

The principals' associations of Ontario are pleased to welcome you to the second of three webinars in 2020 pertaining to ASD.

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- Welcome to the all participants, from ADFO, CPCO and OPC, to this final of three webinars on supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- When the term Principal is used, this is inclusive of Principals and Vice-Principals



A Collaborative Approach: Working with Partners

Consider opportunities to expand your current school team to include other various perspectives in support of the students with ASD in your school



In webinar 1 we discussed what is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the prevalence, level of severity and leadership approaches. In webinar 2, we gave you an overview of PPM 140 and Incorporating methods of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) into programs for students with ASD.

Webinar 3 looks further at a collaborative approach to supporting students with ASD. To ensure the best possible learning experience and engagement for this webinar, please allow 45 minutes of your time with an opportunity for follow-up questions.

As we move through this webinar please reflect on - Who is currently on your team and is there an opportunity to expand this team to include various perspectives in support of the students with ASD in your school?

Land acknowledgement

ADFO, CPCO and OPC would like to acknowledge the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on the lands on which we gather today across Ontario and we thank the past, present and future caretakers of this land.

These lands are gathering points where age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal took place. The principals' associations are grateful to have the opportunity to work and learn on these lands in a community of sharing.



It takes a village to raise a child.
It takes a child with autism to raise the consciousness of the village.

Elaine Hall

Photo by [Rene Bernal](#) on [Unsplash](#)

We all know the African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child. It means that an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment. The villagers look out for the children.

On this slide the proverb is taken a step further - It takes a child with autism to raise the consciousness of the village. From the learnings from Webinar 1 and 2, what do you think the author means by this? Please submit your ideas using chat.

I wonder if children/youth with autism help us to identify how well our team is working collaboratively together. When you're working to support children and youth with complex needs, the cracks within our team will reveal themselves. Knowing how to pull the team together, how to identify what supports they need to create positive change is our work as leaders in the school.

It Takes a Village...

Student

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/and/or supports

School-Based Team

Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary Teams

Community partners - Therapists, Faith Group

Siblings



Image by [Gordon Johnson](#) from [Pixabay](#)

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Today in this third webinar, we begin by thinking about the students with ASD in your school - who is part of the “village” - who is missing from the “village”? How do you, as the school principal/vice-principal, embrace the village? Are there members of the village that may need more effort to embrace than others? Reflect on why this may be.

In today’s webinar, we will be focusing on building a collaborative team to create the village to support students with ASD in your school. Specifically, we looked at how to increase the voice of the student within this team and how to work with parents/guardians and/or their supports.

The remaining groups that help to form the village, will be discussed in years two and three of this webinar series.



Help us get to know
who the audience is
by participating in a
few polling questions.





THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

*A School and System Leader's Guide
to Putting Ontario's Leadership
Framework into Action*

1st ed. September 2013

This webinar supports the development of the Leadership Practices, particularly those included under the *Building Relationships and Developing People* column. It also supports the application of the PLRs, particularly *Problem-solving expertise and Knowledge of effective school and classroom practices that directly affect student learning*.

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Leadership in Supporting ASD

In supporting students with Special Education Needs three key themes were identified through research:

- Relationships
- Communication
- Modelling

Source: Sider (2019)

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In addition to the core Leadership capacities of the OLF, research tells us that the school principal has the influential role in fostering a welcoming and supportive class and school environment.

How can principals foster inclusive schools for students with special education needs?

- Relationships are foundational to the special education supports that are put in place
- Communication is a key leadership skill that principals need to employ in order to successfully support all students in the school.
- Principals model the type of behaviour that they desire for the entire school community.

Collaboration



“Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.”

Ted Wachtel, International Institute for Restorative Practices

We also know the importance of collaboration. No one person holds all of the information. We rely on different perspectives and expertise to serve our students with ASD and their families. This quote reminds us that most importantly, we need to work with our students and families.

Collaboration - A Partnership Approach



“For collaboration to occur, participants need to feel that their shared effort will result in an outcome that is better than could be accomplished by any one participant, even if the outcome is somewhat different from what each person envisioned at the outset.”

