

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

ASERT
bringing autism resources together.

PA *autism.org*

Presented by:

Kate Hooven, MS, Justice System Consultant

April 4, 2017

INTRODUCTION

AGENDA

1

- Introduction

2

- What is Autism?

3

- What does the ASERT data say?

4

- So What?

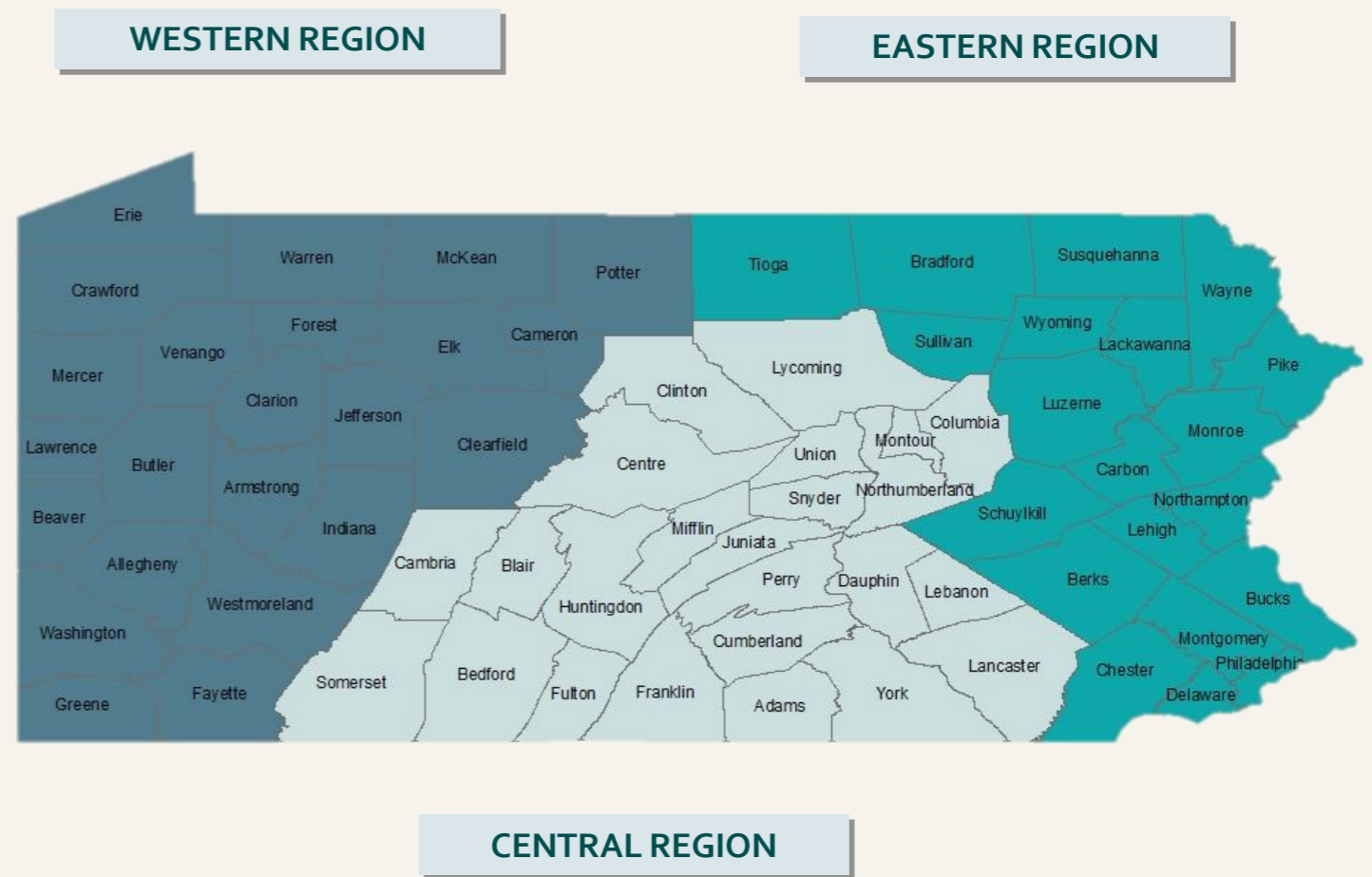
5

- What's Next?

WHAT IS THE ASERT?

Autism Services Education Resources & Training

- Funded by the Bureau of Autism Services, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.
- A unique partnership of public and private entities.
- A key component of the BAS strategy for supporting individuals with autism and their families throughout Pennsylvania.



ASERT EASTERN REGION PROJECTS



#THEDRESS





AUTISM 101

HISTORY OF AUTISM



Leo Kanner, 1943

The word Autism is derived from the Greek word "autos" meaning "self".

HISTORY OF AUTISM: DSM CLASSIFICATION

1987

DSM-III-R criteria for diagnosing autism

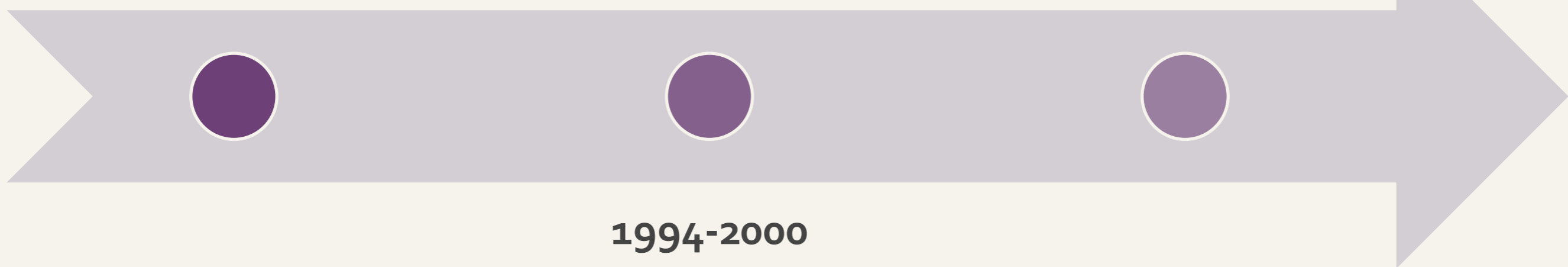
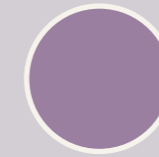


1994-2000

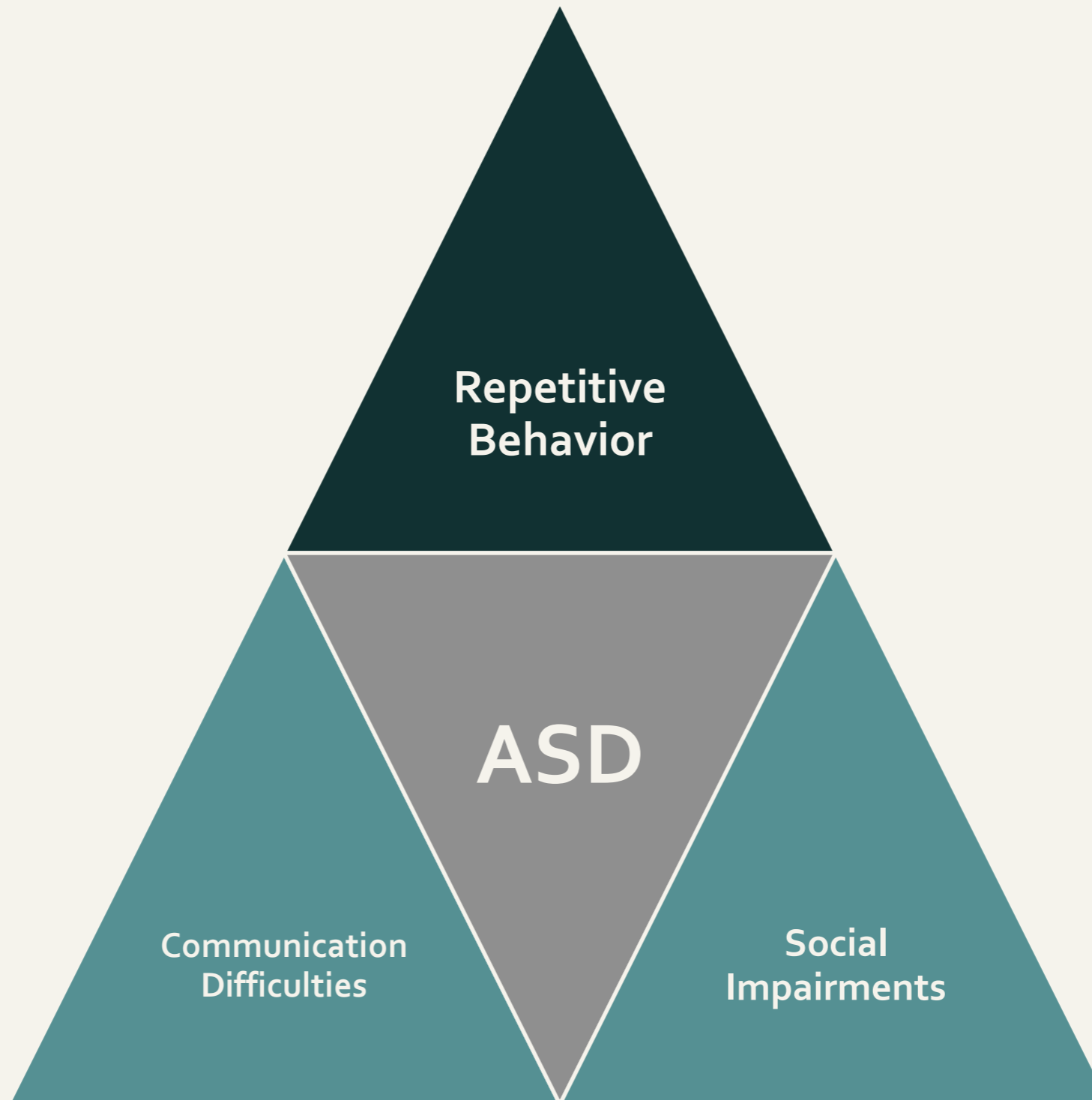
DSM-IV and DSM-IV-TR expand autism definition and include Asperger Syndrome

2013

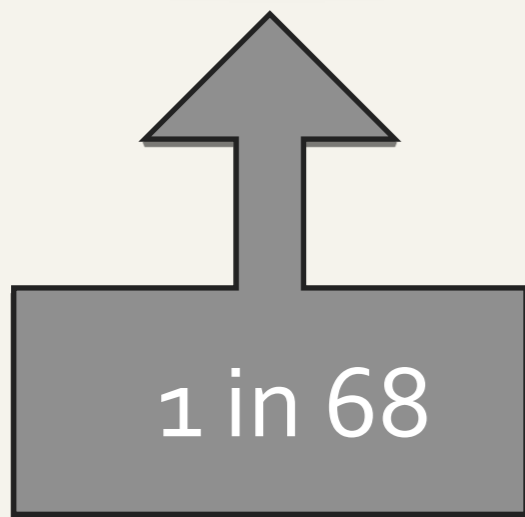
DSM-5 collapses all autism diagnoses into one diagnosis: Autism Spectrum Disorder



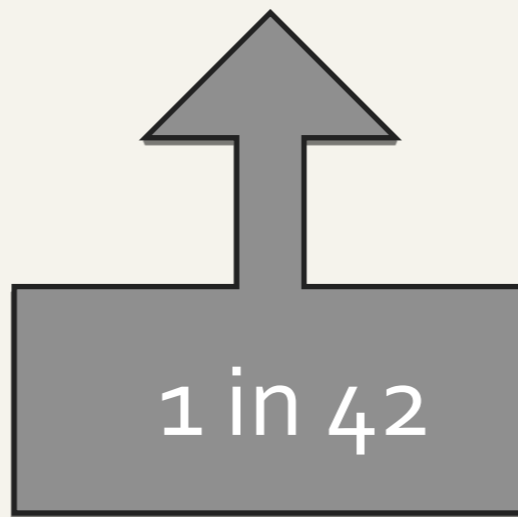
WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?



