

**Developing an Understanding of the Hidden Curriculum for Learners with High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome**

A Lifespan Approach to Understanding Autistic Thought, The Rage Cycle, Avoiding Meltdowns, and Some Social Narrative Tools

*Courage to Risk Conference*

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**THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM**  
 Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations  
 Revised Edition  
 Melissa Reardon  
 Rhoda Schickel  
 Autism Asperger Publishing Company

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**A PEEK INTO HOW STUDENTS WITH AUTISM THINK**

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**

School Age

**SOME EXAMPLES**

Moore, S. (2002)

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**

**School Age**

Differences: Language Development, Language, Sensory, Motor Skills & Behavior

- Interpretation: Literal vs. Implied
- Pragmatics: Communicative intent

+ Question: Do **you** want to do that?  
*you or me?*

+ Question: Do you want to do **that**?  
*this or something else?*

+ Question: Do you **want** to do that?  
*self or other influenced?*

Moore, S. (2002), p. 13

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**

**School Age**

Differences - Social Interaction

- Conversation: Engaging
- Code of conduct: Turn-taking, personal space, appropriateness of topic
- Emotions: Different rather than non-feeling
- Change: Preparing for
- Peer to peer: Bullying
- 2/3rds. Rule: Developmental age is 2/3rds chronological age

Tony Attwood

Moore, S. (2002)

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**

**School Age**

Differences - Sensory

Shore, S. (2003)

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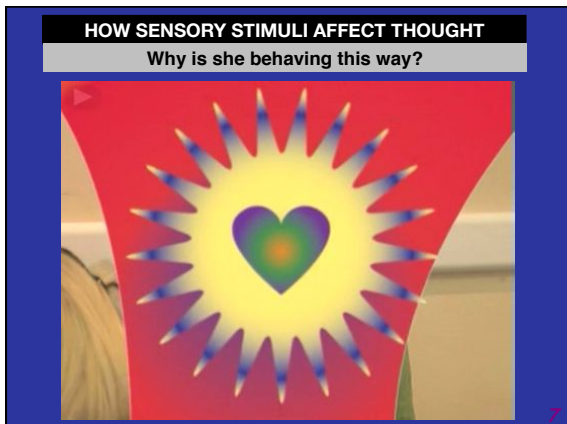
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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**  
School Age  
Differences - Motor Skills

• Fine:	Writing, dressing
• Gross:	General appearance, physical activities
• Visual-Motor:	Copying, sitting in a chair

- Coordination      - Balance  
- Hypotonia        - Dysgraphia  
- Motor Planning   - Visual-motor planning

Moore, S. (2002)

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**  
School Age  
Differences - Cognition (How We Think)

• Rigidity:	Black/ White
• Generalization:	Skills and concepts across settings
• Impulsivity:	Shoot, ready, aim
• Rote Memory:	≠ comprehension
• Theory of Mind:	What is the other thinking?
• Hyperlexia:	Decoding > comprehension

Moore, S. (2002)

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### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS

**School Age**  
Wildly Disparate Abilities - Behavior

- Anxiety/Stress: Unpredictable World
- Depression: Depression first appears (Wing, 1981)  
70% on antidepressants (Barnhill, 2000)  
Greater self-peer awareness (Barnhill & Myles, 2002)
- Emotional Modulation: Tantrums, Rage, Meltdowns

Myles, B., Adreon, D. (2001)

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### A CLOSER LOOK AT MY PLACEMENT ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM – 10

AGE	0	1.5	2.5	4	6	8	10	13	19
<b>E</b>	Typical development	Autism bomb hits	Putnam evaluation of atypical development	Enter Putnam	Kindergarten	Cracking rocks	Concern about dropping the letter "e."		
<b>V</b>	Turns over at 8 days	Withdrawal from environment	Condition improves to "average"	Condition improves to "average"	Social & academic difficulties	Special interests in astronomy and weather			
<b>E</b>	Rapid physical and motor development	Tantrums	Strong autistic tendencies	The wonderful world of switch motors	Discovered making a mess of myself while eating HRP chicken	Teacher concerns for reading and math skills	My friend says "he feels like a pizza" and I argue with him that he does not look like a pizza and probably does not feel like one either		
<b>N</b>			Early intervention from parents who refuse reconstructions	Echolalia and autism					
<b>T</b>									
<b>S</b>									

Literal Thought

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### THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM - COMMUNITY

Peter Gerhardt (personal communication, April 2004)

#### THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations

Brinda Myles  
Melissa Trammis  
Brinda Schuman

Autism Asperger Publishing Company

http://www.esoterically.net/log/archives/2003\_01.html

Sam arrives after Bob. What two rules did he break?