Quote Source: Online Applied Behaviour Analysis, Geneva Centre

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What's the best approach when supporting students with ASD?

Single Disciplinary	Multi-disciplinary	Interdisciplinary	Transdisciplinary
Highly specialized in one disciplinary.	People from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge.	Integrating methods and knowledge from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches.	Creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary frameworks.
No cooperation with other disciplines.	Not focused on problem solving but requires expert opinions.	Focused on problem framing and solving from disciplinary perspectives.	Solving problems by going beyond disciplinary perspective to involving practitioners, beneficiaries and non-academia.
Development of a new detailed discipline.	Members cooperate in their contributions but do not integrate their perspectives.	Perspectives are integrated with stronger levels of cooperation.	New knowledge is generated through the use of multi and interdisciplinary concepts.
	Disciplinary theory development.	There is a common understanding on methodological approaches, epistemological and ontological perspectives.	Considered as the highest form of integration of all actors in a participatory.

Source: Mumuni et al. (2015)



In Webinar One, “What is ASD?”, we introduced this graphic. In Webinar Two, “Implementing Inclusive Leadership”, we further explored the continuum of ways we can work together to support students with ASD and their families.

We discussed:

- What’s the best leadership approach when supporting students with ASD? Reflection - where are you right now?
 - Single disciplinary would be one professional is asked to assess the situation either through observations or reviewing the student’s portfolio
 - Multidisciplinary refers to a team without real collaboration because it’s base on the expert model which means one person provides everyone with recommendations
 - Interdisciplinary is more of a collaborative approach where parents and student are part of the team. Before even determining the needs, the team meets to establish a plan. Who does what and when? Who’s going to coordinate the process?
 - Transdisciplinary would be a combination of everything but also involves professionals not involved in the school system. A good example would be telepsychiatry where you have the medical, social, educational and family involved in a full assessment of the needs. You could have an advocate group participate to be a voice for the parents
- If you can collaborate with a parent who has a child with Autism - you’ll be able to engage and collaborate with any parent
- Principals to think about these models as they have their school support team meetings

It Takes a Village...

Student

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/and/or supports

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Community partners - Therapists, Faith Group

Siblings



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Student as Partner - transition slide

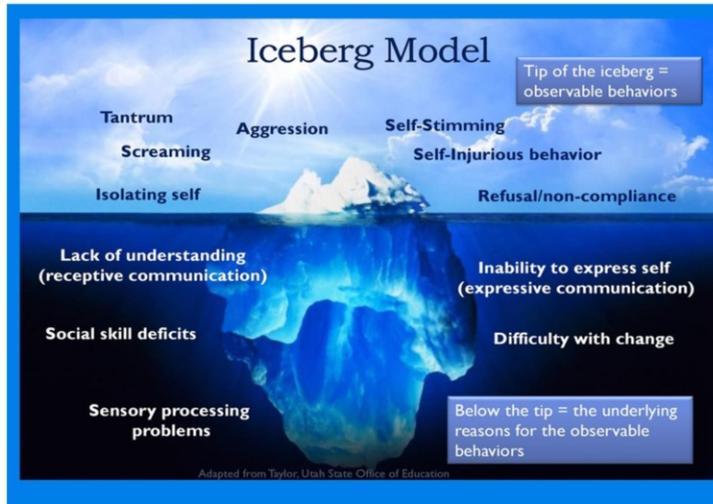
Student Agency



Student agency refers to the level of control, autonomy and power that a student experiences in the educational situation. Student agency can be manifested in the choice of learning environment, subject matter, approach, and/or pace.

The student is always at the centre of decisions. As much as possible, the Principal/Vice-Principal must provide opportunities for the student to communicate their needs and to set their own goals. Think about your students? When do you invite them into IEP meetings, transition meetings or IPRCs? What is holding you back from inviting them in? Are their other barriers at play?

Things to Remember



Source: <https://slideplayer.com/slide/12232059/>

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You may have seen this image before. This image identifies some observable behaviours and underlying reasons... and how they are connected.