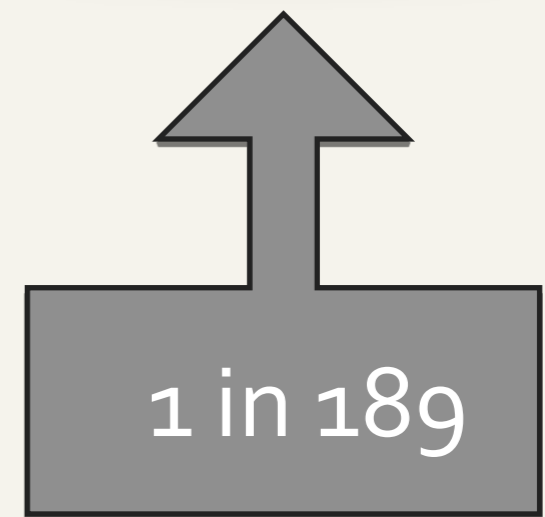
MALE V. FEMALE PREVALENCE



1 in 68

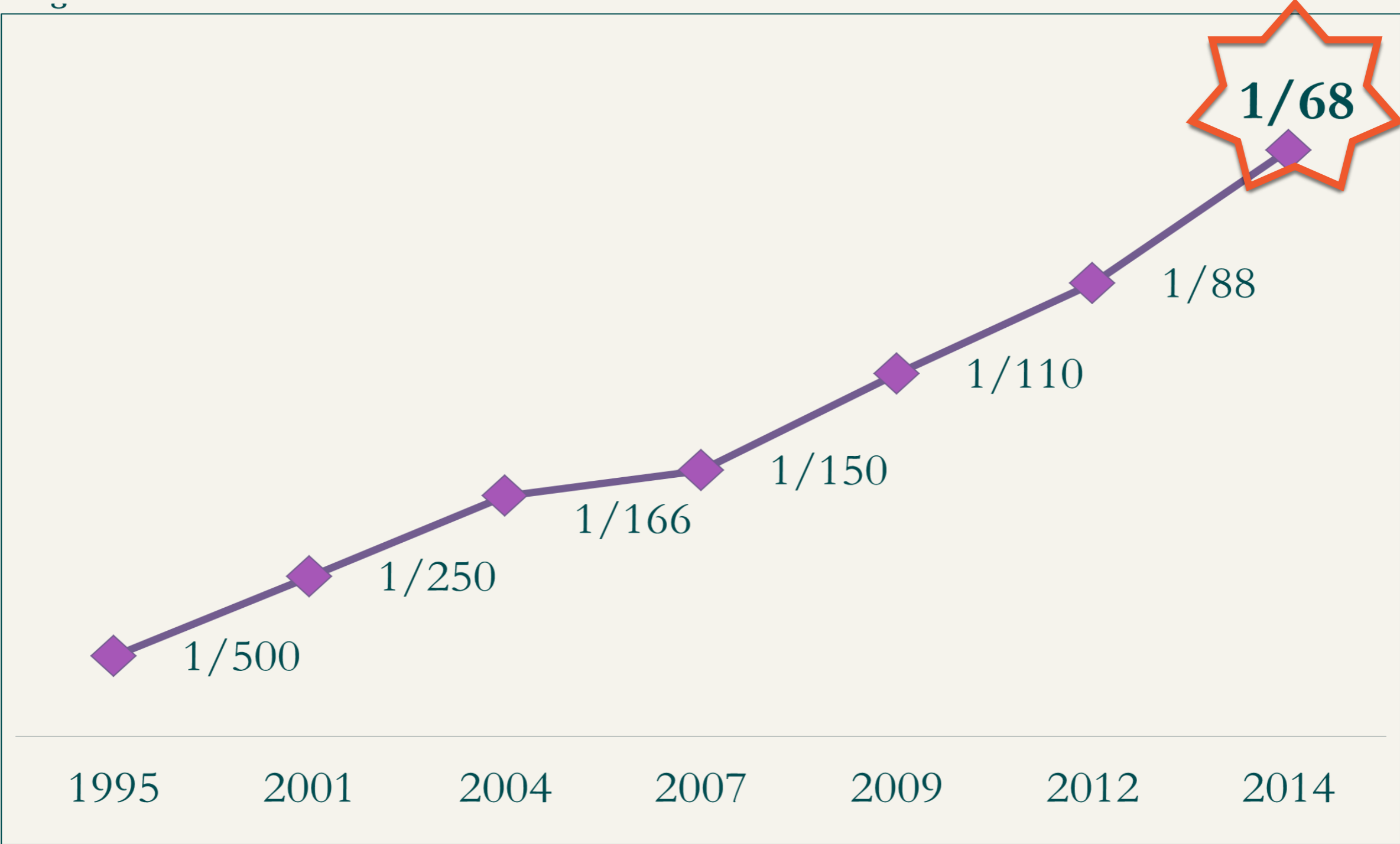


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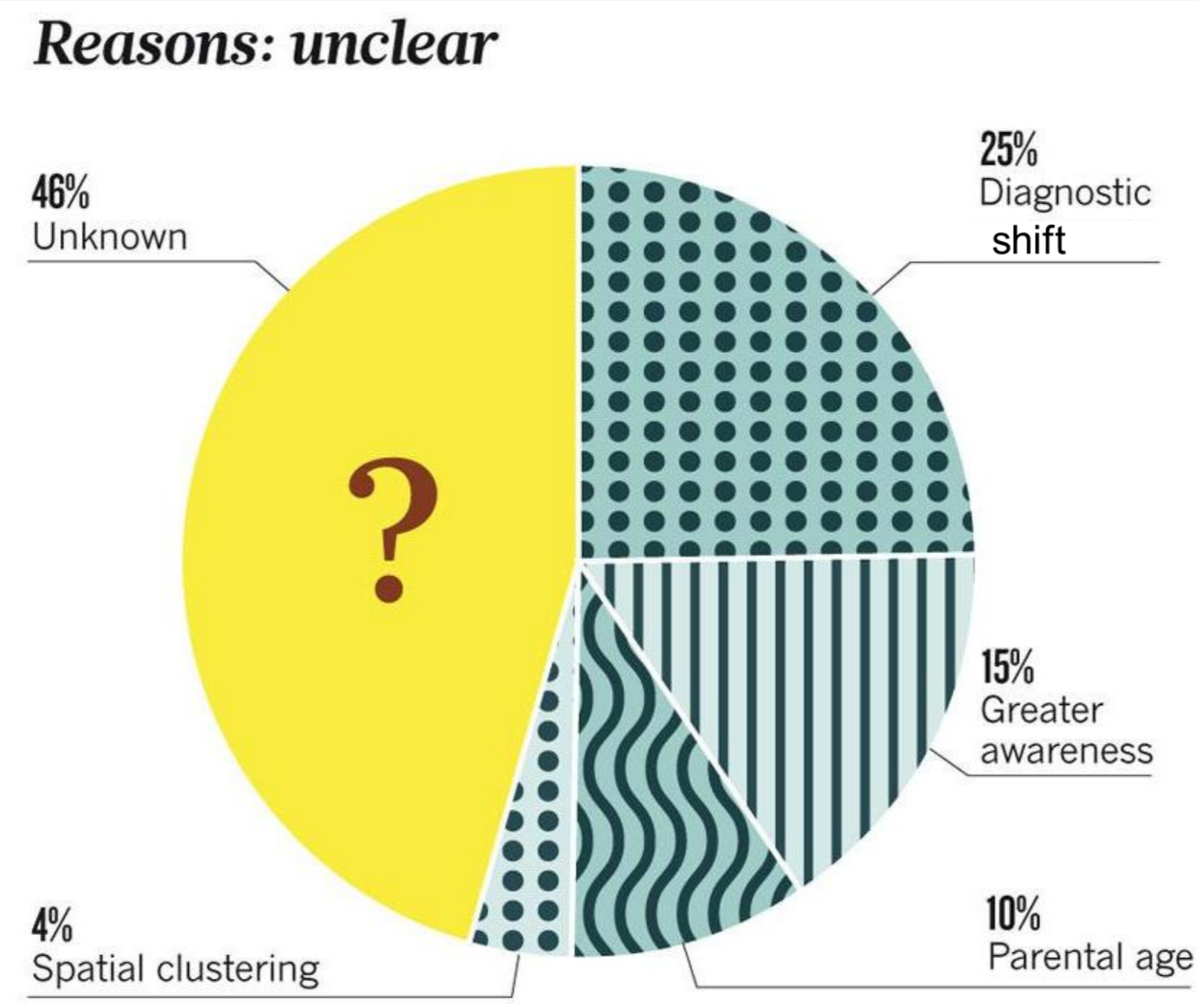


1 in 189

INCREASING PREVALENCE



WHY IS THE PREVALENCE INCREASING?



Source: nature.com

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

Pre-Elementary:

EI services are available until age 5

Elementary:

Special Ed and BHRS services

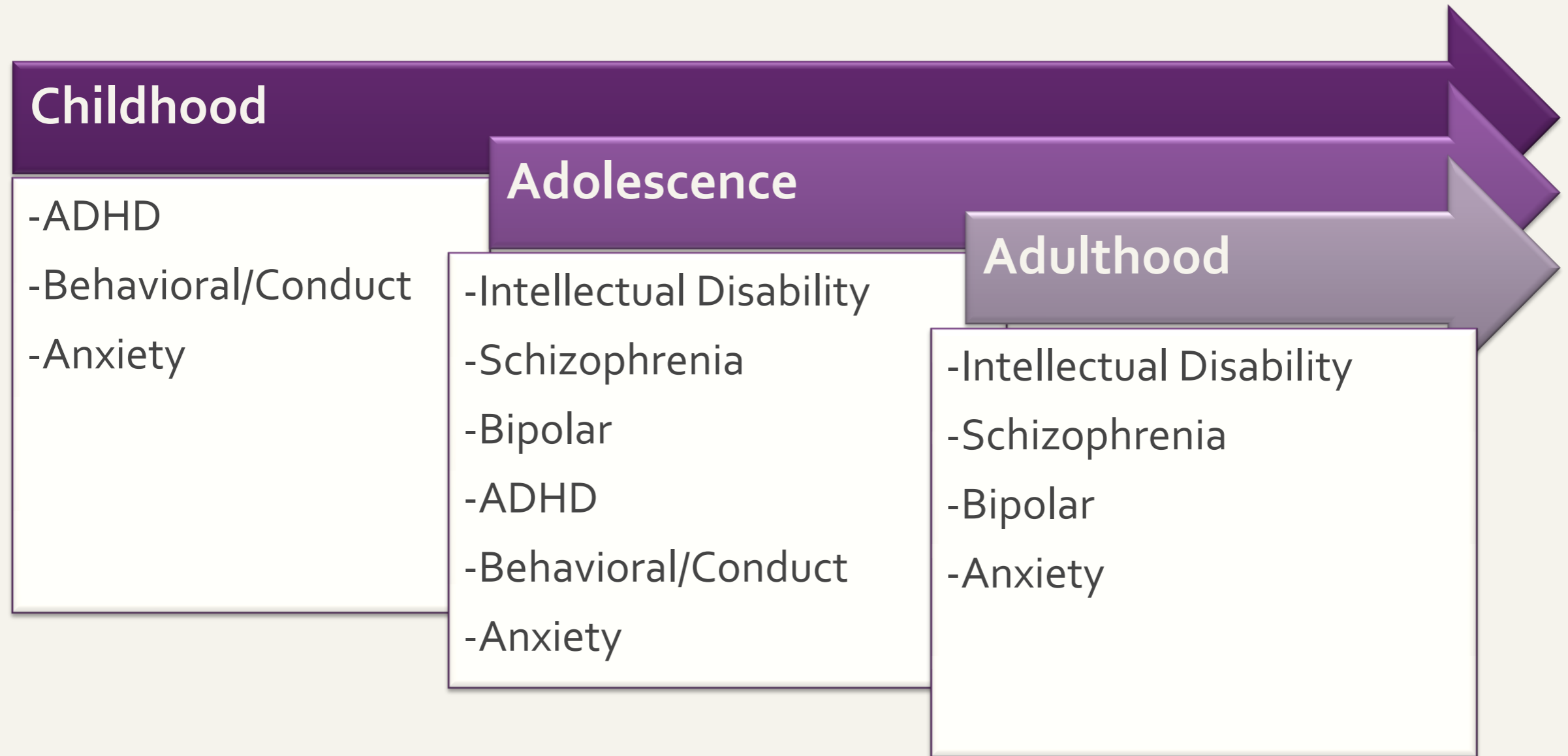
Middle/High School:

Special Ed until age 22 and BHRS services until age 21

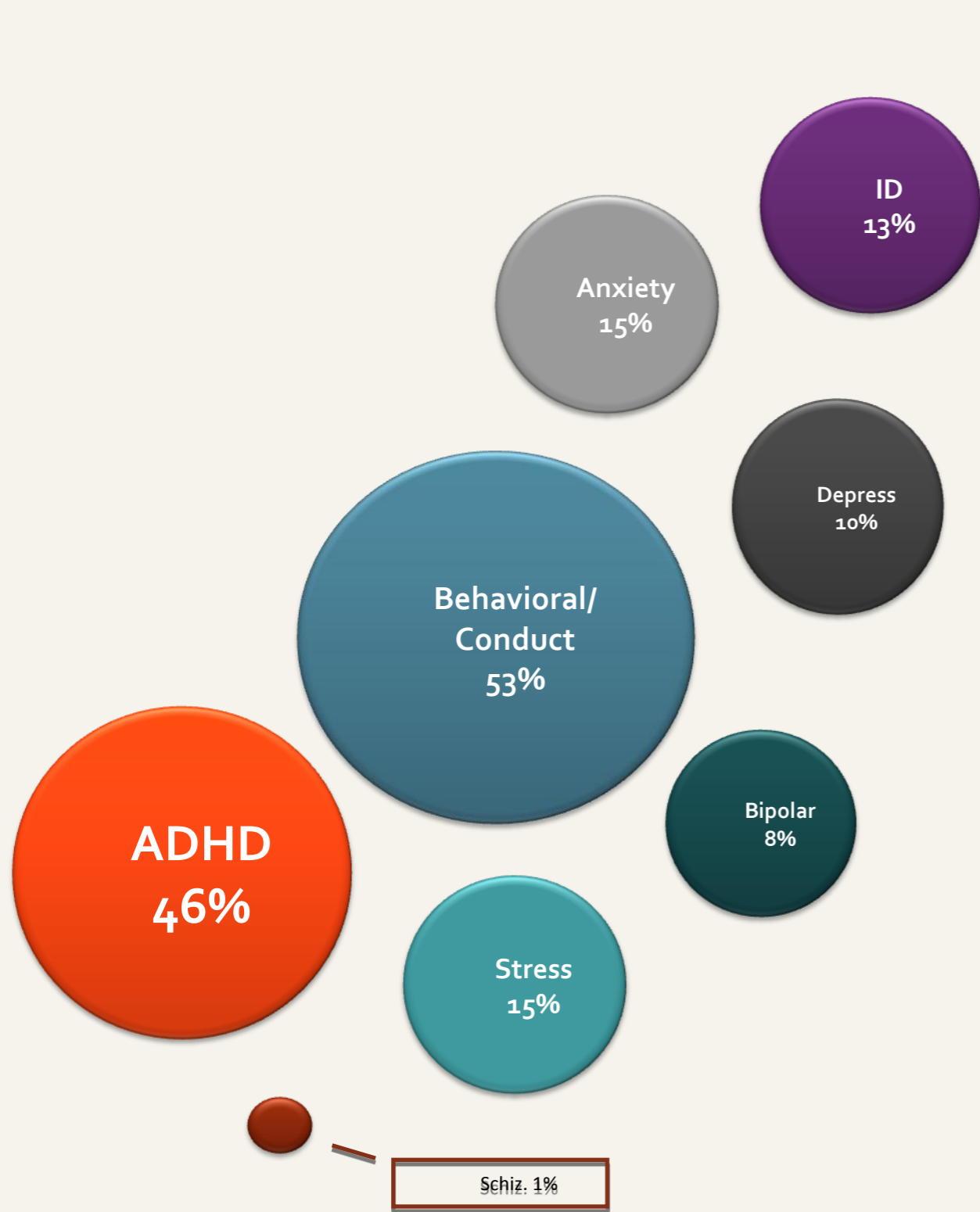
Adults:

~500+ slots for the Adult Autism Waiver and Adult Community Autism Program

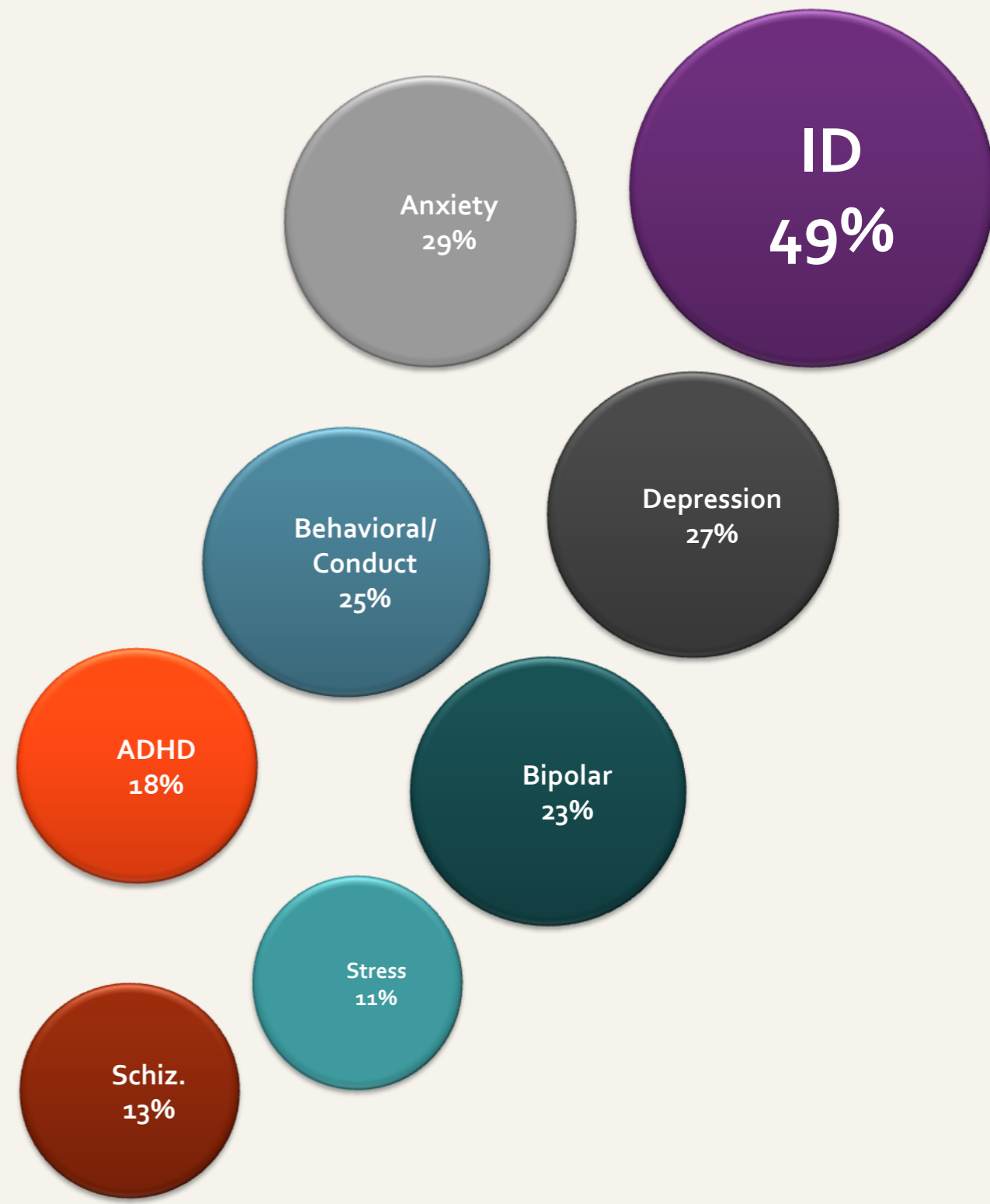
COMORBID CONDITIONS: WHAT AGES ARE WE SEEING THEM?



Source: paautism.org/census



Children and Adolescents (under 21)



Adults (over 21)

