

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Inclusion Works Lunch & Learn Series

The Future of Autism and Employment: Lessons Learned from TEACCH

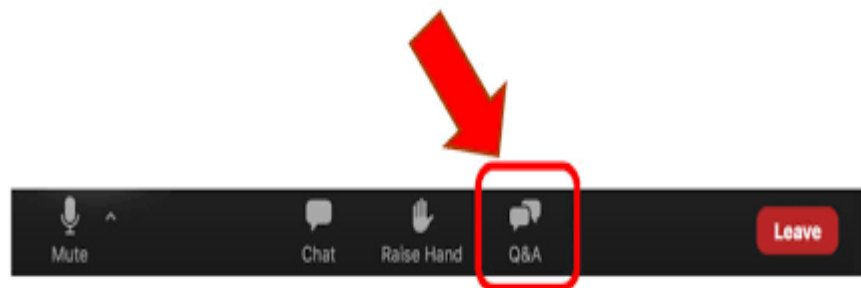
Mike Chapman, Director TEACCH Supported Employment

April 15, 2026

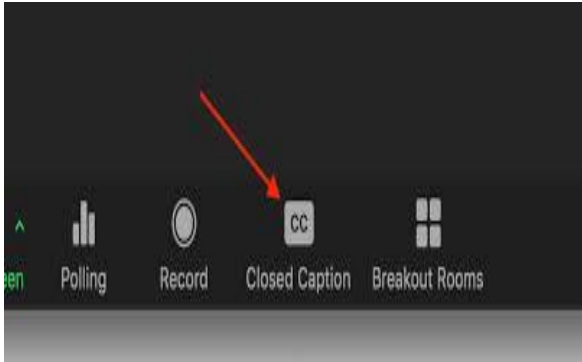


Housekeeping

- Reminders about the webinar technology:
 - Please make sure you are using a computer or smart phone connected to the internet, and the audio function is on, and the volume is turned up.
 - Please make sure your microphone is muted for the duration of the call unless you are speaking or asking questions.
 - Questions can be submitted any time during the presentation using the “Q&A” box located on your control panel, and we will answer as many questions as time allows after the presentation.



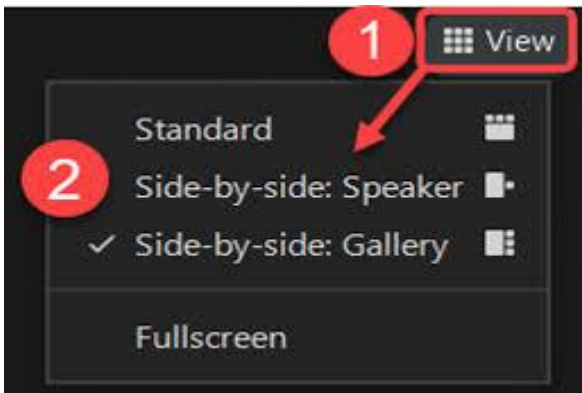
Housekeeping



- American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Closed-Captioning
 - ASL Interpreters and Closed-Captioning options will be available for today's event.
 - For closed-captioning options select the "Closed Caption" feature located on your control panel.

Intérpretes en lengua de signos americana (ASL) y subtítulos:

Habrá intérpretes de ASL y opciones de subtítulos disponibles para el evento de hoy. Para opciones de subtítulos, seleccione la función "Subtítulos" ubicada en su panel de control.



- Adjusting Video Layout and Screen View
 - Select the "View" feature located in the top-right hand corner of your screen.

Agenda

1. **Introductions**
2. **Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder**
3. **Trends & Progress**
4. **How to Access Support**
5. **Q & A**