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**WHERE DO WE FIND  
HIDDEN CURRICULUM?**

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**THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM**

Do you have the time?	I should have told you, but...
Get off my back!	It should be obvious that...
Do you have the time?	Everyone knows that...
Do not pick your nose.	Common sense tells us that...
Shut up!	No one ever...
Get out of here!	
Feeling blue	
Put a lid on it.	
Talk to the hand	

Adapted from Myles, B., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. (2004). *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

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**THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM - COMMUNITY**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>With Parents</b>	<b>Teen Friends</b>
• Why are you at the library?	To get a book	Socialization, pretend to look for book, laugh
• How long are you there?	Long enough to get a book	Hours, until closing or getting kicked out
• How loudly do you talk?	Quiet voice or whisper	Loud as possible w/o being caught
• Is it fun?	Tolerable - barely	Absolutely

Adapted from Myles, B., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. (2004). *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

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**THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM - WORKPLACE**

Official/ unofficial organization chart

Lunch hour

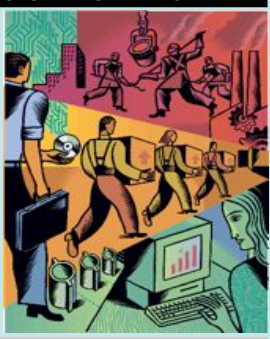
Casual dress

The customer is always right

Use of business resources such as e-mail

Who should be avoided?

Disagreements with superiors



Adapted from Myles, B., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. (2004). *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

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**SOCIAL NARRATIVES AND OTHER TECHNIQUES**

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**SOCIAL STORIES – by Carol Gray**

Using vignettes to describe how social interactions work employing...

**Descriptive Sentences:** Background of situation

**Directive Sentences:** Suggests action and decode meanings

**Affirmative Sentences:** Suggests commonly shared values or opinions

- When the teacher asks a question, many students would like to provide an answer. *Descriptive*
- It's hard for a teacher to hear when several students try to answer at once. *Descriptive*
- Students in a classroom need to take turns talking. *Affirmative*
- When I want to answer a question that the teacher asks in class, I will try to sit quietly and raise my hand. *Directive*
- The teacher may call on me to answer or the teacher may give another student a turn at answering the question. *Descriptive*
- If the teacher does not call on me this time maybe next time she will ask me to answer her question. *Descriptive*

Adapted from Gray, C. *The new social story book*. Future Horizons

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**POWER CARDS** - Gagnon, E. (2001). AAPC

**Strategizing using these characteristics**

- The hero or role model: Motivating, build on relationship
- Special interest: Motivating, nonthreatening

**Components of these strategies**

- Brief scenario using hero or special interest and the behavior or situation that is presenting difficulty plus a relevant picture or graphic.
  - 1 — Attempts solution to problem and succeeds.
  - 2 — Solution presented in 3-5 manageable steps for the student to try.
- The Power Card (size of a trading card, bookmark, or business card).
  - Aids in generalization.

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**Madeline Teaches Becca How to Remain Calm**

**Power Card**

**Scenario:** About 15 minutes into her weekly music lesson, Becca, a 15 year old girl with AS consistently throws herself into a coach crying that she "will never be able to do it" and "that is no use." After 10 minutes, Becca's mother calms her down and the lesson continues with a doll named "Madeline". This behavior occurs during other activities too.