POLY-PHARMACY

Among 33,565 children with autism

Number of psychotropic medications



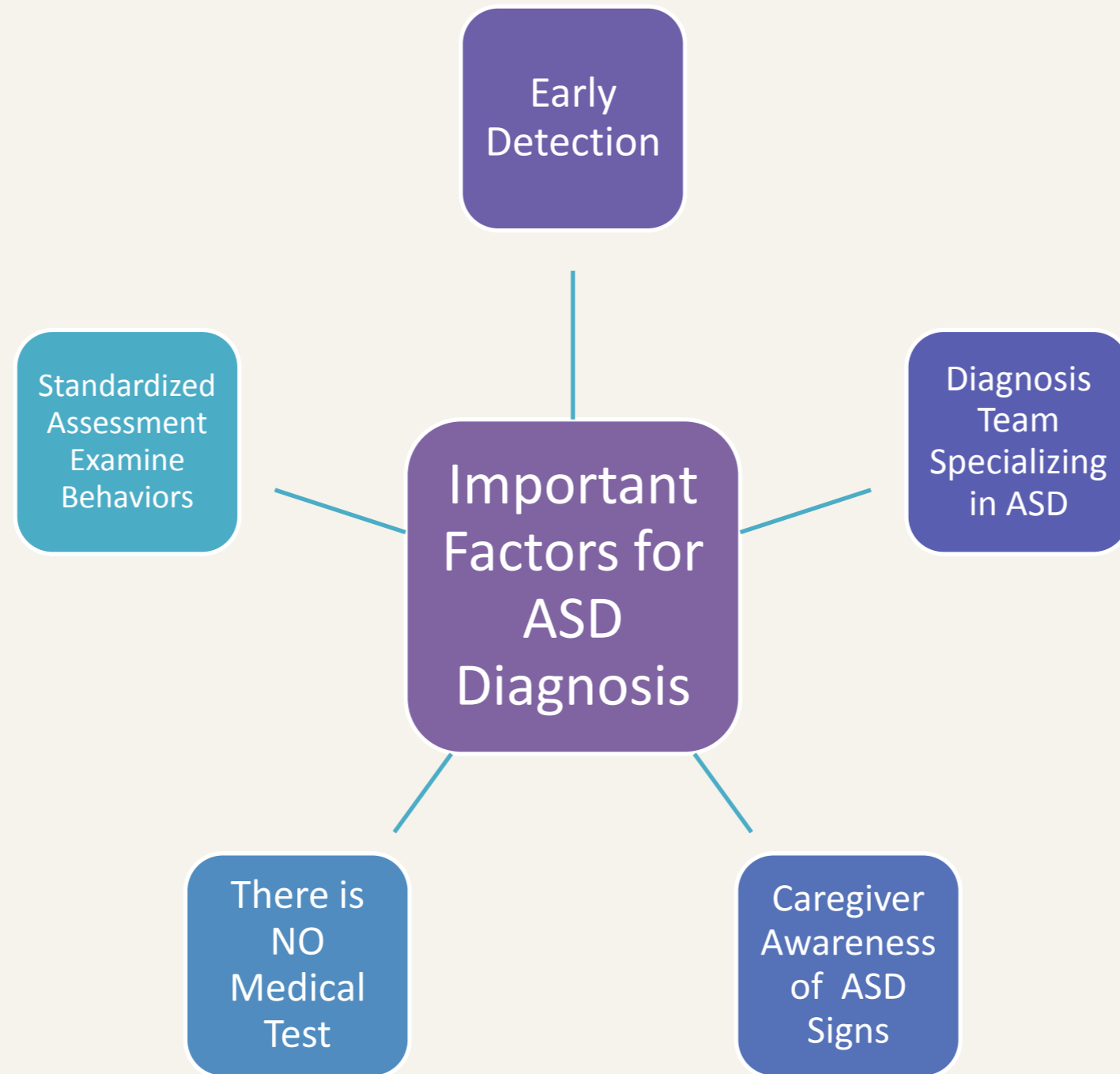
64% of children

35% of children

15% of children

Source: Spencer et al., 2013

DIAGNOSING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



POTENTIAL CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

Currently there is no singular proven cause of ASD.*



Research is still being established in this area

* Source CDC.gov

SYMPTOM DOMAIN #1: SOCIAL INTERACTION

1

Lack of Attention to Faces

2

Reduced Eye Contact

3

Lack of Social Reciprocity

4

Difficulty in Receiving and Expressing Emotions

5

Difficult in Developing Peer Relationships

6

Difficulty in Using Nonverbal Social Communication

SYMPTOM DOMAIN #1: SOCIAL INTERACTION

Tools/Strategies for Little/No Eye Contact



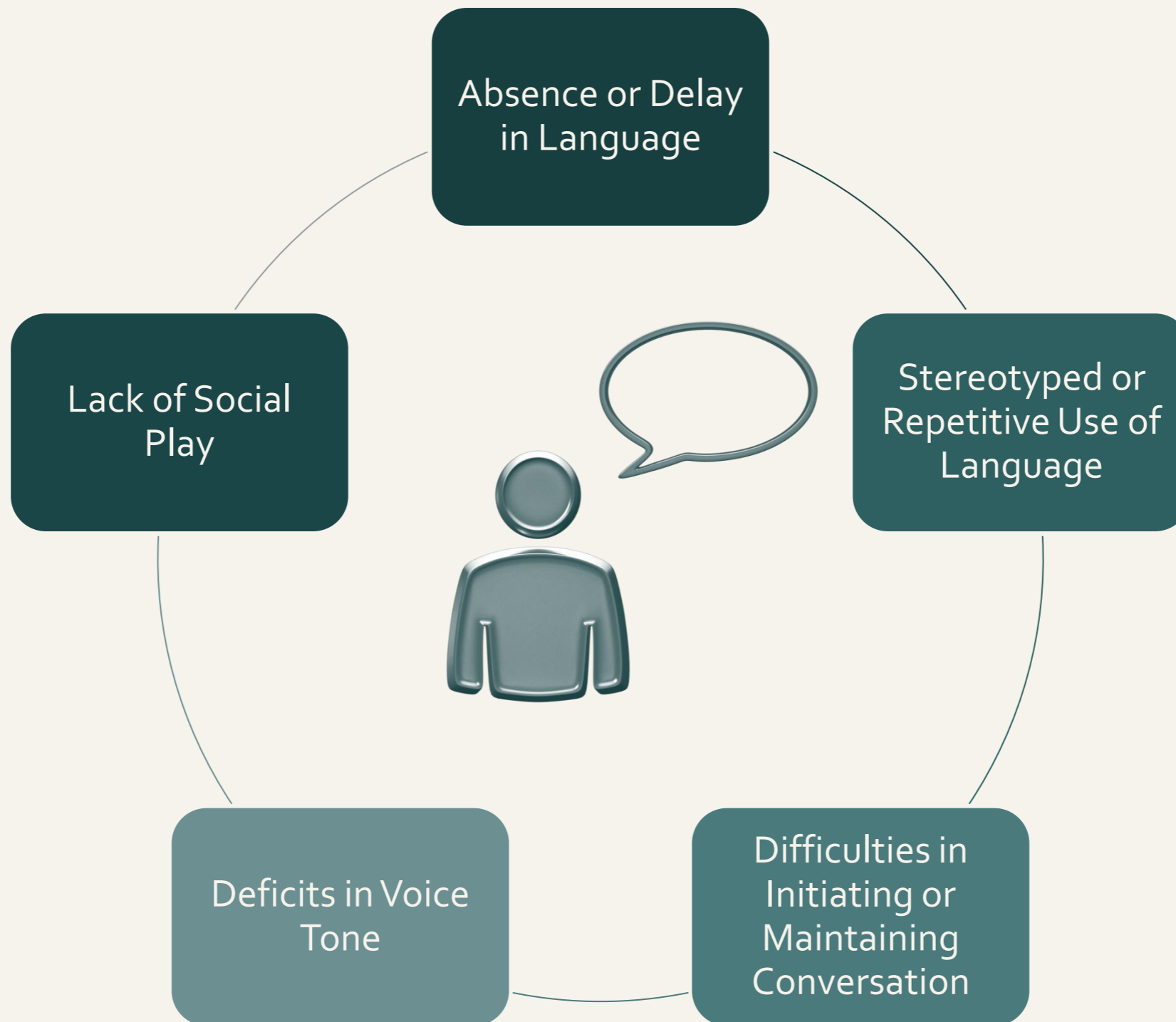
Does not mean they are not listening

Wait for their response first

Smile and engage

Try to capture attention, but do not force it

SYMPTOM DOMAIN #2: COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES



LANGUAGE

Speak clearly
and concisely

Speak in a
calm, quiet
voice

One
command at a
time

Ask if they
understand

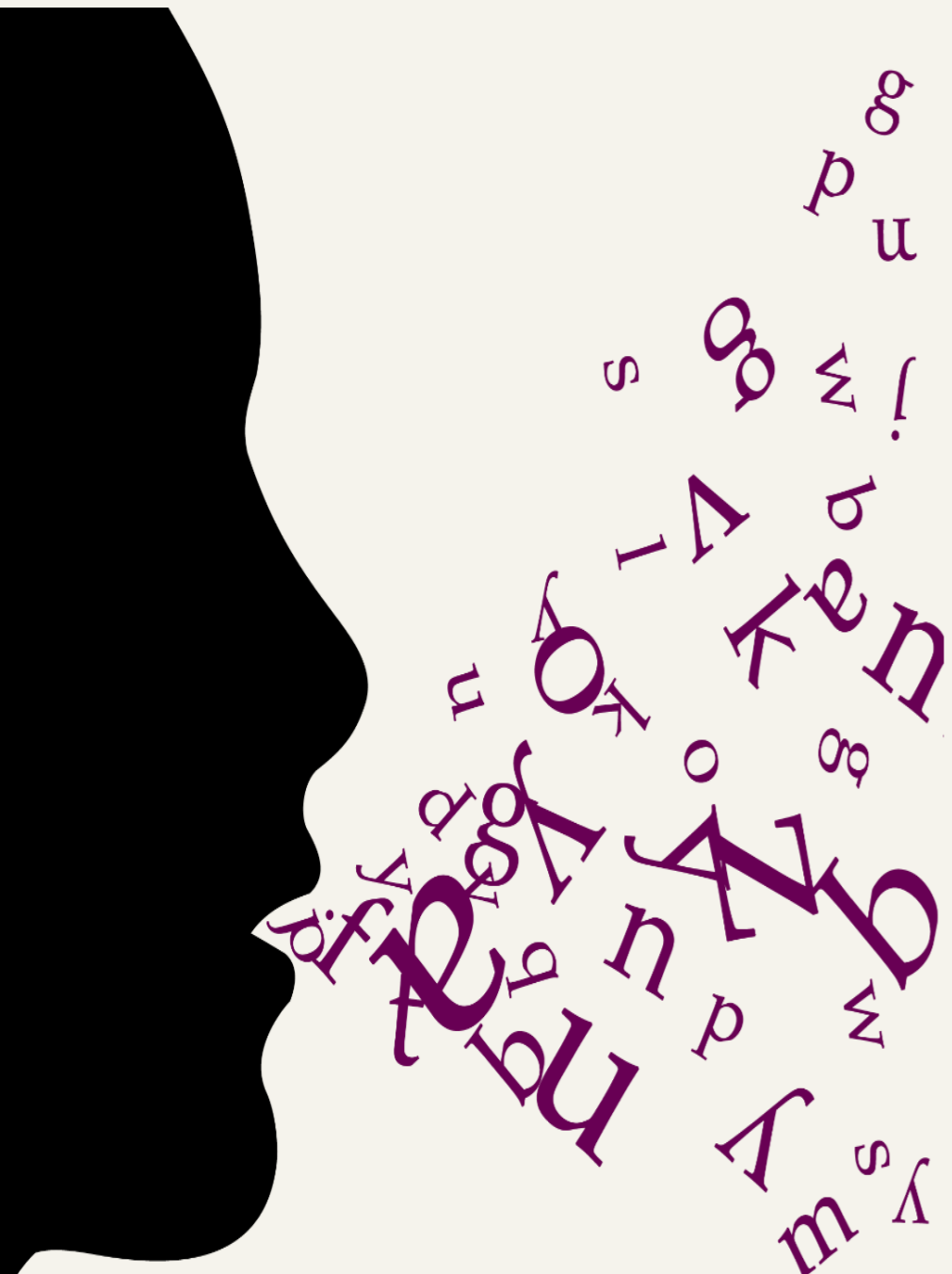
No slang or
abstract
language

Give them
time to
respond

Repeat or
rephrase

One person
talks at a time

ECHOLALIA



Immediate Echolalia

"Do you have ID?"

"Do you have ID?"

Keep in mind when giving a choice, they may always repeat the last choice.






















Delayed Echolalia

"Do you have ID?"

"Can you hear me now? Good."

SYMPTOM DOMAIN #2: COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

Tools/Strategies for Lack of/Delayed Language

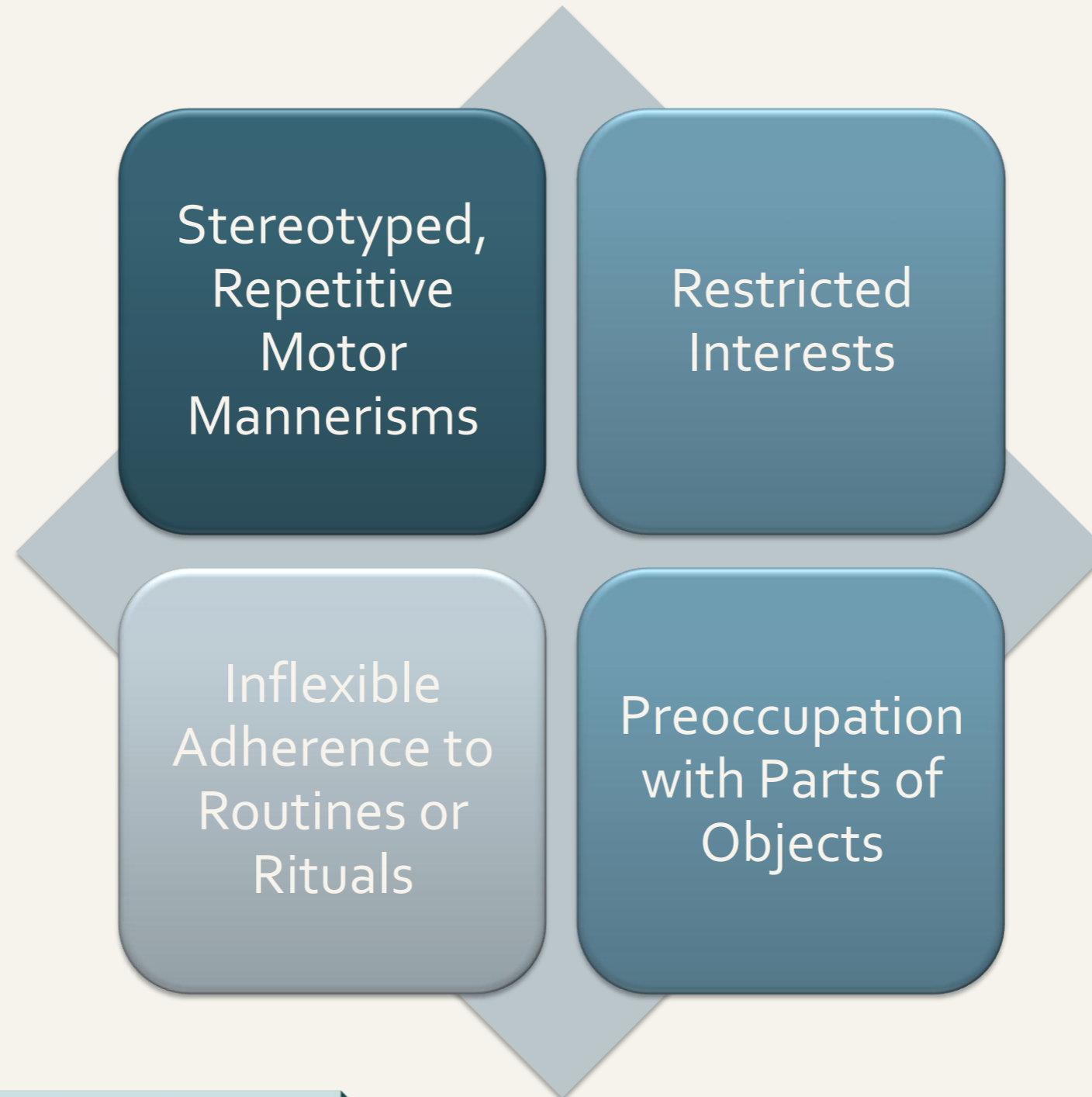
 I want		 I see		 thank you	
 drink	 biscuit	 apple	 coke	 crisps	 banana
 book	 sand	 bricks	 pens	 farm	 puzzle
 shoe	 jumper	 trousers	 coat	 sock	 hat

Picture exchange communication system (PECS)

Alternative Communication

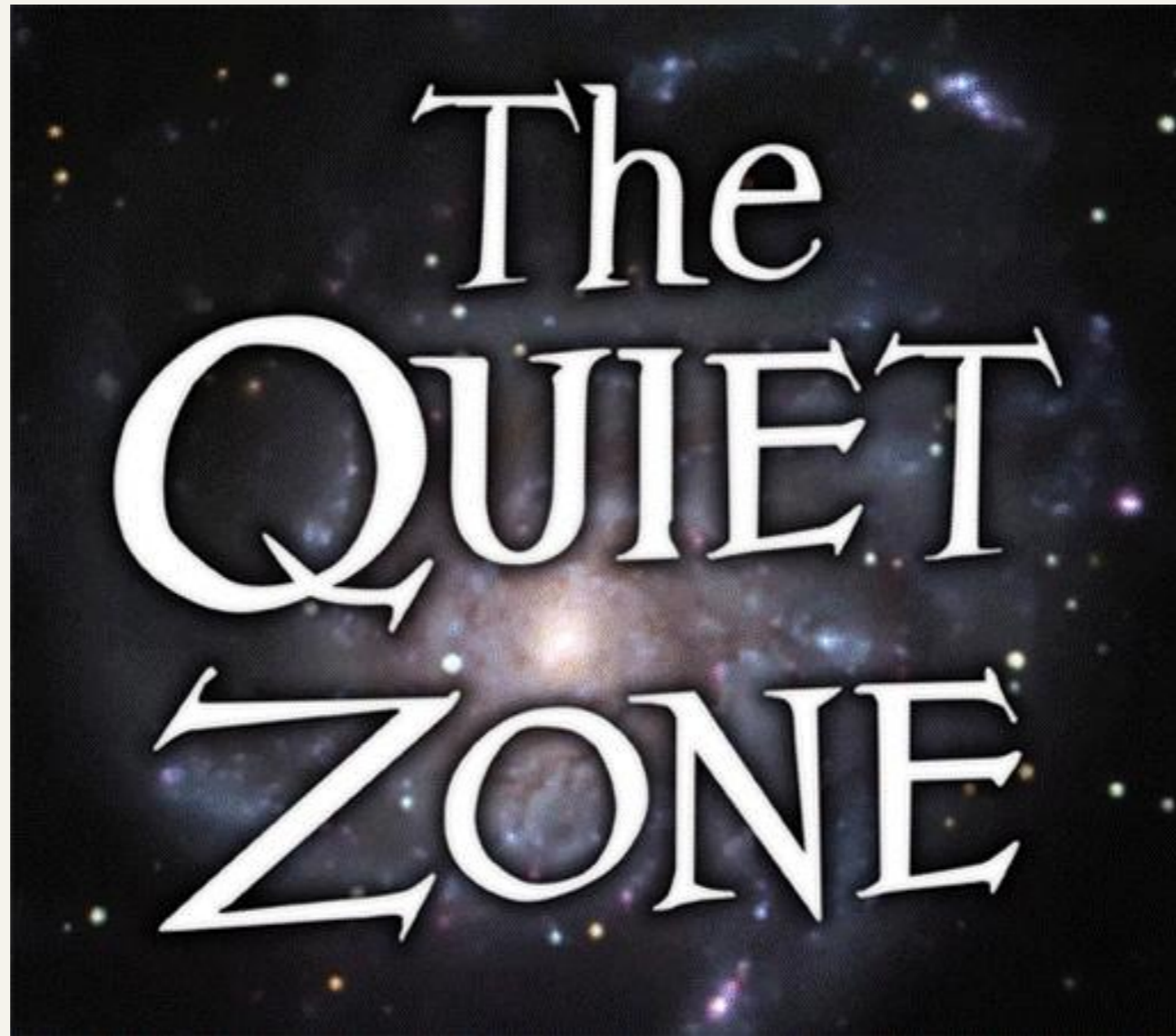


SYMPTOM DOMAIN #3: RESTRICTED OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR



SYMPTOM DOMAIN #3: RESTRICTED OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