Introductions



Michael Chapman, Director
TEACCH Employment Services



Autism and the Employment World

S. Michael Chapman
Director of Employment Services



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

TEACCH

Autism Program

Services Across the Lifespan

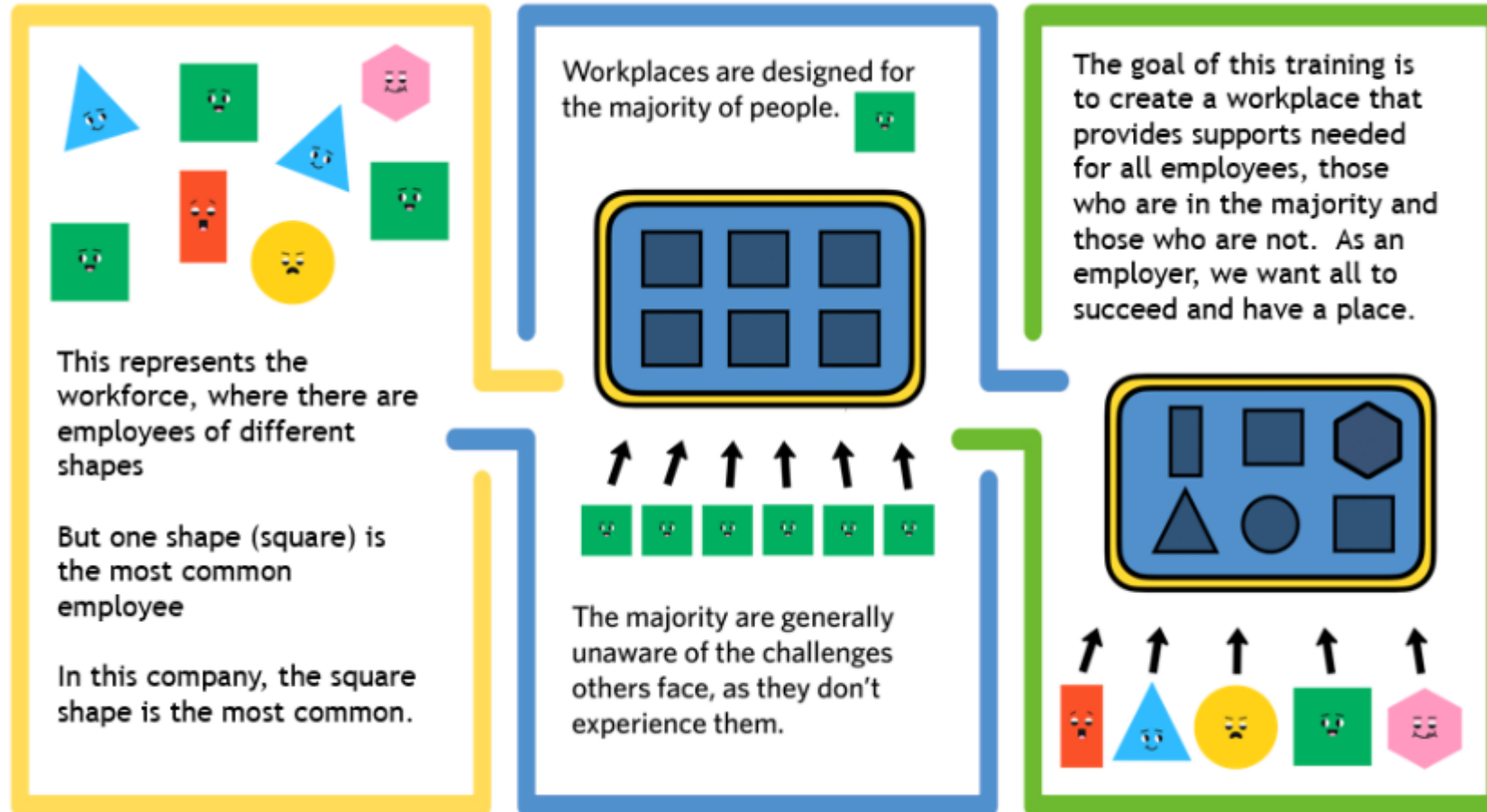
Language Use During the presentation

- ▶ **Autism** - Autism is a condition that impacts how individuals experience the world. Many individuals prefer this term without the word “disorder” to describe autism to move away from negative images. Autism and ASD refer to the same developmental disability.
- ▶ **Autistic** – Using the word “autistic” to describe someone is using identity-first language. Many self-advocates prefer identify-first language that emphasizes that autism is a positive part of their identity.
- ▶ **Individual with Autism** – Person-first language. Many professionals who work with individuals with autism prefer to put the person before their disability. Parents of children sometimes prefer person-first to emphasize autism is not their child’s sole identity.
- ▶ **ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder** is the label given by medical providers. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) terminology for the neurodevelopment disorder to emphasize that there is a “spectrum” in type and severity of individual experiences.
- ▶ **Asperger’s** - While no longer an official diagnosis, some autistic individuals prefer using this term to describe their diagnosis of autism that is applicable to individuals with relatively unimpaired language and intelligence.
- ▶ **Individual on the autism spectrum**- A neutral way to describe someone on the autism spectrum.

Neurotypes

- ▶ The range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits regarded as part of normal variation in the human population.
- ▶ Neurological variations are known and valued as any other human variation.
- ▶ These variations can include:
 - ▶ Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD or dyspraxia)
 - ▶ Dyslexia
 - ▶ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - ▶ Dyscalculia
 - ▶ Autistic Spectrum
 - ▶ Tourette Syndrome (TS), and others

Neurotypes in the Workplace

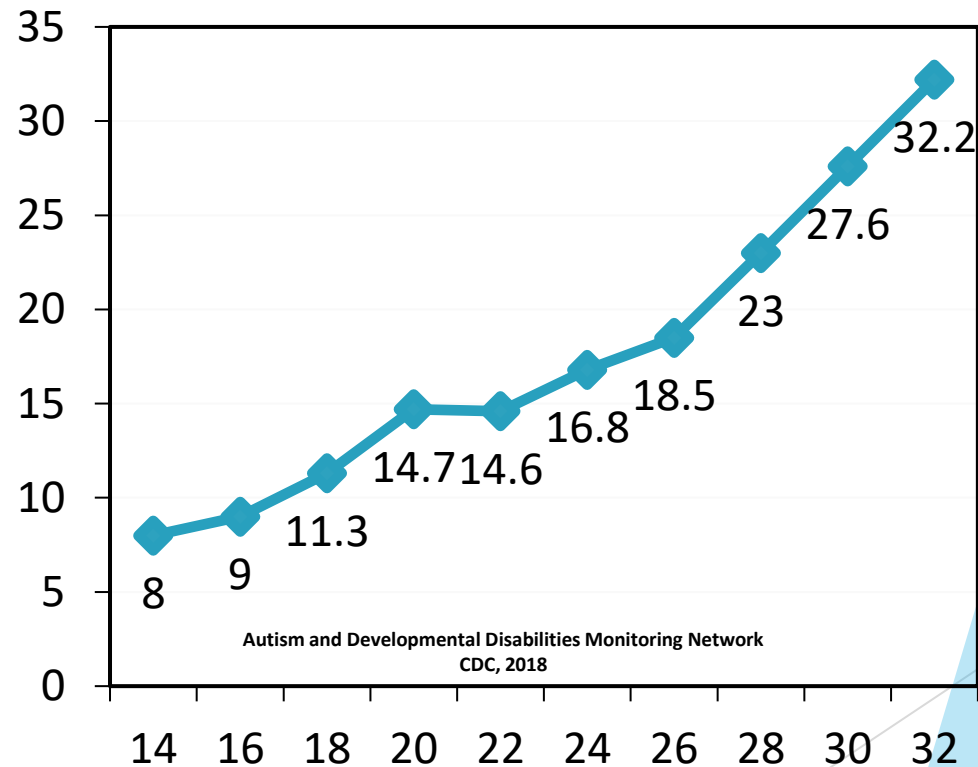


Trajectory of Autism

- ▶ The rate of Autism increased from 1 in 150 in 2002 to 1 in 31 in 2022.*
- ▶ Those identified for this data in 2002 are now 31 years old.
- ▶ We can expect a 300% increase in transition age youth on the Spectrum from 2012 (when first group reach 18) to 2032 (when current group reaches 18).
- ▶ X axis, year they surveyed groups turn 18
- ▶ Y axis, number per 1000

* Note that the data they use for rate, is usually 3-4 years behind the actual calendar year

Prevalence per 1000 of
18-year old in Year ending



People on the Spectrum and Employment.