Are you identifying some of the observable student behaviours as barriers to inviting student voice into goal setting? What might be some creative ways to support students to give voice into their own learning and goals?

We want to provide as many opportunities as possible for children and youth to give voice to their own pathways. Remember the notion of WITH not TO.

Student Voice

"Don't let your own fear and preconceived notions about what someone can and can not do limit them."

"Accessibility benefits everyone. Inclusion benefits everyone."

"Schools need to acknowledge the skill sets that everyone has – able bodied and disabled alike."

"Talk to me, not around me."

"Give kids control."

"Don't get in the way of independent efforts."



While these comments are from Students living with disabilities in London District Catholic School Board, the committee believes they are representative of the provincial voice of students.

It Takes a Village...

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Parents as partners - transitional slide

A Parent's Perspective

"Parent's don't sign up for this."

"Don't make your school problems the parent's problems."

"This is our normal."

"It is all about time and priorities."

"Advocacy is hard and exhausting."

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While these quotes are from the Thames Valley Children's Centre, Parent Mentors, the committee feels they are representative of parents in our province.



Parents as Partners

Image Source: Acorn House International

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Again we focus on the notion of WITH not TO. How are we creating a welcoming, safe place for parents to participate in the educational planning for their children?



Perspectives - Parents of Children with Autism

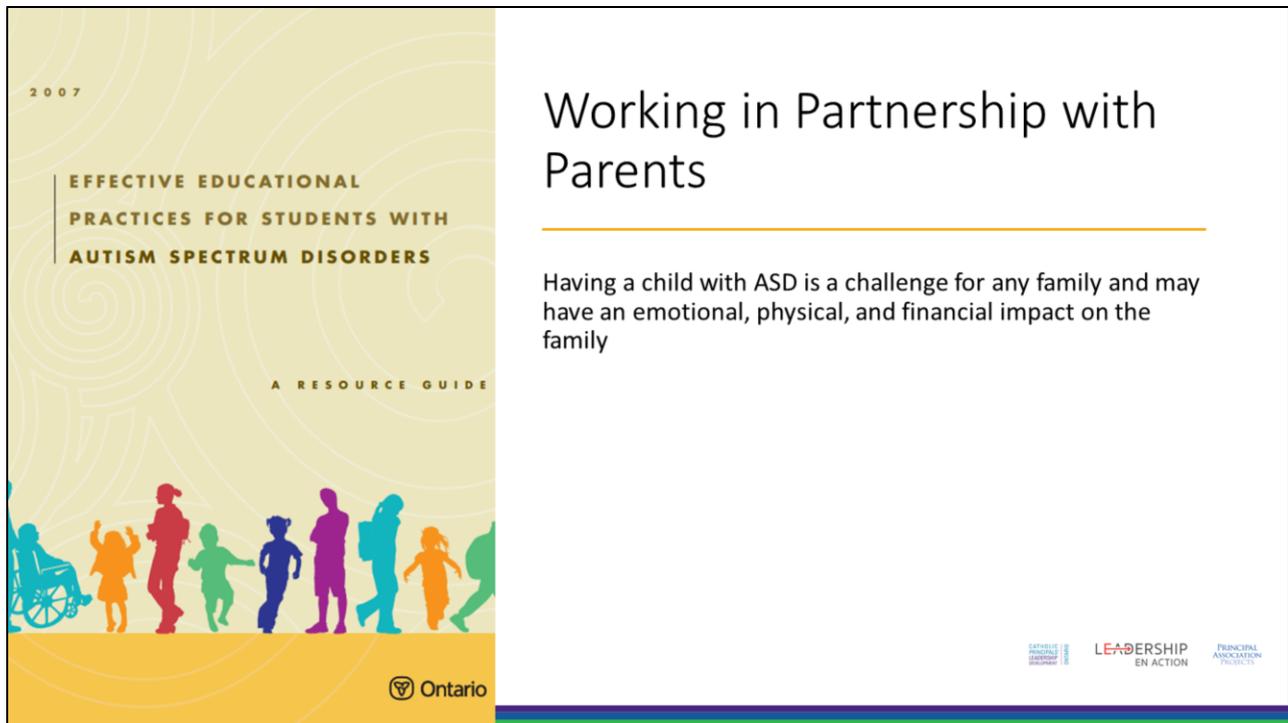
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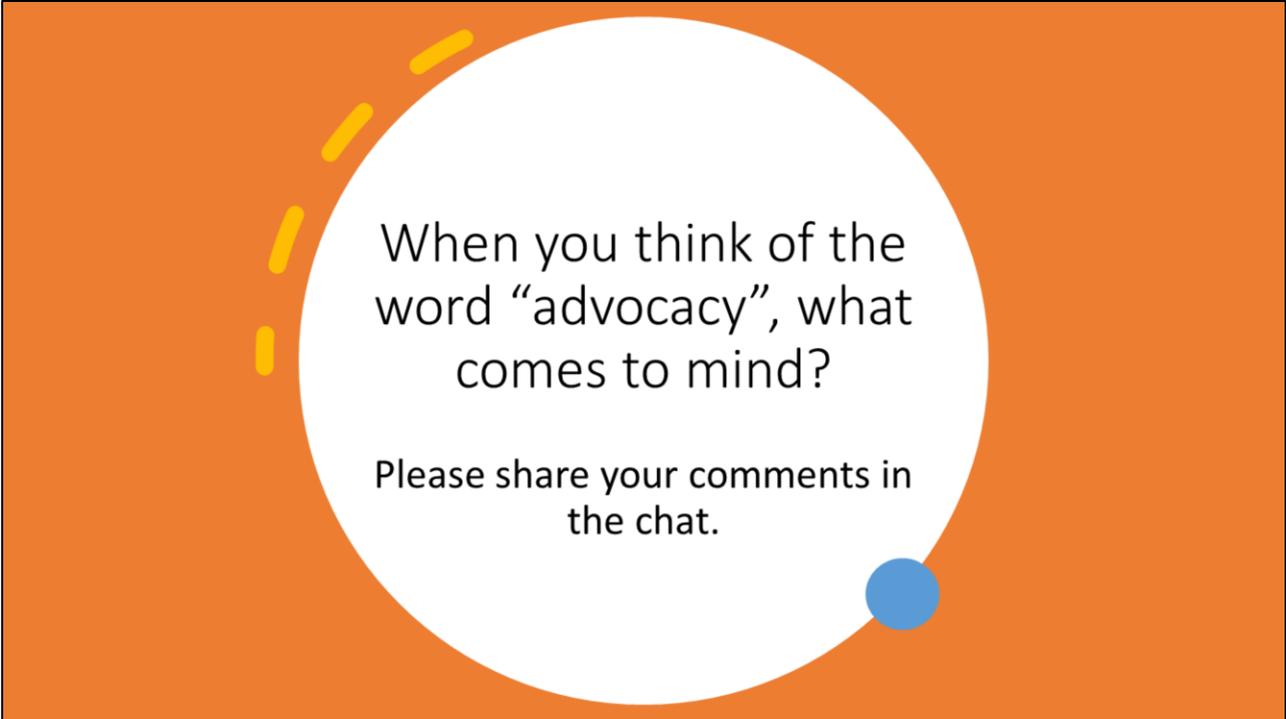
It can be challenging working with parents who are living with a high level of stress at all times.

Principals and Vice-Principals are encouraged to presume that that the parent is presenting their best self. How can we create a supportive environment for parents to help to reduce the stress when partnering?



It is important to keep in mind that many parents are on their own journey of acceptance of the diagnosis and its significant implications for both their own lives and the life of their child. Having a child with ASD is a challenge for any family and may have an emotional, physical, and financial impact on the family (Higgins, Bailey, & Pearce, 2005). The impact on families can vary considerably across situations. Some families are able to cope with these additional stressors; however, for others it can be more difficult.