Tools/Strategies for Repetitive Behaviors

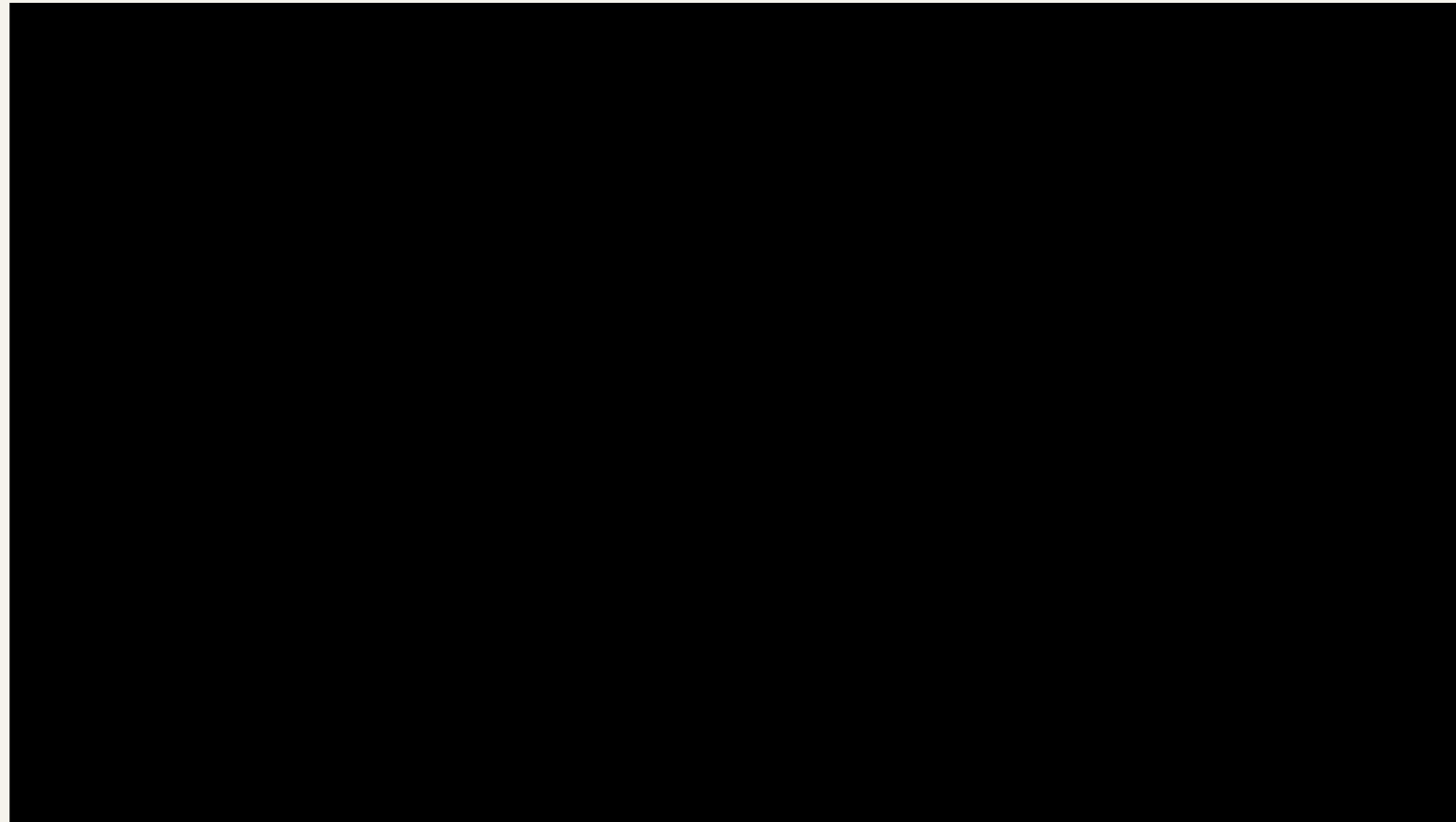


CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH AUTISM

Sensitivity to
Light

Sensitivity to
Touch

Sensitivity to
Sound



<https://youtu.be/7oe7yNPyf2c>

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE OVERSTIMULATION

Flapping

Pacing

Rocking

Scripting

Loud
Verbalizations

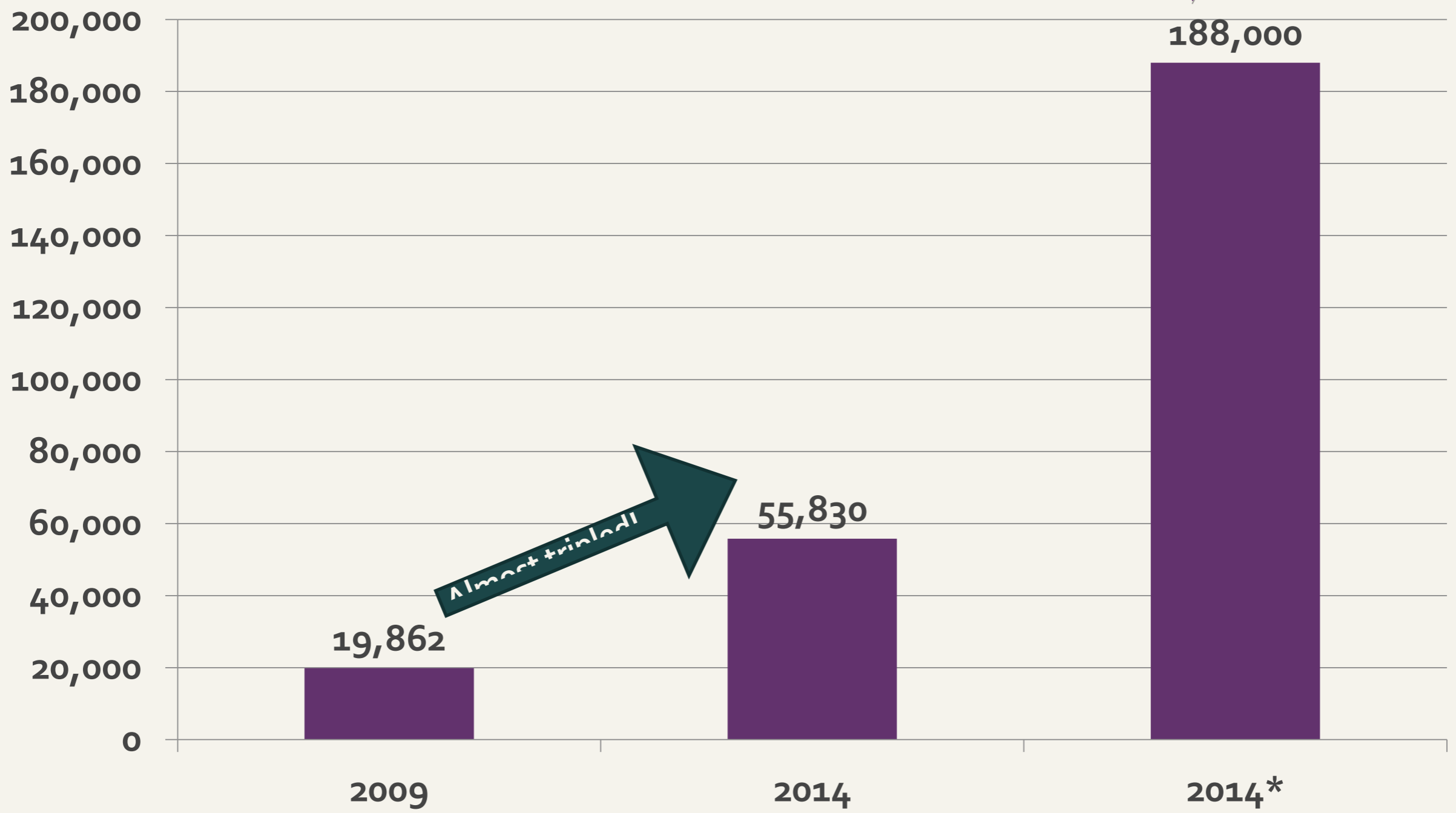
OVERSTIMULATION CAN LEAD TO...



DATA

AUTISM PREVALENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Applying CDC Prevalence

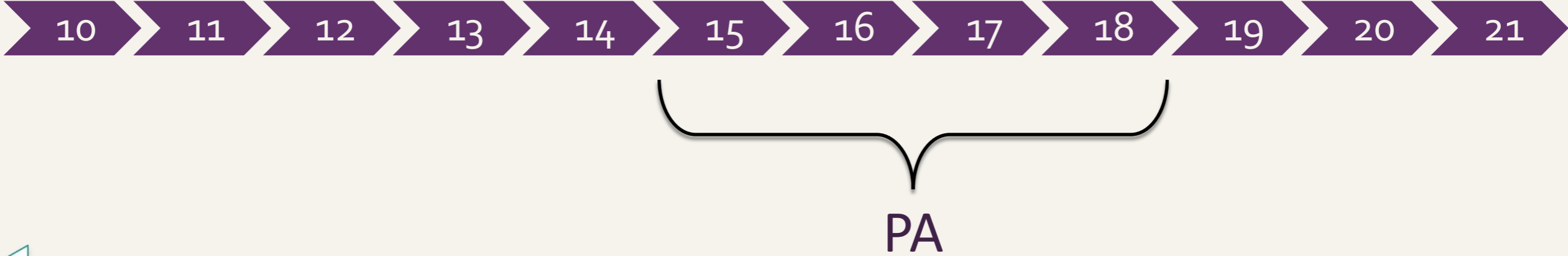


JUVENILE JUSTICE CHARGES: PA

Top 5 Charges

- Theft*
- Harassment-Strike, Shove, Kick*
- Simple Assault-Causing Bodily Injury*
- Theft by Receiving Stolen Property*
- Aggravated Indecent Assault*

Ages with Highest Number of Charges



JUVENILE JUSTICE BY CHARGE TYPE: PA

Offense Against Person

- 48%
- Includes Assault, Harassment, Stalking etc.

Offense Against Property

- 30%
- Includes Arson, Theft, Trespassing etc.

Other

- 22%
- Includes Drug Charges, Driving Offenses, etc.

JUVENILE JUSTICE BY CHARGE SEVERITY: PA

Felony

- PA-27%

Misdemeanor

- PA-56%

Summary

- PA-17%

SURVEY DESIGN

Where?

Who?