- ▶ 70,000 to 120,000 enter adulthood every year
- ▶ 35% of young adults on the spectrum are attending college. (Shattuck *et al.* 2012)
 - ▶ 24,500-42,000 entering college
- ▶ Anecdotal data reports 75-85% of college graduates on the spectrum are unemployed
 - ▶ 3,675-6,300 will find a job

Autism Learning Differences



Implications for Understanding

- ▶ Individuals on the Spectrum learn differently
- ▶ Learning differences can create unique strengths and challenges
- ▶ Employment should focus on valuing strengths and supporting challenges



Learning Differences

Implicit learning

Theory of Mind

Executive Function

Sensory perception

Processing speed

Stress and Distress responses.

Learning Differences
Understanding Social Nuances (Implicit Learning) Social Cues are interpreted differently Needs assistance understanding the “unwritten social rules” Communication differences, receptive and expressive
Perspective Taking (Theory of Mind) interpret comments or actions differently than others do Understanding other people’s emotions and perspectives
Organization Time Management (Executive Function) Time management (meeting deadlines, arriving to meetings on time) may be a challenge Organizing materials and workspace may be a challenge Larger projects can be overwhelming
Sensory Perceptions (Hypersensitivity) May find it hard to focus due to: Loud or irregular sounds (beeping; hum of fluorescent lights) Strong smells (perfume, cooking food) Bright lights (fluorescent lights, blinking lights)
Additional Signs of Learning Difference
Processing Speed May need extra time to think through a response during conversations as a result of the learning differences described above
Distress May show distress as a result of the learning differences described above

Summary: Learning Styles in

Strengths

- ▶ Explicit Learning
 - ▶ rules and routines
- ▶ Visual Information
- ▶ Focus on details
- ▶ Restricted Interests
 - ▶ increased motivation

Differences (may need support)

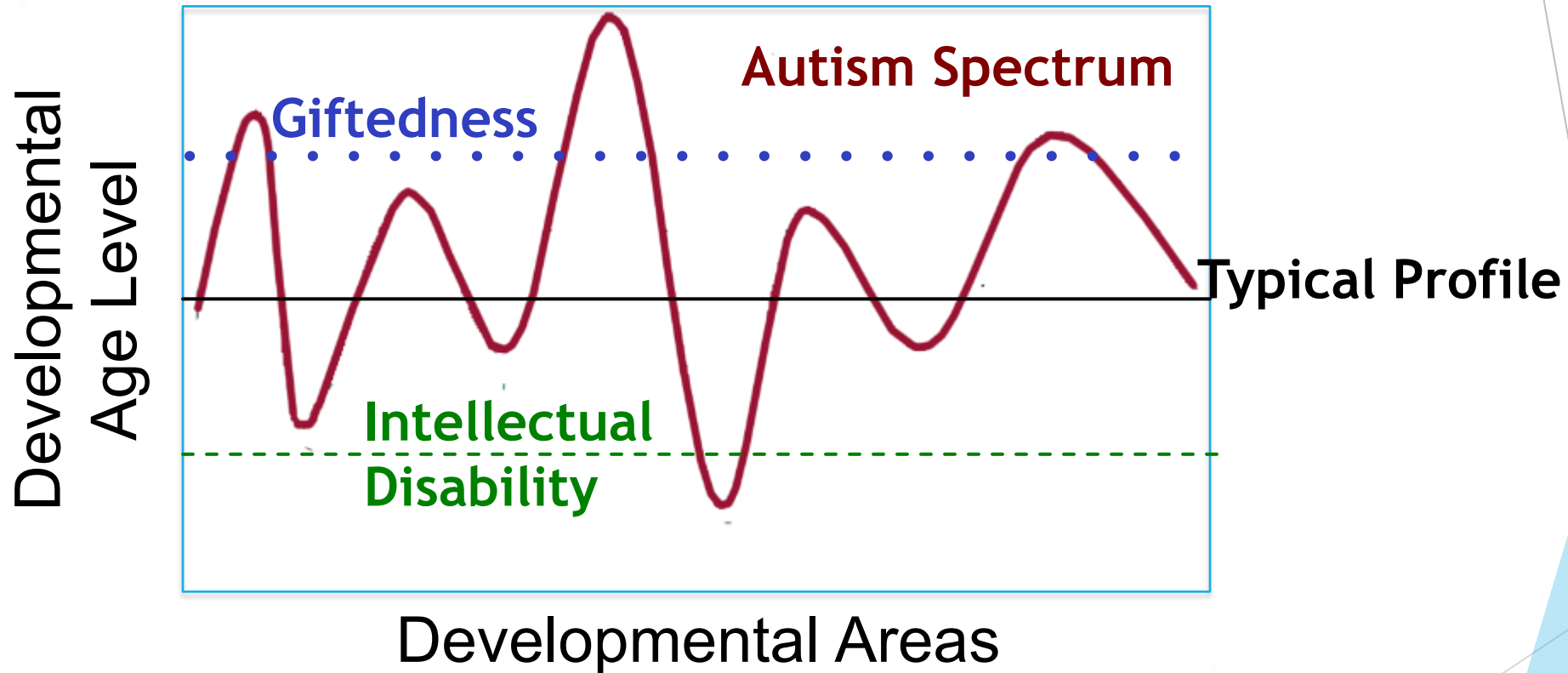
- ▶ Intuitive (Implicit) Learning
- ▶ Selective Attention
- ▶ Theory of Mind
- ▶ Executive Functioning
 - ▶ planning, organization, & time management



