRESENTATION NOTES

SLIDE 43

<u>Say:</u> Let's discuss each of these as a group and review information about IEPs specific to your school. Please make sure you have your "At My School" worksheet available. Go to the "IEPs" section of the worksheet.

This is your opportunity to ask any clarifying questions about your school's processes related to the IEP.

Facilitate discussion of the questions.

SLIDE 44

<u>Say:</u> Another key support for you is the special education staff at your school.

SLIDE 45

<u>Say:</u> The role of the special education teacher is to help monitor the IEP, to make sure the student is making progress, and as necessary incorporate instruction and supports to help the student succeed. General educators and special educators consult with each other on how to help students achieve their IEP goals.

Special education teachers can be a great resource for general educators to help understand the student, their special learning needs, and how to incorporate learning supports.

The specific roles of special educators depend on different schools and different relationships between teachers. Some roles may include:

• To provide direct instruction to the class or specific students. Instruction may be specific to content that is particularly challenging for a student.

• To help general educators make creative modifications to the curriculum. As we've discussed previously, the student with ASD may require a different way of having information presented.

It's beneficial for general educators and special educators to have regular meetings to discuss students' progress and identify ways to complement each other's efforts.

SLIDE 46

<u>Say:</u> Different districts and schools have various policies and practices for utilizing the support of paraprofessionals. These examples may or may not apply in your setting.

Paraprofessionals, or instructional aides, are people trained to work directly with students in the classroom and can be key supports for teachers. They should be thought of as facilitators who help students with ASD (and other special needs) adapt and be successful in the classroom environment by using the plan developed by the general and special educators.

Paraprofessionals are not often present in general education classrooms. When they are, they make sure the student:
• Is on task
• Has the materials needed
• And has the necessary and planned supports

SLIDE 47

Say: Let's discuss each of these as a group, and review the roles and responsibilities of special educators and paraprofessionals specific to your school. Please make sure you have your "At My School" worksheet available. Go to the "Teaming with Special Educators" section of the worksheet.

This is your opportunity to ask any clarifying questions about your school's processes related to how special educators and general educators work together to support students.

Facilitate discussion of the questions.

SLIDE 48

Say: During this session we have discussed supports. We have talked about supports for all students, supports key to students on the spectrum, and supports available to you . The time and effort you are able to invest in the development and use of these supports will pay off in improved student outcomes. Additionally, you are more likely to diminish the challenges that students with ASD and teachers can experience when the environment is not structured and information is not clear. The time and effort are well worth it.

Ask for any remaining questions.

Thank participants for their participation.

Remind participants to complete evaluation.

Tell participants: If you wish to access the other presentation that reviews the characteristics of ASD and practices for challenging behavior, go to: http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/materials.

Share unanswered questions with relevant school professionals for follow-up.

SLIDE 49

Say: You can use these resources to review or share some of the information we've talked about today. These links also include information on the other part of the Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum: Characteristics and Practices for Challenging Behavior.

SLIDE 50

These resources were created by a team comprised of these individuals with funding provided by the Institute of Education Sciences and from the Organization for Autism Research.