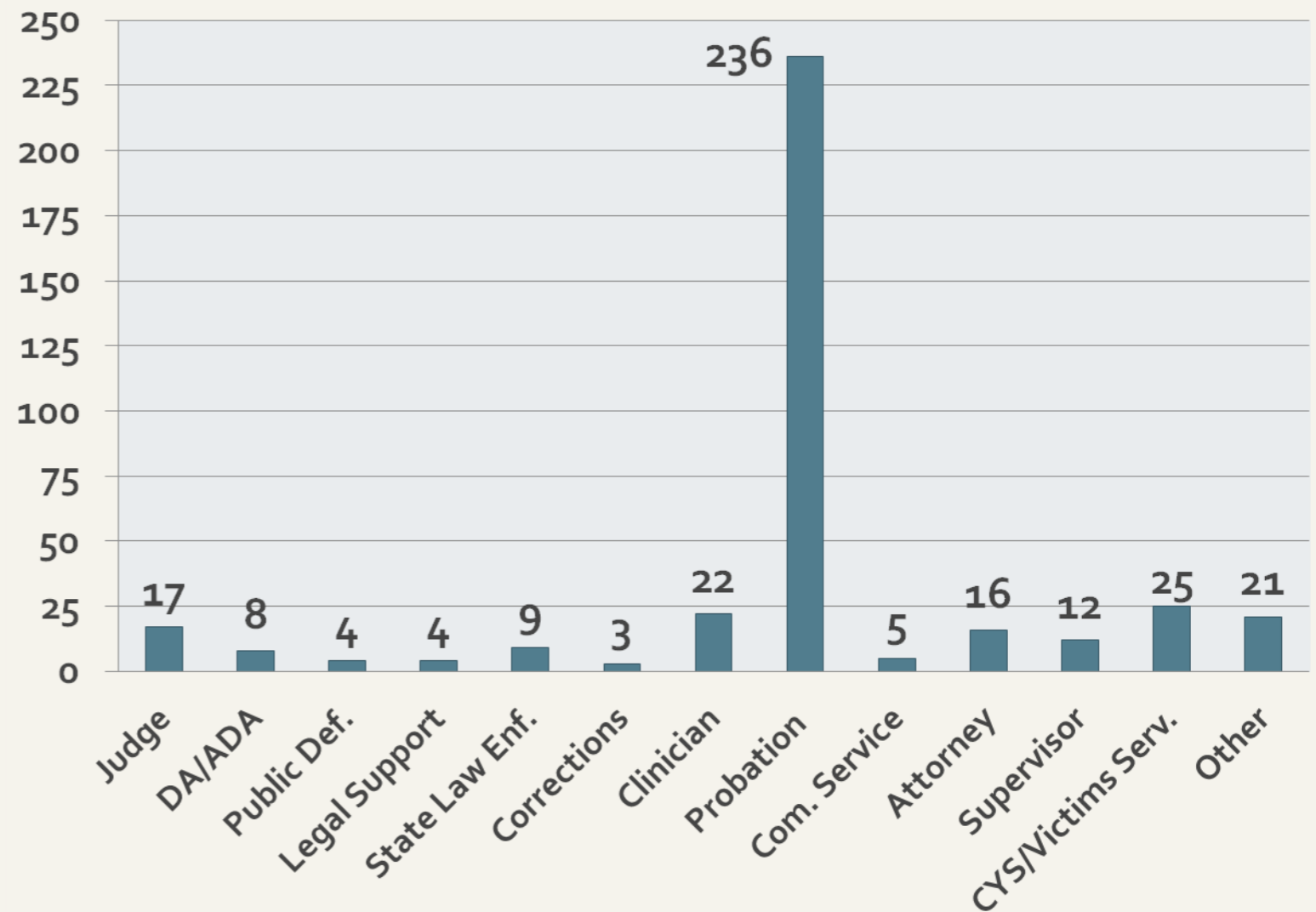
*What do
you need?*

*What do
you know?*

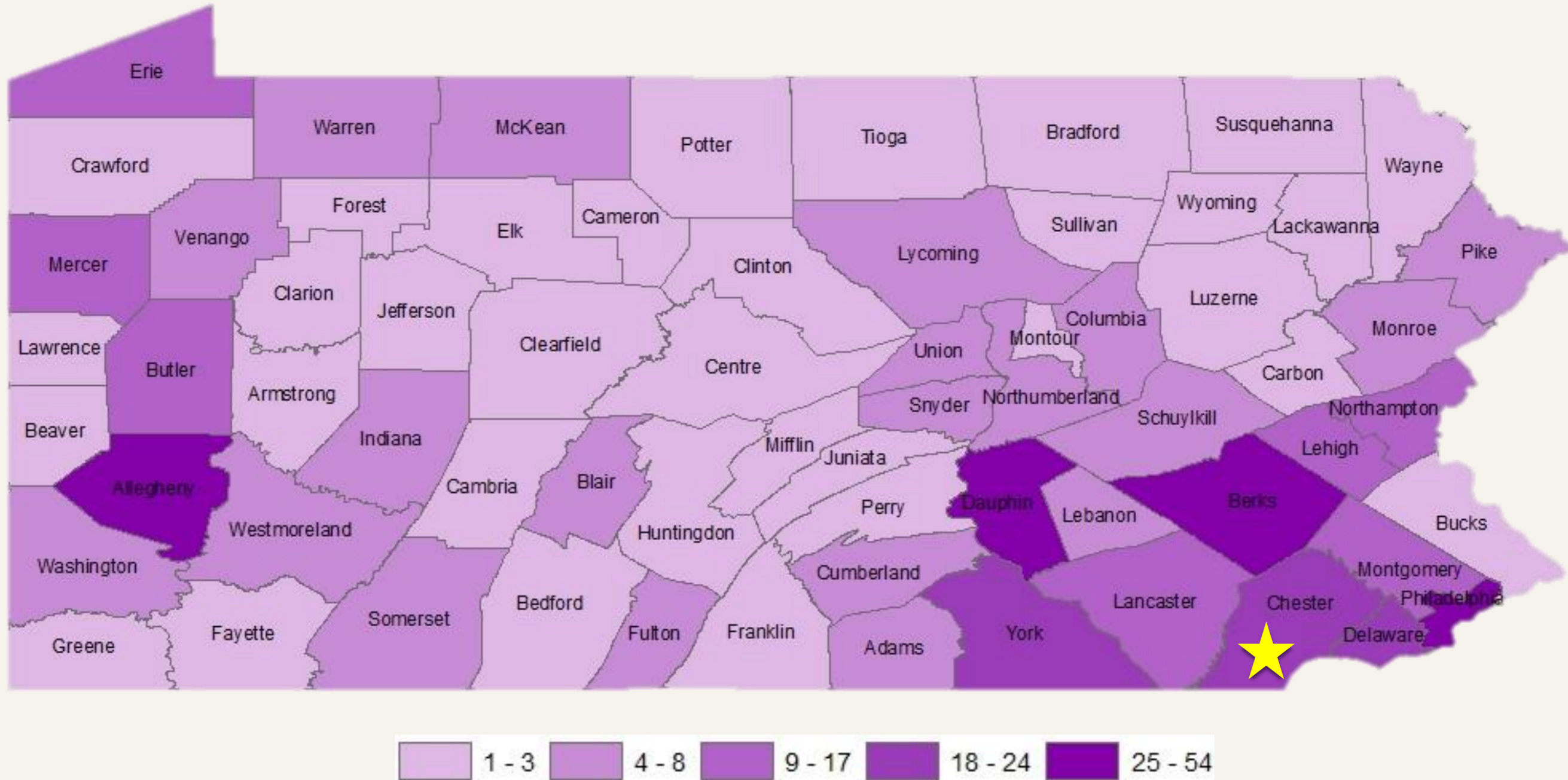
RESPONDENTS

Characteristics

- 365 Respondents
- Representation from many systems and professions
- Largest proportion of respondents from probation

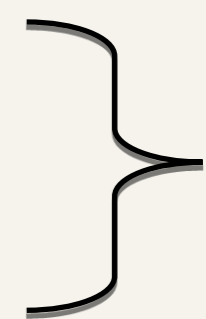


MAP OF RESPONDENTS

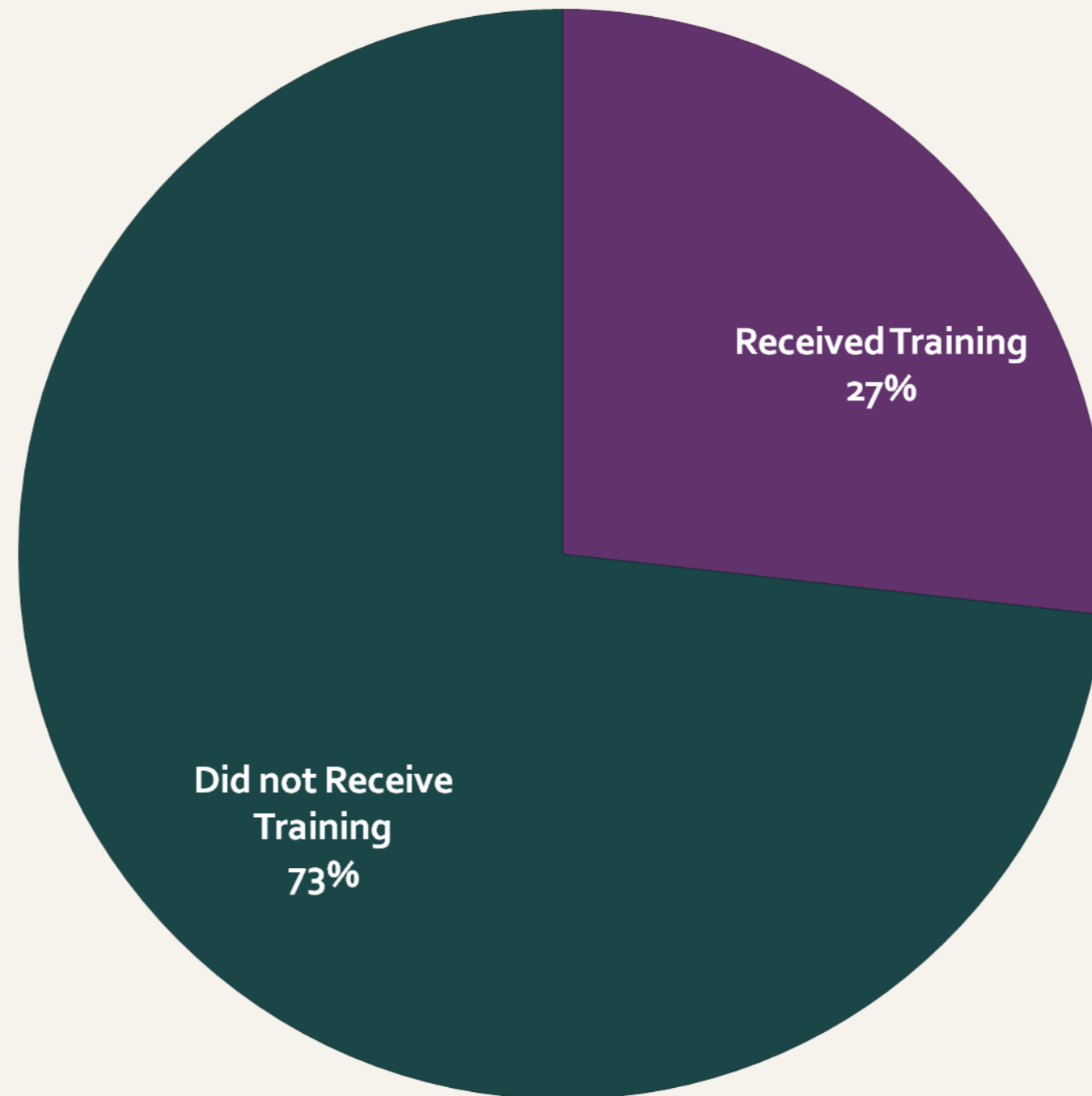


GENERAL AUTISM KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

Question	Percent Agree
Reading facial expressions may be difficult for people with autism.	88%
Individuals with autism often have a set of focused and specific abilities or skills.	88%
Generally individuals with autism do not easily understand or relate to the feelings and thoughts of others.	78%
Autism affects both males and females equally.	54%
Many individuals with autism do like being touched.	36%
The symptoms of autism do not change with age.	19%
Most people with autism can easily understand sarcastic language.	6%
People with autism generally make good eye contact with other people.	5%



TRAINING EXPERIENCE



ASD & SEXUALITY

SEXUALITY AND ASD: BACKGROUND

Difficulties with interpersonal relationships

Impact of communication deficits

Curiosity about sexuality

Impact of social isolation

Rejection from their peer group

Access to sex education may be an issue

INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

Lack of
socio-sexual
knowledge

Confusion about
privacy and
intimacy

Issues of consent

Restricted
interest and
sexual obsessions

PREVENTION: SEX EDUCATION

Limits and boundaries

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors

Theory of mind and notion of consent

Illegal behaviors and their consequences

Body parts, hygiene, self-esteem, intimacy, steps in a relationship, expression of emotion, communication and positive relationships

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

Guidance and support in friendship abilities

Prevention of bullying

Guidance on aspects of puberty and sexuality

Self-acceptance

Acceptance by family members

Training of psychologists and psychiatrists in sexuality and ASD

Kate Hooven

SO WHAT?

YOUR ROLE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

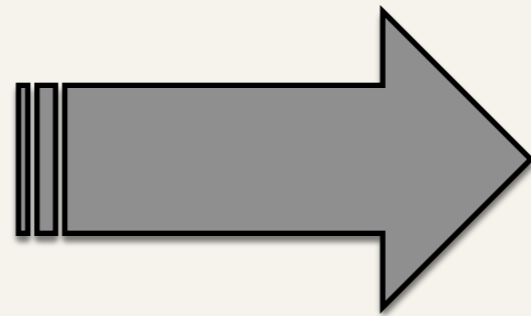
SENSORY EXPERIMENT



SENSORY OVERLOAD: EXAMPLE



SAFETY IS THE GOAL



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

WHAT MAY IMPACT SAFETY

Misreading Social Cues

May not understand sarcasm

May not understand seriousness

May not understand friendliness

Difficulty understanding Social Rules

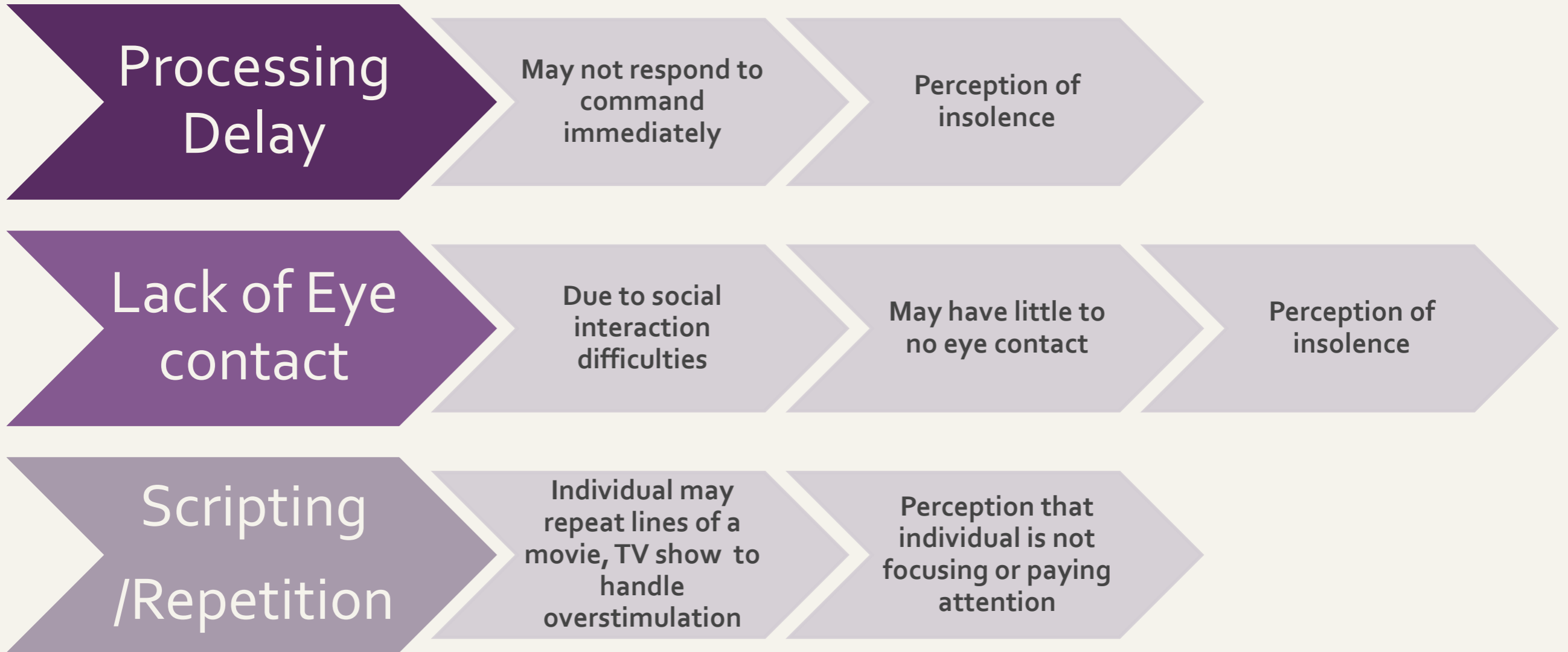
Difficult to respond appropriately

Sensory Issues

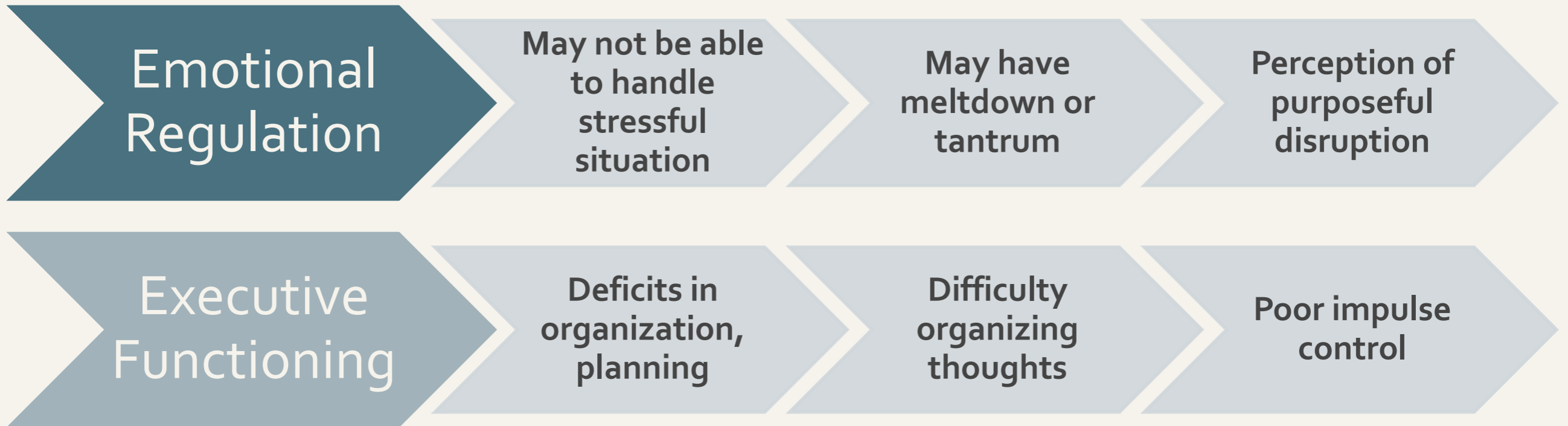
Self-stimulating behavior

Perception of being inebriated or high

WHAT MAY IMPACT SAFETY (CONT.)