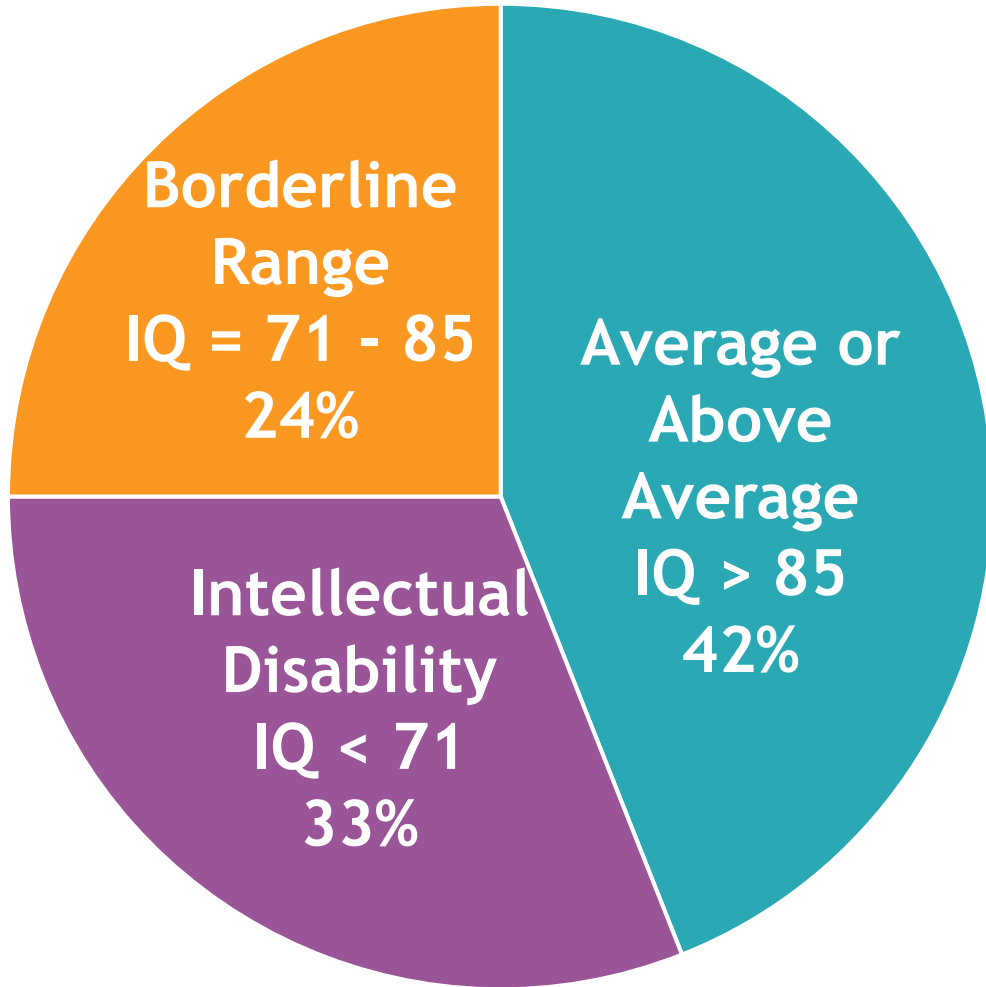
Learning Styles: Implication for Intervention

- ▶ Use direct (explicit) instruction to teach skills and to facilitate social understanding (implicit learning; auditory processing; multiple perspectives).
- ▶ Provide clear visual sequences to clarify expectations, promote planning and organization, and denote passage of time (auditory processing; executive function).
- ▶ Modify the environment to reduce distractions and direct attention to important and relevant information (attention).
- ▶ Explicitly plan for and teach generalization strategies (implicit learning)