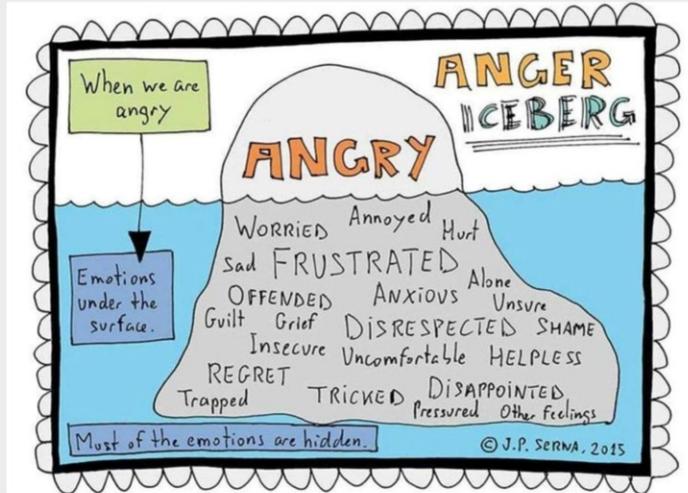
Don't make assumptions from what we are seeing from the parents - we don't know where the parent is at. Understand behaviour / don't judge
Understanding what the parent is saying through the anger
Fairness is not sameness - demystify this - what is best for this child at this time



When you think of the word “advocacy”, what comes to mind?

Please share your comments in the chat.

Use the comments from the question in the slide to link to the following slide in an effort to change the perception of advocacy. Turn advocacy into a positive stance of parents for their children.



Parents are presenting their best selves at any given moment. Our role as School Leaders is to see beyond the anger or presenting emotion and to look deeper to understand the parent's perspective. As principals and vice-principals, we must help our staff to also see beyond the emotion. It is our responsibility to seek a relationship with parents and to work in partnership.

Seeing beyond the presenting emotion, requires the Principal/Vice-Principal to use their Personal Leadership Resources (as outlined in the Ontario Leadership Framework).



A Parent's Perspective

"Working with the school is like working with your inlaws. You didn't choose each other -- but you care about someone in common."

Image Source: [Boston Globe](#)

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Reflect on this quote.

What are some ways it resonates with you?

We are working together on behalf of the child/student.

Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. As partners in the process, parents can provide perspectives and information that will broaden educators' understanding of the student. Parent participation will enhance program planning and assist in the determination of educational goals, methods, and motivational strategies that are most appropriate and effective for a student.

Advocacy vs Collaboration

Comparing inclusionary planning models for autistic children

Advocacy	Collaboration
<p>More time spent defending the rights of the children with regards to services</p> <p>Often will seek support from community agencies to represent them during the IPRC or IEP</p>	<p>More child centered which gives a voice to the parents with regard to placement and services</p> <p>Parents and child are active participants in all the decisions with regards to services</p>



A parent can not be an advocate and a collaborator - the day they are really part of a partnership is when they are really part of a team - thus the parent does not need to be an advocate

- Do we see the parent as an advocate/activist or a collaborator?
- Advocacy is not necessarily a bad thing - how it presents
- Ideally we want parents to become collaborators (proactive) rather than advocates (reactive)
- Reference to Shared Solutions or other resources to help avoid and address conflict
- School staff should encourage parents to advocate appropriately

The goal of working with parents who have children/youth with special education needs, is to invite them into partnership.

It's very important for all professionals to develop a relationship with both parents. Too often professionals from the Autism intervention program or the school are using the expert approach which leaves the parents without a voice. These parents often will join different associations like Autism Ontario to find their voice. Unfortunately, these parents often don't find answers to their specific issues. Consequently, parents feel they have to act as advocate which CAN entail involvement with lawmakers to have access to services. These issues could be avoided if the services were parent-child centered because everyone would share a common vision with regards to services. For example, parents often have to defend their child's rights for inclusion especially when they're not consulted for the placement or the IEP. Collaboration should be defined during the initial contact with families. Collaboration promotes equity among all the individuals involved in the process while advocacy often leads to the expertise of certain individuals like autism and applied behaviour analysis.

Parents know their children best. They support the partnership by bringing facts about the profile of the child.