WHAT MAY IMPACT SAFETY (CONT.)



TRAUMA

Consider Possible Traumas to an Individual with Autism

Bullying

Physical Abuse

Emotional Abuse

History of Restraints

AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AUTISM MAY:

An Individual with
Autism May:

Act deaf, not respond to your commands or his/her name

Have an impaired sense of danger

Have a heightened flight or fight response

Avoid eye contact

Have heightened sensory perception

Not tell you if they are hurt

Be drawn to water

Engage in repetitive behavior

Try to touch your badge, handcuffs, etc.

HOW TO APPROACH SOMEONE WITH AUTISM



Slowly and cautiously



Give verbal warnings



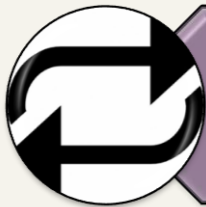
Keep your voice quiet and calm



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

IN OTHER WORDS...

Be

S.

Stay
calm

A.

Ask
clearly

F.

Facilitate
Understanding

E.

Explain the
Process

R.

Repeat
commands

SAFETY: EXAMPLE



MIRANDA RIGHTS

"..anything you said can and will be held AGAINST you..."



- **Miranda Rights are extremely wordy**
- **Language is vague and could be confusing**

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.)

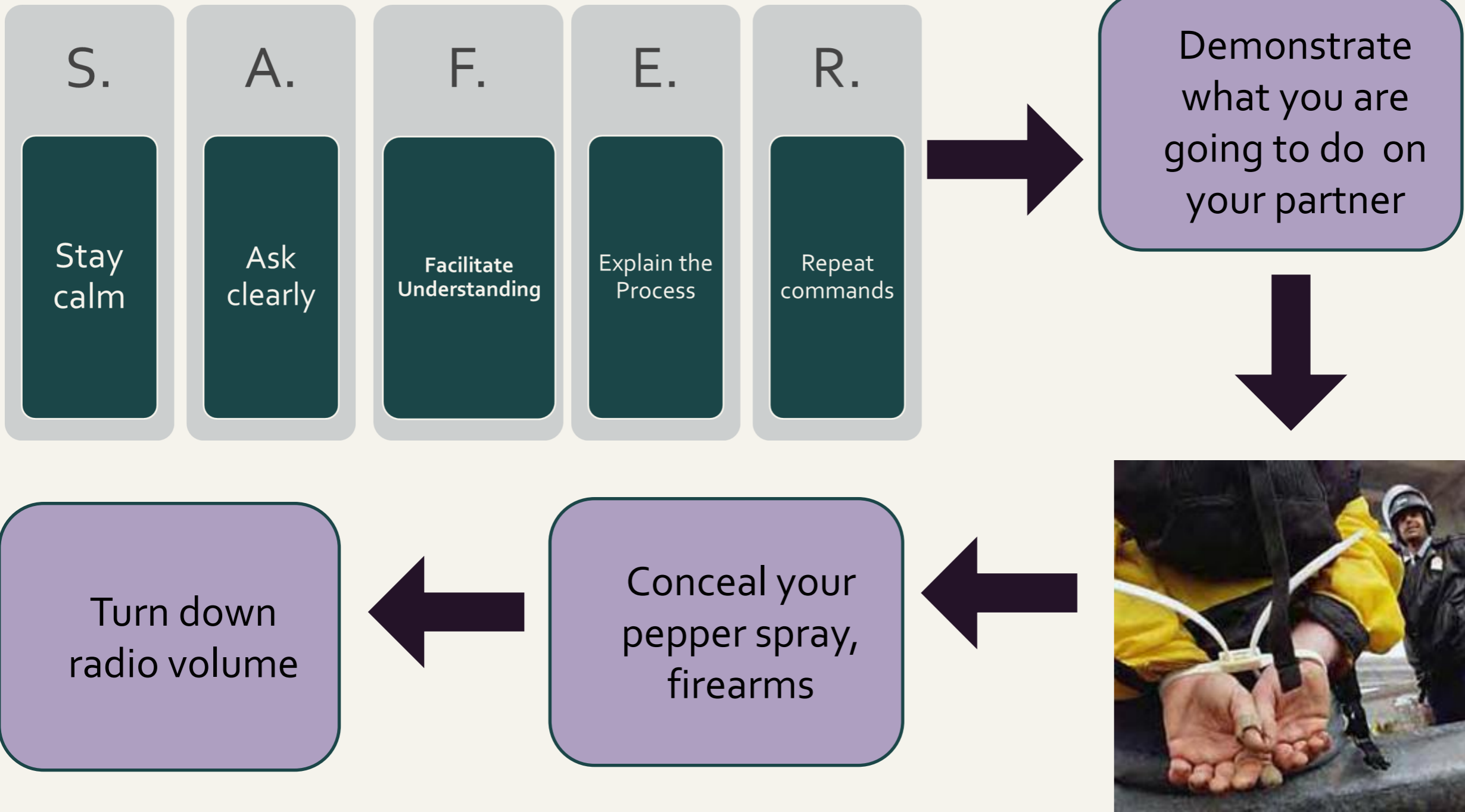
Additional Considerations

Language Difficulty
May Play a Role

May Need Extra Time
to Process Information

Consider Item Fixation

CUSTODY/ARREST



TRANSPORT



To decrease anxiety:

Turn down radio volume

Turn off siren

TRANSPORT (CONT.)

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

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

PROCESSING



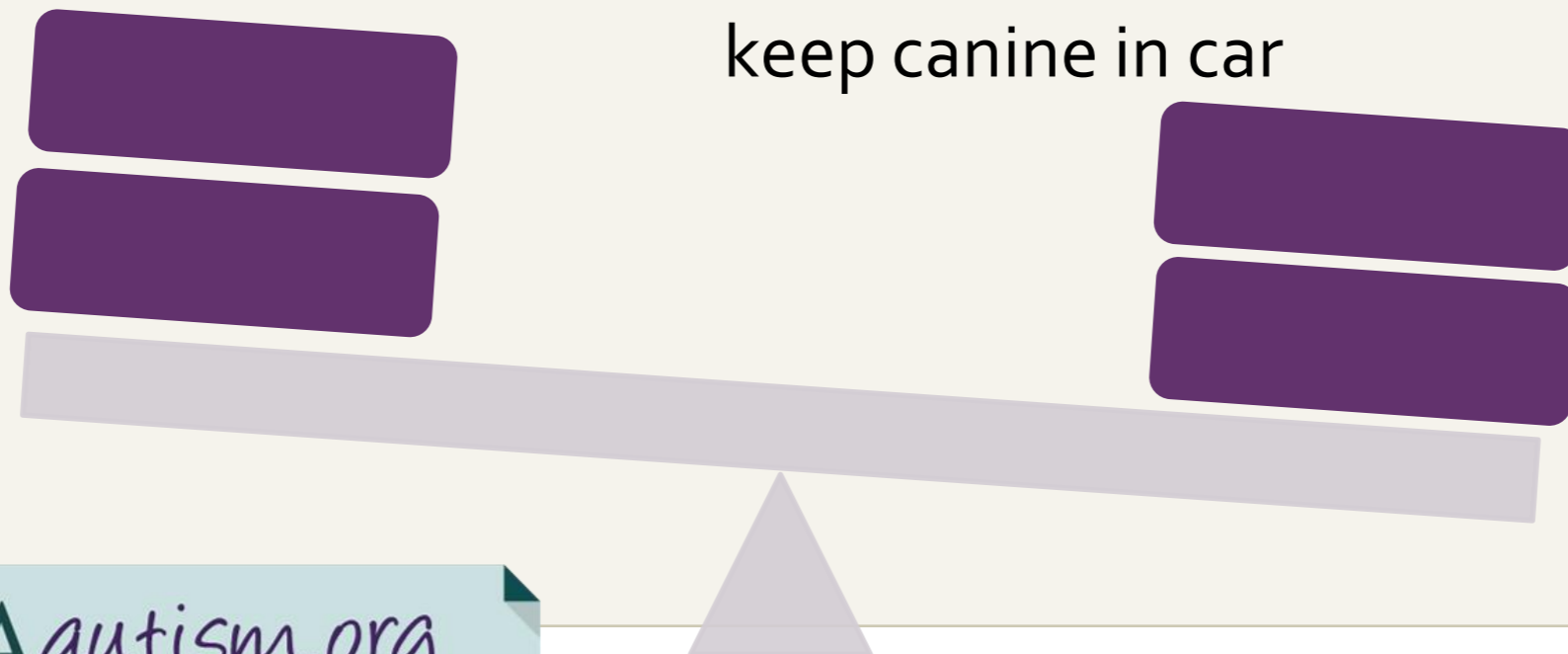
Fingerprinting/swabbing
may present sensory issues for an individual with autism

THE DO'S FOR A POSITIVE INTERACTION

Don'ts

Do's

- Do maintain a safe distance
- Do look for autism identifiers (bracelet, card)
- Do remain calm
- Do reassure that you are there to help
- Do model the behavior you are requesting
- Do turn down/off radio, siren, lights and keep canine in car

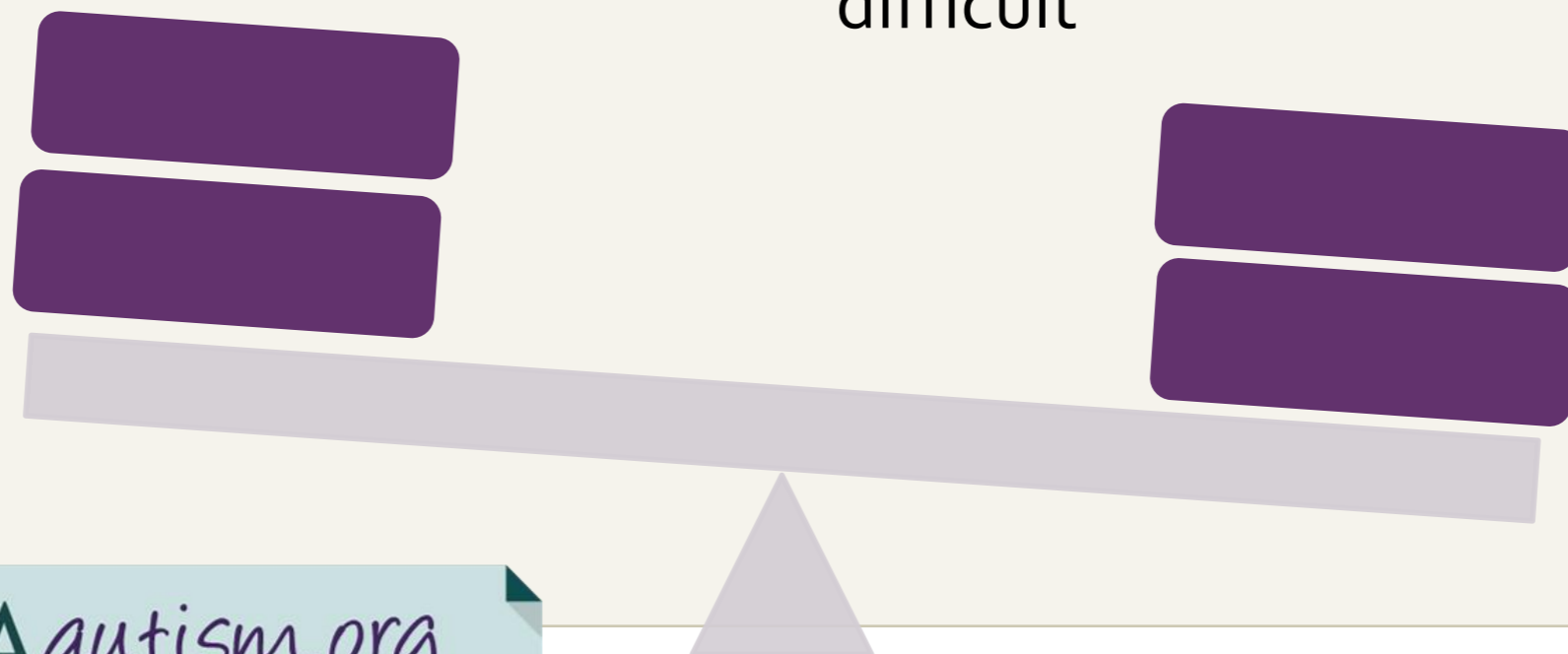


Do's CONTINUED

Don'ts

Do's

- Do ask if they are hurt
- Do use pictures or visuals if possible
- Do ask if they have autism
- Do recognize that change is very difficult