Uneven Patterns of Development

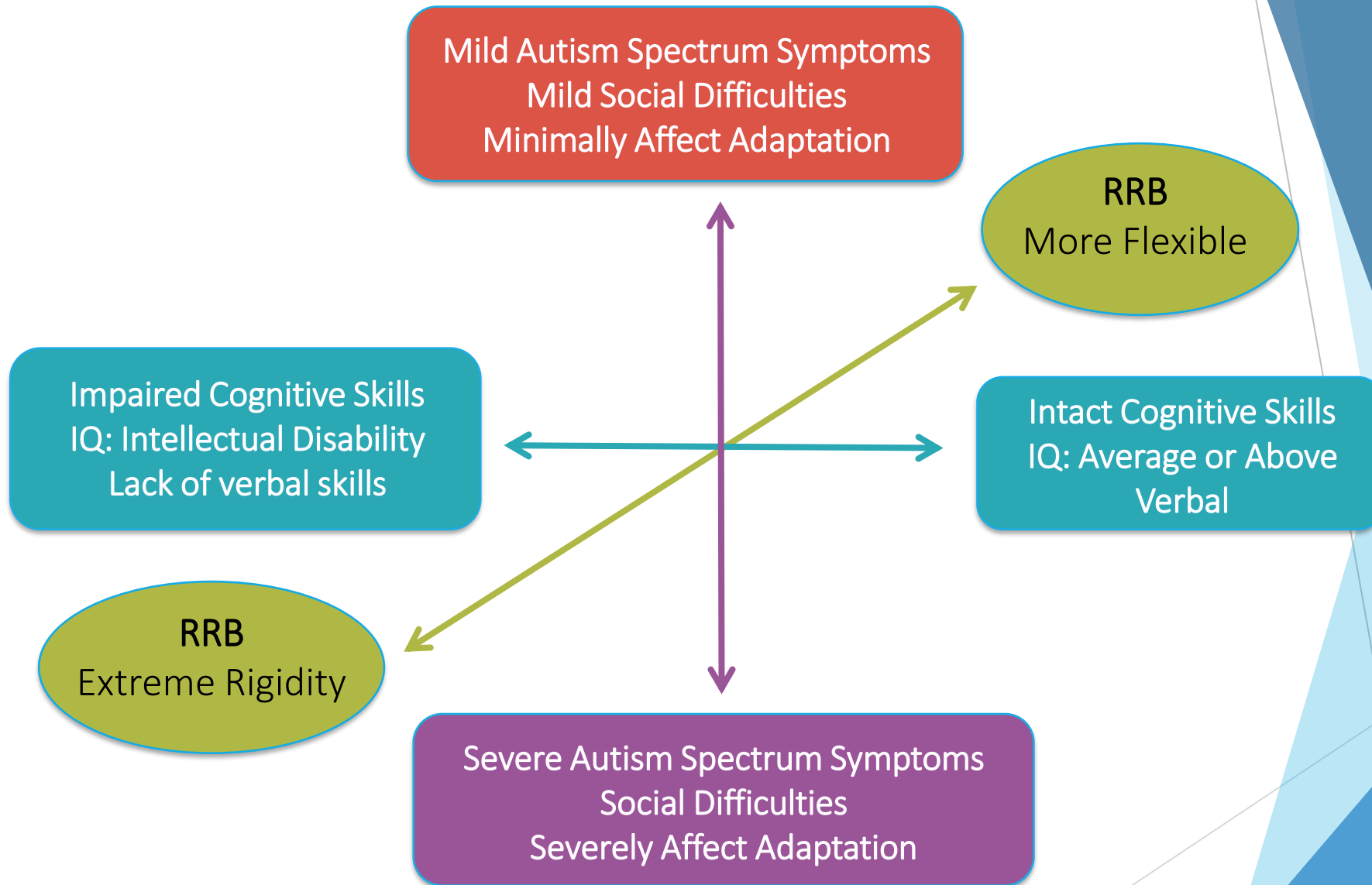


Intellectual Scores of Individuals on the Spectrum

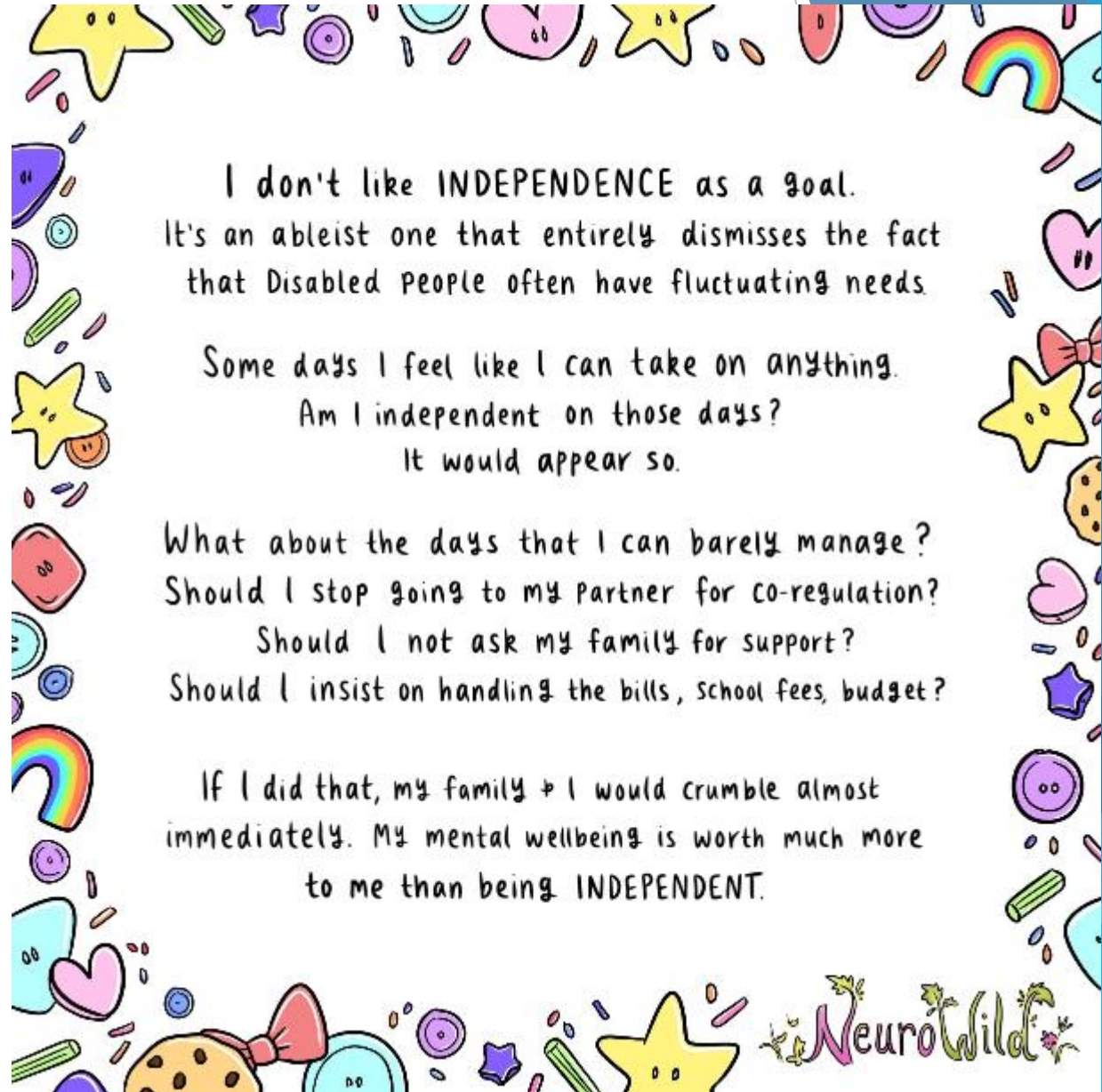


Decrease from 50%
with an
intellectual
disability from the
2002 cohort.