Depending on when you are engaging with the parent - recognize the stages of grieving - this is a path - as leaders we need to be responsive to where they are at.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents are able to provide valuable information

Communication between home and school

Enriching the parent/child relationship

Consider the impact of sharing positive information

Parents are able to provide valuable information about many key aspects that affect how a student participates at school, such as:

- Developmental history
- Health issues
- The range of professionals who are or have been involved with the student and the services provided
- Their child's likes, dislikes, special interests, and sensory sensitivities
- Effective positive reinforcers and motivators

It is important to keep in mind that home/school communication for many students with ASD is a method of reporting for students who, because of the nature of their disability, cannot do this for themselves.

- The nature of the communication between home and school can have a significant impact on the quality of the relationship between home and school
- School staff needs to meet with parents to discuss and establish methods for home/school communication.
- The classroom teacher is responsible for the content of the home/school communication.

Generally, parents want to know about the activities in which their child participated during the day.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents are able to provide valuable information

Communication between home and school

Enriching the parent/child relationship

Consider the impact of sharing positive information

Parents can use this information to talk with their child and elicit communicative responses whenever possible. Information to assist in this process can include:

- Activities in which the student participated
- Any new or particular skills that were demonstrated
- Nature of play with friends and classmates
- Songs and stories of the day
- New themes or areas of learning
- Upcoming, special events, trips, or snack days

Remember to report positive information as often as possible. This can have a significant impact on the quality of the family's evening or weekend.

In most situations, it is unnecessary to report the daily incidences of non-compliance, off-task behaviour, and other occurrences if these are an ongoing or typical component of the child's behavioural profile.

When significant behavioural incidents occur, they must be reported to parents. However, the communication book is not the forum for sharing this kind of information. The principal decides how this information is to be shared with parents, and often assumes this important role.



Parent Perspectives and Need for Support

Couple Relationship and ASD

- 6% higher divorce rate
- 78% report that they were divorced after their child was diagnosed
- 76% report that autism was not the primary cause of divorce
- 50% report that autism was a contributing factor in the divorce

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These parents have a divorce rate that is approximately 6% higher than the national average.

- Demands placed on parents caring for a child with autism contribute to a higher overall incidence of parental stress, depression, and anxiety which adversely affects family functioning and marital relationships compared with parents of children with other disabilities.
- Autism is not an alone leading cause in marital separations.
- One of the supporting studies has been reviewed revealed that 78% of respondents said that they were divorced after their child was diagnosed, and overwhelmingly 76% of the respondents said that autism was not the primary cause of their divorce. Although the majority of respondents did not consider autism a leading cause of divorce, 50% did consider autism to be a contributing factor in the divorce.

School teams are encouraged to continue their relationship with both parents - even when their has been a marital breakdown.



Parent Perspectives and Need for Support

Mothers and ASD

- Report high levels of psychological distress, depressive symptoms, and social isolation
- 40% reported clinically significant levels of parenting stress
- 33-59% reported experiencing significant depressive symptoms

Photo by [Anh Nguyen](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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- Mothers, in particular, may experience high levels of psychological distress, depressive symptoms, and social isolation.
- Research has found that nearly 40% of mothers reported clinically significant levels of parenting stress and between 33% and 59% experienced significant depressive symptoms following their child's diagnosis of ASD.

School teams are encouraged to continue their relationship with both parents - even when there has been a marital breakdown. Focus for the leader is keeping the conversation around the child not the dual parent situation.