**Task:** Develop a Power Card to address Becca's tantram.

**Analysis:** Behavior                      Possible cause  
 Tantrum 15 minutes                      Lack of ability to sense  
 into the music lesson                      and handle frustration

**Motivator:** Special Interest/  
Hero  
 The doll Madeline

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**Madeline Teaches Becca How to Remain Calm**

**Power Card**

Madeline wants you to remember to choose one of the following ways to help calm yourself if you get frustrated when you have difficulty answering a question. If one of the ways does not work try another. If you need help to answer the question this time, perhaps next time you can do it all by yourself.

- Take 5 deep breaths exhaling slowly after each breath.
- Close your eyes and slowly count backwards from 10 to 1.
- Get a hug from Mommy.
- Take a short break.



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**S**eek... to understand all aspects of the hidden curriculum

**O**bserve... what people are doing and NOT doing

**L**isten... to what people are saying and NOT saying

**V**ocalize... questions and check for understanding

**E**ducate... teach and learn... knowledge is power

Adapted from Myles, B., Trautman, M., & Scheivan, R. (2004). *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

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**S**top... what you are doing in order to...

**O**bserve... what people are doing and NOT doing in order to...

**D**eliberate... to determine the next step of...

**A**ct... based on the information you now have.

Adapted from Bock, M. A. (2001). SODA strategy: Enhancing the social skills of youngsters with Asperger Syndrome. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 36(5), 272-278.

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**SOCCSS**

Situations – Options – Consequences – Choices – Strategies – Simulation

Adapted from Jan Roosa (1995) in Myles, B., Trautman, M., and Scheivan, R. (2004). *The hidden curriculum*. Shawnee Mission: AAPC. p. 22

**Situation**  
**Who:** Sarah and Kassi  
**When:** During math class  
**What:** Kassi pokes Sarah when the teacher is writing on the board. When Sarah pushes Kassi away is when the teacher turns around to see Sarah acting out.  
**Why:** Kassi seems to like the way Sarah wiggles when poked.

Options	Consequences	Choice
Ignore Kassi's poking.	Kassie could continue with her poking. Kassie might stop poking Sarah.	
Punch Kassie in the nose.	Kassie might stop but Sarah might also get into trouble for fighting in class.	
Tell Kassie to stop; if she doesn't, tell the teacher.	The teacher would tell Kassie to stop. The teacher would tell Sarah to ignore her.	✓

**Strategy - Plan of Action**  
 The next time Kassie pokes Sarah, Sarah will tell her to stop. If Kassie doesn't stop, Sarah tells the teacher.

**Simulation - Practice**  
 A. Visually B. Verbally  
**C. Role-playing**

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### Self-Initiated Individual Education Plan (Cont.)

A Guide to the Individualized Education Program  
Office of Special Education Programs, 16 June 2002.  
<[http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSE/Products/IEP\\_Guide/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSE/Products/IEP_Guide/)>

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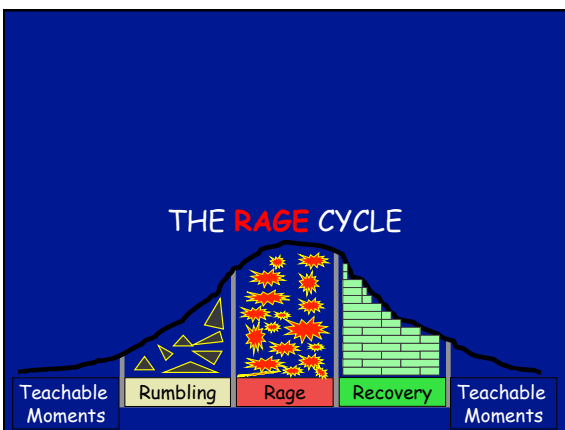
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### THE RAGE CYCLE

STAGE	COMMON BEHAVIORS		
<b>Rumbling</b>	Increased verbal behaviors such as swearing, nonsense noises, unusual changes in vocal volume, or making threats	Increased stereotypical behavior such as grimacing, fidgeting, rocking, flapping, tearing paper, or tapping foot	Increased movement, including pacing, walking in circles, or leaving the room
<b>Rage</b>	Verbal behaviors such as screaming	Emotional expressions such as explosive impulsiveness and rage at self	Physical behaviors such as destroying property, biting, hitting, kicking, and self-injury
<b>Recovery</b>	Sleeping	Denial of rage behaviors and withdrawal into fantasy	Apologizing