Autism and Developmental
Disabilities Monitoring
Network
CDC, 2020



Independence versus Interdependence



Independence Versus Interdependence

additional Comments from Previous slide's author

My personal opinion on being independent.

Note: not everyone will share this opinion and that's fine.

Note: this is absolutely not having a go at anyone who is independent or is striving to be.

These are my thoughts about myself being independent. And how much independence would actually cost me. And I wouldn't pay it.

Also, for many of us, independence is often not a realistic goal. What happens when we set unrealistic goals for ourselves? We end up disappointed and ashamed of ourselves, don't we?

I would prefer to have goals such as 'I will try to complete XYZ task (with assistance when required)'. If I try my best and can't do it, does that mean I'm a terrible, useless human? No. Just that I'm a human with fluctuating needs and abilities. If I get it done with help? Then I get it done. That's better than not getting it done.

Just my thoughts. Welcome to the rainbow brain.

This is from my Instagram @neurowild_

Hard Skills versus Soft Skills

- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ Office
- ▶ Service Industries
 - ▶ Food Service
 - ▶ Janitorial
 - ▶ Retail
- ▶ Laboratory
- ▶ Stocking/Warehouse
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Social Skills
- ▶ Independent Functioning
- ▶ Vocational Behaviors
- ▶ Leisure Skills

Employment Process

- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Job Development
- ▶ Job Site Training
- ▶ Long Term Support

Formal Assessment and Informal Assessments



What to look for during Informal Assessments

- ▶ Strengths
- ▶ Challenges
- ▶ Emerging skills
- ▶ Interests or motivators
- ▶ Learning style/differences
- ▶ Accommodations to address learning differences.

The Importance of Informal Assessment and Experiential Learning.

- ▶ Allows for assessment of current skills
- ▶ Traditional formal testing may not translate into functional vocational goals
- ▶ Easier to assess range of skills
- ▶ Can utilize a variety of strategies and materials to access skills
- ▶ Addresses generalization
- ▶ Assessment takes place in more natural settings

Job Development

- ▶ Locating Employment Options
- ▶ Making Contact with Employers
- ▶ Explain Autism
- ▶ Explain “Red Flags” in Resume
- ▶ Job Sampling
- ▶ Job Applications
- ▶ Breakout Jobs/Job Carving
- ▶ The Interview

Job Site Training

Physical Structure

- ▶ Physical structure refers to the way that we set up and organize the work areas; where we place the furniture and materials
 - ▶ Clear Physical and Visual boundaries
 - ▶ Minimize Visual and Auditory distractions

Physical Structure

Define a Location



Minimize Distractions



Job Site Training

- ▶ Physical Structure
- ▶ **Schedules**
- ▶ Visually tell the adult what activities or tasks he should do and in what sequence

What's next

Clean Yogurt
machine

Fill Silverware
Sink

Clean Dishes
Until 9:30

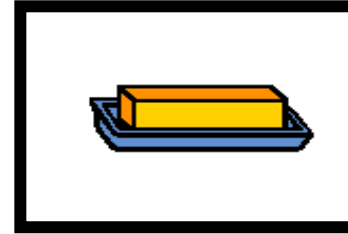
Take Out plates

Put Out Soup
Bowls

Finished

Clean Shelf with
soap and Water

Wipe Out Salad
Bar



Photos that move to an activity

More concrete, easier to
understand.

Job Site Training

- ▶ Physical Structure
 - ▶ Schedules
 - ▶ **Visual Instructions and Checklists**
- ▶ Visually tells the adult how to approach a task or in what sequence to complete a task

Book spine



Leave as much white area around numbers as the spine will allow. This makes the number easy to read.

Spine



If the spine is narrow, you may trim the label on sides top & bottom. This makes the number easy to read.

Book front



When the spine is too narrow & the label must be placed on front of the book, leave as much white area as possible. This makes the number easy to read.

Spine

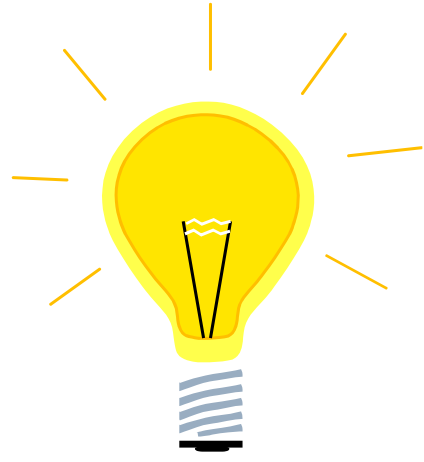


When the label must fit on the spine sideways, it is fine to trim close to the number on top & bottom. This makes the number easy to read.

Spacing 3 times between number groups will give you more white area above and below the call number.

Job Site Training

- ▶ Physical Structure
 - ▶ Schedules
 - ▶ Visual Instructions and Checklists
 - ▶ **Rules and Reminders**
- ▶ For those things we do not always have to use but need to remember.