Parent Perspectives and Need for Support

Challenges

- Timely ASD diagnosis
- Lack of treatment services
- Working with the education system

Unmet Needs

- Financial support
- Social networks
- Break from responsibilities
- Rest/sleep
- Remaining hopeful

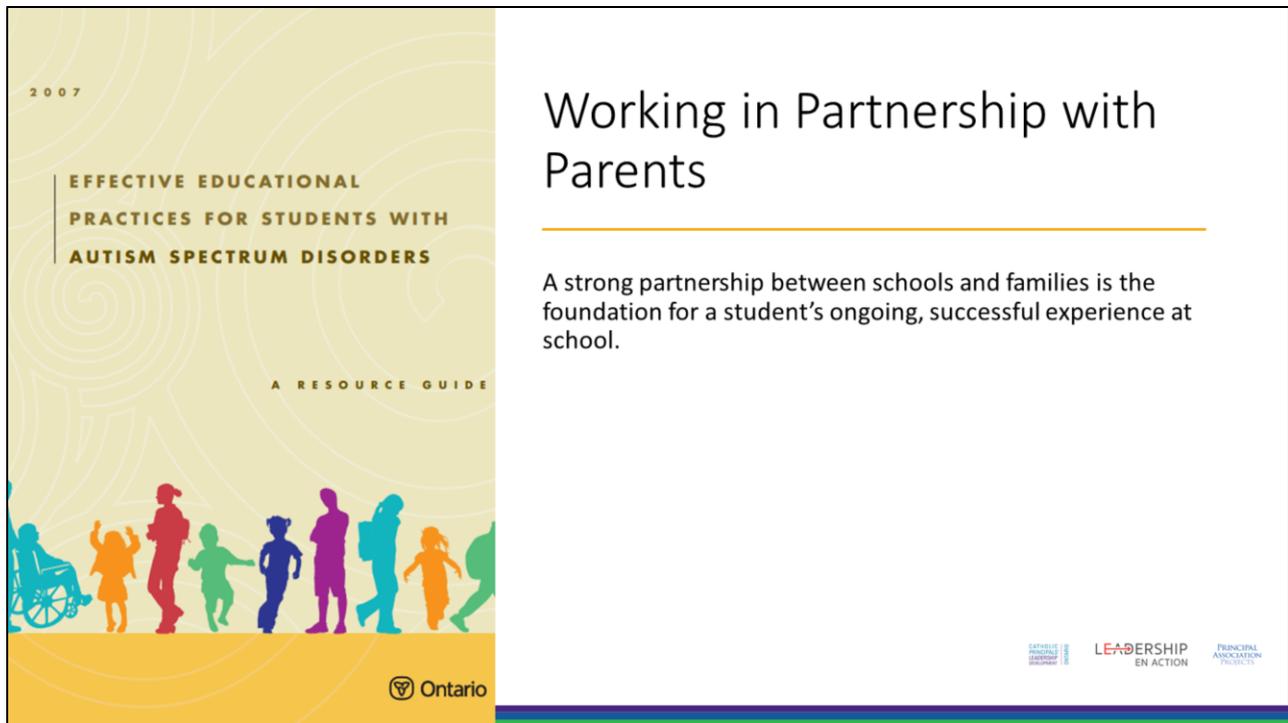
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- Challenges in obtaining a timely ASD diagnosis and lack of appropriate treatment services and education were contributors to parental stress and dissatisfaction. Frequently reported important unmet needs include
 1. financial support;
 2. social networks - i.e. friendships;
 3. break from responsibilities;
 4. rest/sleep; and
 5. help remaining hopeful about the future.



Highlight connection between research perspective and Ministry documents.

Parents are advocates for their child's best interests. It is essential that they have opportunities to be involved as partners in the ongoing planning and review of educational programs for students with ASD. A strong partnership between schools and families is the foundation for a student's ongoing, successful experience at school.