Adapted from Myles, B., & Southwick, J. *Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments: Practical Solutions for Tantrums, Rage and Meltdowns*. Autism Asperger Publishing Company

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THE RAGE CYCLE	
STAGE	POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS
Rumbling	Antiseptic bouncing Quiet room with work Walk and no talk
Rage	Keep child, other and possessions safe <b>Keep child, other and possessions safe</b>
Recovery	Keep demands very low Favorite activity <b>Not a time for social autopsies or other discussions of behavior</b>

Adapted from Myles, B., & Southwick, J. *Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments: Practical Solutions for Tantrums, Rage and Meltdowns*. Autism Asperger Publishing Company 28

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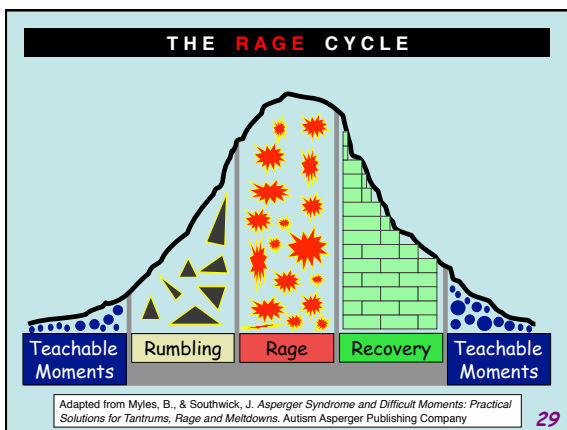
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IMPROVING SELF-ASSESSMENT		
Emotion	Body Signals	Possible Activities
 <b>Happy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pleasant feeling</li> <li>Smiling and laughing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any of your favorites: Color, ride your bike, dance to music</li> </ul>
 <b>Neutral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calm feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit quietly</li> <li>Read a book</li> </ul>
 <b>Sad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moving slowly</li> <li>Feeling tired</li> <li>Frowning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cry</li> <li>Talk about how you feel</li> </ul>

Adapted from Myles, B., & Southwick, J. *Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments: Practical Solutions for Tantrums, Rage and Meltdowns*. Autism Asperger Publishing Company 30

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**INCIDENTAL HIDDEN CURRICULUM RESOURCES**

The collage features four book covers. On the left is 'How Rude! The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out' by Alex J. Packer, Ph.D. In the center is 'As a Gentleman Would Say: Responses to Life's Important Situations' by John Bridges and Bryan Curtis. On the top right is 'A Little Book of Manners: Courtesy & Kindness for Young Ladies' by Emilie Barnes, illustrated by Michael Spinks. On the bottom right is 'A Little Book of Manners for Boys' by Bob and Emilie Barnes, also illustrated by Michael Spinks. A small number '31' is in the bottom right corner.

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**SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION**

*"Brings unusual clarity to some of the most confusing issues surrounding neurotypical disorder and its treatment."*

# Understanding Neurotypicals FOR DUMMIES

- Learn to decode nonspectrum behavior
- Educate children on radical acceptance of differences
- Successfully communicate without eye contact

**A Reference for the Rest of Us!**

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**WHAT MIGHT BE LIKE TO HAVE AUTISM?**

Let us find out...

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**DISABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Now... Let's tell a story in a round-robin fashion**

Instructions:

All you need to do is relate your sentence to the previous person's sentence.

Adapted from: Lavoie, R. (1989). *Understanding Learning Disabilities: How difficult can this be?* (Videotape) Greenwich, CT: Peter Rosen Productions.

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**DISABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Now... Let's tell a story in a round-robin fashion again EXCEPT**

- This time... no words can contain the letter "n"
  - No "n" at the beginning, middle, or end

Adapted from: Lavoie, R. (1989). *Understanding Learning Disabilities: How difficult can this be?* (Videotape) Greenwich, CT: Peter Rosen Productions.

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**SUCCESS WITH AUTISM**

**Definition**

If you are productive and fulfilled with your life you are probably successful

*It's all in the journey*

*You are exactly where you need to be right now*

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