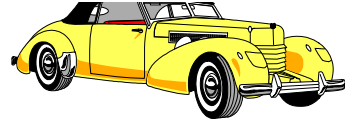


For Your Information

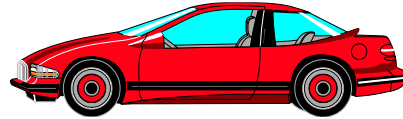
EVAN,
PLEASE BE CAREFUL NOT
TO RUN INTO RESIDENTS
WHEN ENTERING THE
DINING ROOM.

SAM'S RIDE TIME

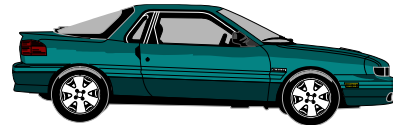
9:00-11:30
EARN 1 MINUTE



11:30 - 12:30
EARN 2 MINUTES



12:30-1:30
EARN 2 MINUTES



1:30-3:00
EARN 1 MINUTE

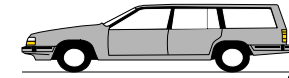


IF I FOLLOW MY SCHEDULE, I WILL EARN RIDE TIME.

I AM WORKING FOR A TRIP TO: Asheville

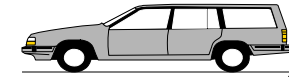
Sam's Ride Coupon

This coupon entitles me to ___ minutes of ride time



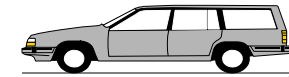
Sam's Ride Coupon

This coupon entitles me to ___ minutes of ride time



Sam's Ride Coupon

This coupon entitles me to ___ minutes of ride time



Job Site Training

- ▶ Physical Structure
 - ▶ Schedules
 - ▶ Visual Instructions and Checklists
 - ▶ Rules and Reminders
 - ▶ **Social Narratives**
- ▶ A visual way to present social situations and teach about different perspectives.
 - ▶ Gives the adult a strategy to use.

MACHINES

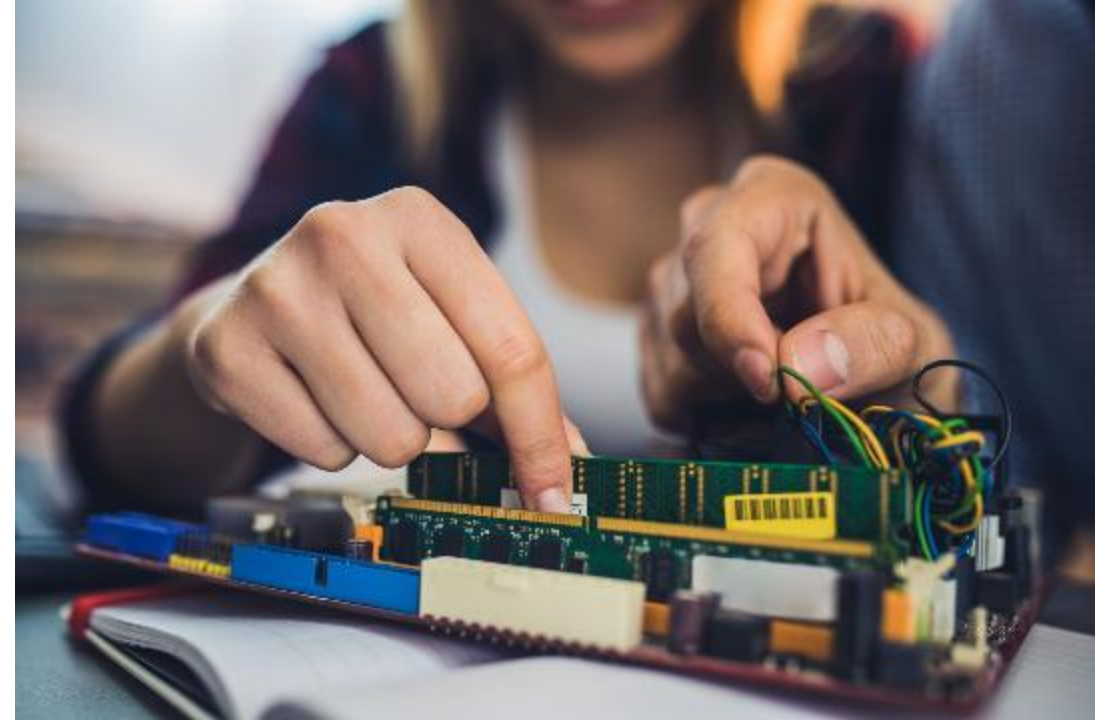
There are many kinds of machines. Some examples of machines are: computers, microwaves and typewriters. I work with planetary and rotary cameras.

Sometimes machines break. Breaking means that they are not working properly. For example, when something is jammed or stuck, or when the film is loaded wrong, that means a machine is broken. Machines tend to break more as they get old.

Sometimes the machines I use at work break. When a machine breaks, I think, "Oh no, I will get behind on my schedule." Ann and Brent think, "Not again. That old machine. Oh well, we'll have to get it fixed."

When a machine breaks, I will tell Dottie so that she can call the repairman.

While I wait for the repairman to fix the machine, I can proofread documents, prepare paper to be filmed or do my relaxation breathing.