Personal Leadership Resources		
Cognitive Resources	Social Resources	Psychological Resources
<p>Problem-solving expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding/interpreting problems • identifying goals • articulating principles and values • identifying constraints • developing solution processes • maintaining calm/confidence in the face of challenging problems <p>Knowledge about school and classroom conditions with direct effects on student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical/rational conditions • emotional conditions • organizational conditions • family conditions <p>Systems Thinking (NEW!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to understand the dense, complex, and reciprocal connections among different elements of the organization • having foresight to engage the organization in likely futures and consequences for action 	<p>Including the ability to:</p> <p>perceive emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizing our own emotional responses • discerning emotional responses in others through verbal and non-verbal cues <p>manage emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting on our own emotional responses and their potential consequences • persuading others to likewise reflect on their responses <p>act in emotionally appropriate ways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to exercise control over which emotions guide our actions • being able to help others act on emotions that serve their best interests 	<p>Optimism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • habitually expecting positive results from our efforts • recognizing where we have, and do not have, opportunities for direct influence and control • taking positive risks <p>Self-efficacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believing in our own ability to perform a task or achieve a goal • as a result of positive self-efficacy, taking responsible risks, expending substantial effort, and persisting in the face of initial failure <p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to recover from, or adjust easily to, change or misfortune • being able to thrive in challenging circumstances <p>Proactivity (NEW!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to stimulate and effectively manage change on a large scale under complex circumstances • showing initiative and perseverance in bringing about meaningful change

Think about a time that you had to draw on your Personal Leadership Resources when working with a parent. What resource (cognitive, social, psychological) comes to mind? Please add your ideas in the chat. Upon reflection, what would you do differently next time, if presented with the same situation?



What strategies do we offer to ensure that parents have the information they need in a timely way?



Shared space for candidates to share ideas in the chat

Communication Books - ask yourself - What if the communication book became lost and was found by another student or a stranger? Would the child's or the family's dignity or privacy be compromised?

The responsive and responsible reporting of the events of a student's days at school makes a positive contribution to both the home and the school experience. Parents feel informed, supported and more able to support the learning needs of their child.

The responsive and responsible reporting of the events of a student's days at school makes a positive contribution to both the home and the school experience. Parents feel informed, supported and more able to support the learning needs of their child.

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Upcoming

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Today's webinar focused on building a collaborative team to create the village to support students with ASD in your school. Specifically, we looked at how to increase the voice of the student within this team and the importance of working in partnership with parents/guardians and/or their supports.

We look forward to learning with you In Year Two of this webinar series. We will continue to expand our village with a focus on the School-Based Team and Multidisciplinary or Interdisciplinary Teams. In the Third Year of our webinar series, we will again expand the village to focus on Community Partners and how siblings can also round out the village of support for students with ASD.



Thank you



Importance of completing the survey when they receive it

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- CPCO www.cpco.on.ca
- OPC www.principals.ca



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Glossary

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

The use of behaviour principles and methods to solve practical problems. In other words, it's the attempt to solve behaviour by providing antecedents and/or consequences that change behaviour

Applied Behaviour Analysis Program

A systematic approach to analyzing and changing behaviour. It entails establishment of behavioural objectives; selection and application of valid and reliable measures; regular recording; consistent application of selected procedures based upon principles of behaviour; plus an experimental evaluation of results.

Comorbid disorders

Two or more disorders diagnosed simultaneously in an individual

DSM V

Referred to as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5). Contains disorder criteria that capture the experiences and symptoms of children. Rather than isolating childhood conditions, DSM-5's organization underscores how they can continue to manifest at different stages of life and may be impacted by the developmental continuum that influences many disorders.

Interdisciplinary

A coordinated group of experts from several different fields who work together toward a common business goal. A business might use an interdisciplinary team of professionals to work on a complex project that requires multiple skills sets or areas of expertise in order to succeed

Prevalence Rate

The total number of cases of a disease existing in a population divided by the total population

Transdisciplinary

A coordinated group of experts from several different fields members of the team come together from the beginning to jointly communicate, exchange ideas and work together to come up with solutions to problems.

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No cooperation with other disciplines.	Not focused on problem solving but requires expert opinions.	Focused on problem framing and solving from disciplinary perspectives.	Solving problems by going beyond disciplinary perspective to involving practitioners, beneficiaries and non-academia.
Development of a new detailed discipline.	Members cooperate in their contributions but do not integrate their perspectives.	Perspectives are integrated with stronger levels of cooperation.	New knowledge is generated through the use of multi and interdisciplinary concepts.
	Disciplinary theory development.	There is a common understanding on methodological approaches, epistemological and ontological perspectives.	Considered as the highest form of integration of all actors in a participatory.

Source: Mumuni et al. (2015)