AND THE DON'TS

Don'ts

- Don't stop repetitive behavior if not injuring self or others
- Don't touch the individual
- Don't take preferred items or objects if not dangerous
- Don't use quick or sudden movements
- Don't give too many commands or choices
- Don't interpret their silence or failure to respond as non-compliance

Do's



DON'TS CONTINUED

Don'ts

- Don't force eye contact
- Don't assume lack of eye contact means deception

Do's



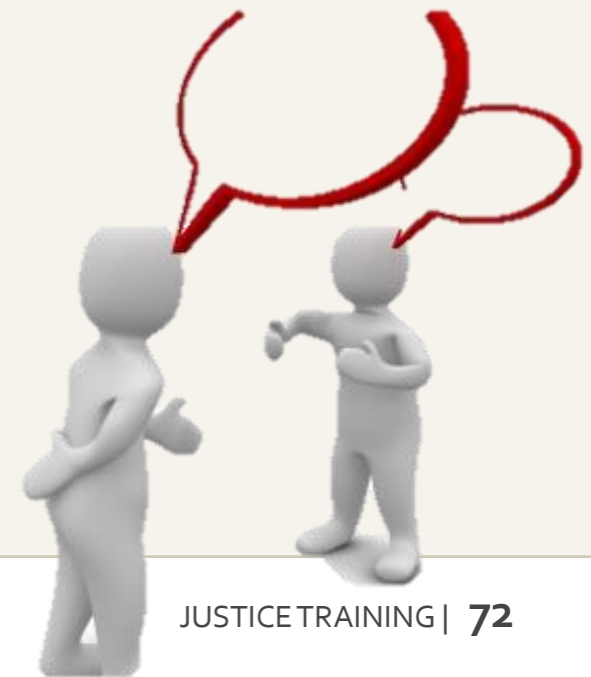
De-escalation techniques that may help resolve a crisis:

- ❖ Attempt to reduce stimulation
- ❖ Keep your voice calm
- ❖ Avoid overreacting
- ❖ Listen to what the person is communicating
- ❖ Do not argue or contradict the person
- ❖ Express support and concern
- ❖ Do not force eye contact
- ❖ Do not prevent, block ritualistic / repetitive behavior, unless behavior is dangerous



De-escalation techniques that may help resolve a crisis:

- ❖ Keep stimulation level low
- ❖ Move slowly approach from the front
- ❖ Offer options instead of contingencies or taking control. Use First / Then approach
- ❖ Avoid touching the person unless you ask permission
- ❖ Be person and supportive
- ❖ Give verbal or visual cues before initiating any action
- ❖ Give the person space



Communication in Crisis Situations

- ❖ Keep in mind that behavior, verbal or nonverbal, can be extremely powerful.
- ❖ Some individuals with ASD may not be able to speak; however, they still communicate.
- ❖ Communication methods can include: gestures, motor movements, boards, talkers, facial expressions, and vocalizations to name a few.
- ❖ Keep in mind that for all people (both verbal and nonverbal) behavior can be a powerful means to express a need, feeling, or preference.



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: CHALLENGES



Open ended questions may be challenging



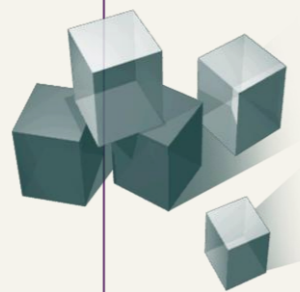
“Chatting” may be difficult due to language deficits



Individuals with autism may be rigid in their thoughts and behavior



Eliciting empathy may be a challenge



Cognitive behavioral skill building techniques may not be as effective for someone with autism.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Tools/Strategies for Motivational Interviewing



Positive reinforcement versus confrontation will be the best motivator



Find some type of activity, hobby, interest that the person has and use that as a motivator.



Make an appropriate referral to an expert who has experience working with people living with autism.



Take into account the impact autism has in all areas when developing a case plan.

INTAKE INTERVIEW



SEEKING AN AUTISM REFERRAL



County Psychologist or
Standard Referral
Process

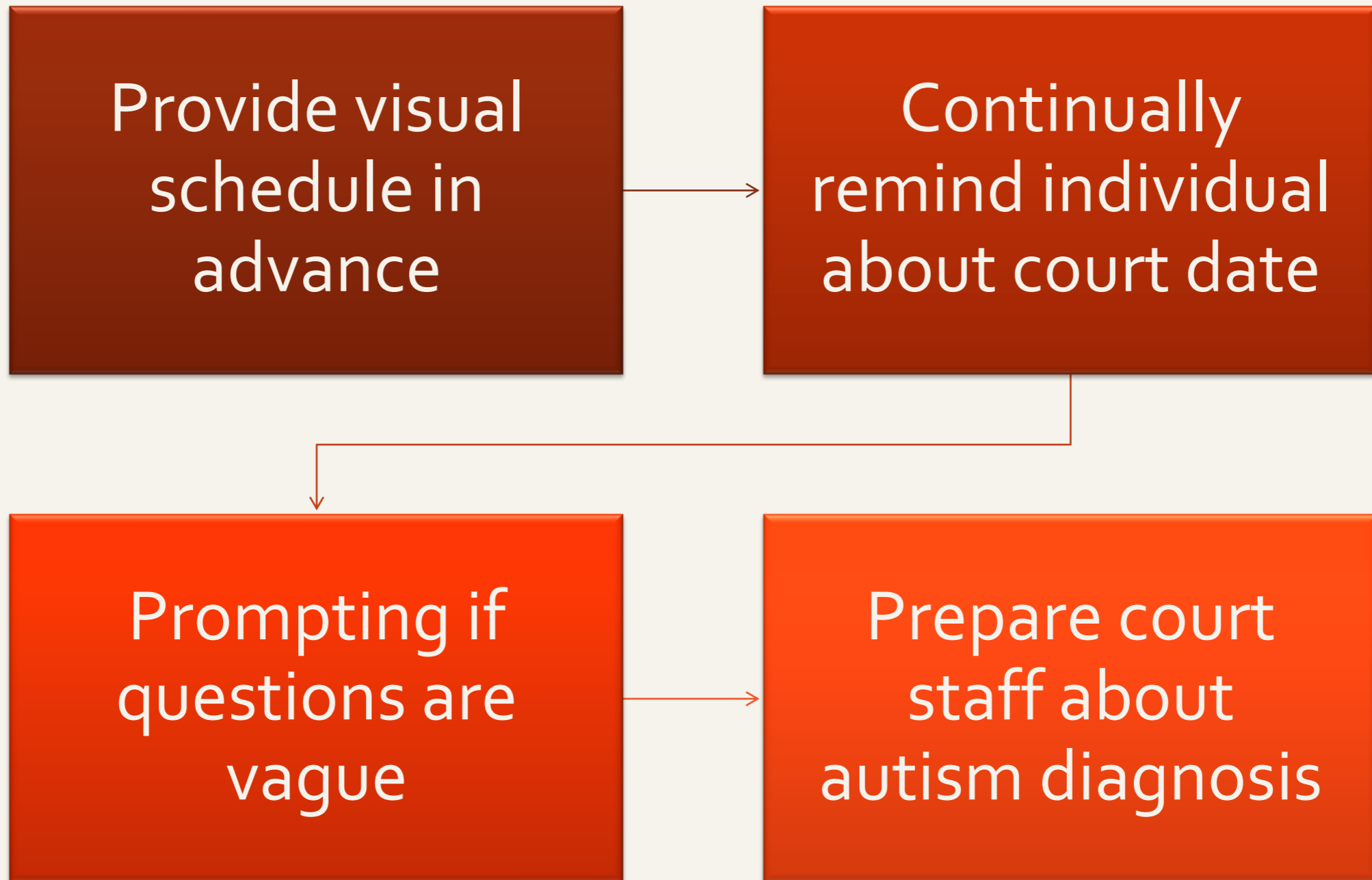
ASERT Resource
Center
877-231-4244

APPEARING IN COURT



APPEARING IN COURT (CONT.)

Tools/Strategies for Supporting Individual in Court



DETENTION/PRISON: INTAKE

Aspects of the Intake Process may be stressful and challenging

- Strip search
- Exam
- Urinalysis
- Questioning
- Locking doors

May need a quiet room to decompress

Provide warning and visual process if possible

DETENTION/PRISON: NEW ROUTINE

Tools/Strategies for Coping with a New Routine

Daily Schedule			
1	arrive at school	7	Journal
2	check in	8	P.E.
3	reading	9	lunch
4	writing	10	art
5	math	11	shared reading
6	recess	12	bus



DETENTION/PRISON: NEW ROUTINE

Tools/Strategies for Easing Transition



Allow individual to shower alone or with few others around



Provide extra supervision in the gym



Allow individual to be in the front or back of the line



Allow for alone time after group activities



Assign appropriate chores

DETENTION/PRISON: NEW ROUTINE

Tools/Strategies for Easing Transition

(CONT.)



During room search, try to keep the room as it was



Understand, hygiene may be a challenge



Provide visuals as much as possible

DETENTION/PRISON: ATTENDING



Make staff aware of individual's diagnosis

Provide visual schedule and supports during school hours

Communicate with home school

Allow for breaks



RULES OF PROBATION

Be specific

- Provide examples
- Be literal

Provide Visuals

- Next to each rule

Sensory issues

- Electronic bracelet may be a challenge
- Consider community service options



TYPES OF WANDERING

Goal-Directed
Wandering

Fleeing/Bolting

Other

WANDERING 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

PLAN



Prepare



Learn



Advise



Notify

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

EATING AND FOOD SENSITIVITIES



Texture friendly foods

Consider the brand

Sensory friendly environment

What was eaten at home?

Have their favorites available

Specific utensils



CLOTHING



WRAP UP

DOING YOUR OWN RESEARCH

The amount of information on ASD available can be overwhelming.

Make informed decisions while doing your research.



ASAT
Online
www.asatonline.org

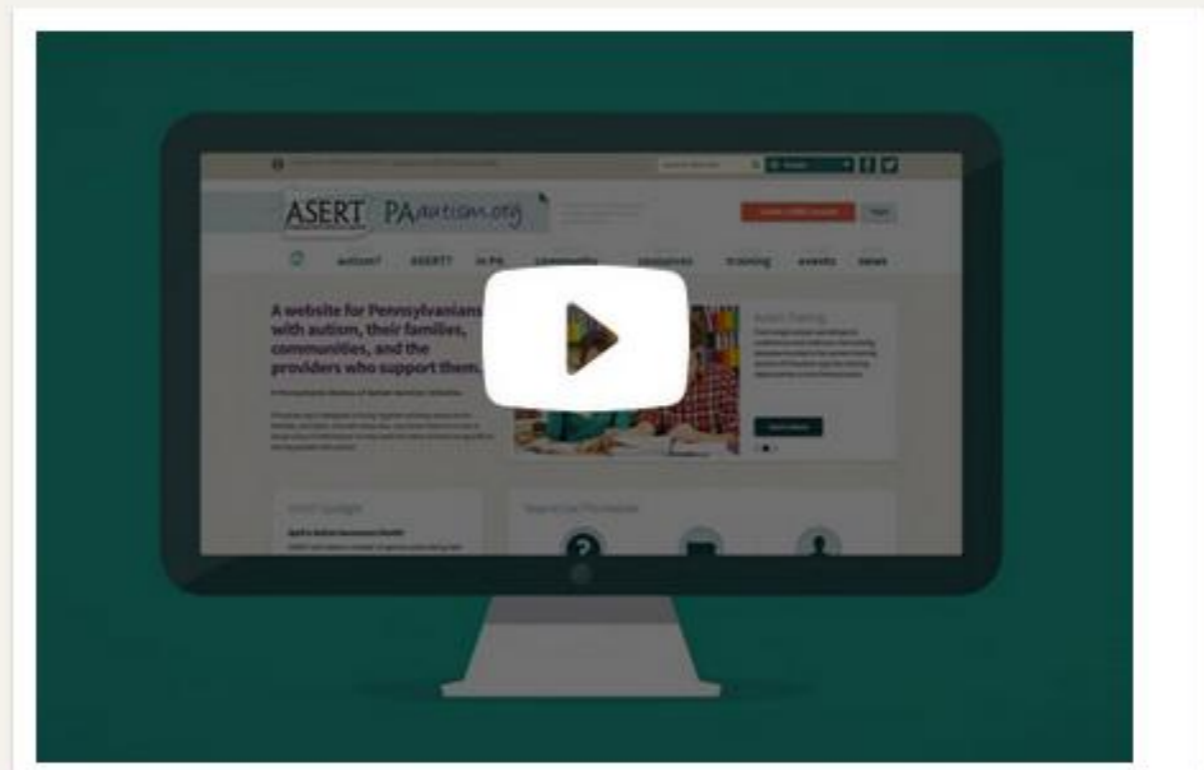
ASERT
www.paautism.org

CDC
www.cdc.gov

CREATING A PAAUTISM.ORG ACCOUNT



A website for Pennsylvanians with autism, their families, communities, and the providers who support them.



FOLLOW-UP TRAINING?



Email us!
ASERT@drexel.edu

Call us!
215-571-3181 or
215-571-3449





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

877-231-4244

Website: www.PAautism.org

Email: info@PAautism.org

ASERT@drexel.edu

*ASERT is funded by the Bureau of Autism Services, PA
Department of Human Services*