Job Site Training

- ▶ Physical Structure
- ▶ Schedules
- ▶ Visual Instructions and Checklists
- ▶ Rules and Reminders
- ▶ Social Narratives
- ▶ **Relaxation Strategies/Calming Strategies**



Mike's Relaxation Structure

Car Dealerships

1. Fred Anderson's Toyota – Glenwood Ave, Raleigh
2. Johnson Lexus – Southpoint, Durham
3. Hendrick Chevrolet – Auto Mall Drive, Cary
4. Southern State Volkswagen – 15-501, Durham
5. Crossroads Ford Inc – Capital Blvd. Raleigh

Take a deep breath



Restaurants

1. K&W Cafeteria – University Mall, Chapel Hill
2. Wendy's – 15-501, Chapel Hill
3. Golden Corral – Roxboro Rd, Durham
4. Chick-Fil-A - Northgate, Durham
5. Red Lobster – Old Wake Forest Rd, Raleigh

Take a deep breath



TV Stations

1. WRAL TV-5 - Raleigh
2. WRAL Fox 50 – Durham
3. NBC 17 – Raleigh, NC
4. UNC-TV – RTP
5. CW- 22 – Raleigh

Take a deep breath



Mike is relaxed.
Mike can go back to work

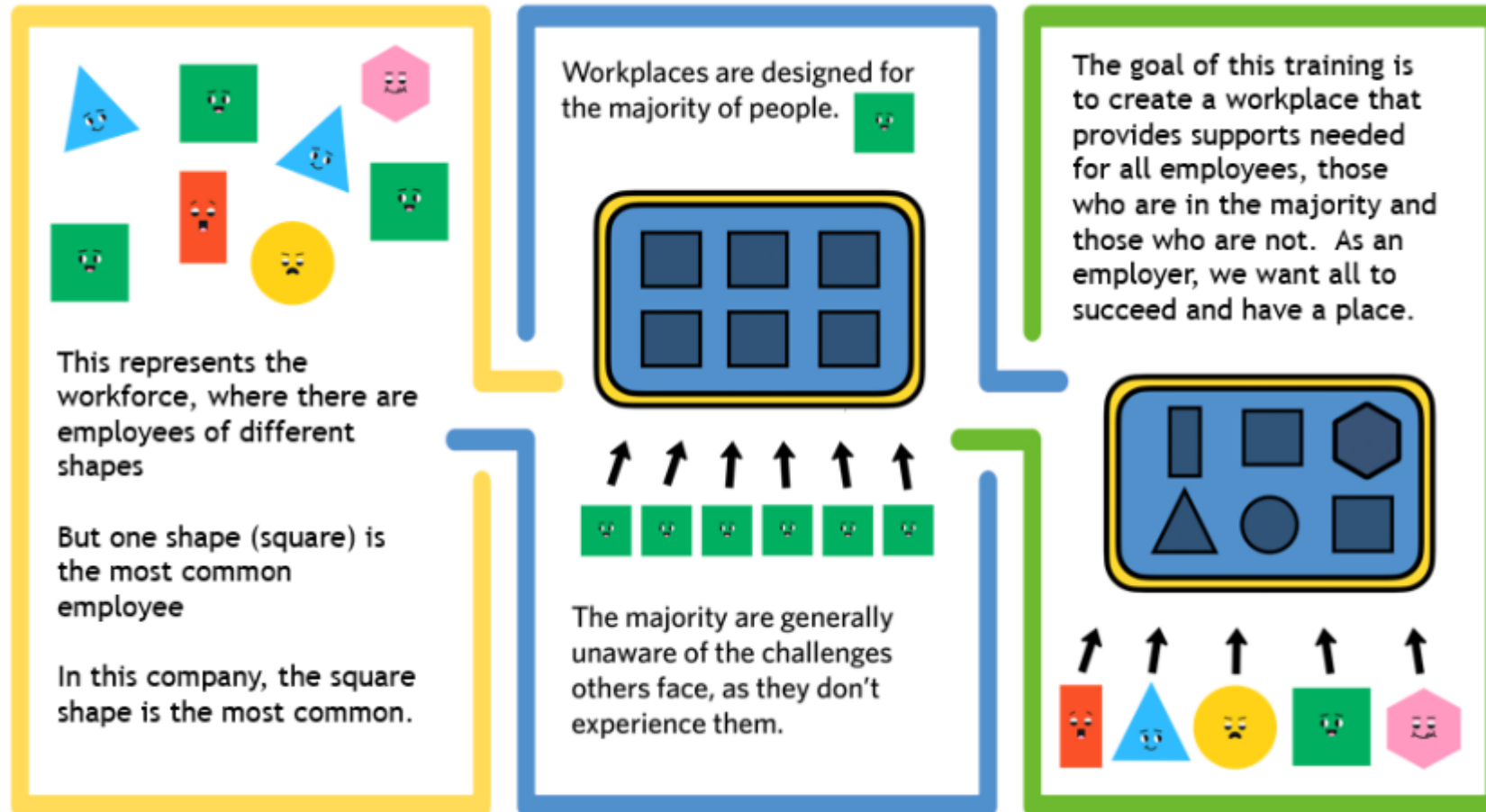
Long Term Success



Supporting the Employer

- ▶ They are your client as an employment agency.
- ▶ Give information in writing.
 - ▶ Job coach roles
 - ▶ Client training plan
 - ▶ Follow up to verbal conversations to clarify what was said.
- ▶ Show them how to work with their employee.
 - ▶ Support them, give them the tools
 - ▶ I do, We do, you do.
 - ▶ What do to when it gets too complicated, and they need help?
Who do they call? (Update this regularly if your program changes)

Changing the workforce



Resources

- ▶ Work Together NC
- ▶ <https://worktogethernc.com/>



Work Together NC

Possibility to Opportunity

Autism and the Employment World

S. Michael Chapman
Director of Employment Services



Questions?

Stay Connected

Want to get connected?

Inclusion Works Advisory Committee

Purpose: To provide a forum to hear the perspectives and opinions of individuals, families, advocates, and providers around the updates and implementation of the Strategic Plan for CIE in North Carolina

Meeting Time: Third Tuesday of every 3 months at 11:00am. **Next Meeting on April 21, 2026.**

Interested in joining?

Email: Claire.Colligan@dhhs.nc.gov

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