Breaking Down Inclusion; Building Up Students

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Agenda

Introductions

IEP Process Core Concepts

What is Inclusion?

Strategies for Successful Inclusion

Q+A
Who am I?

Who are you?
Program of MGH and MGH for Children

Dedicated to providing children, adolescents, and adults with Asperger’s, high-cognitive autism, or a related profile with the knowledge and skills necessary to make social connections and lead fulfilling lives.

MGH Aspire’s “3S” Model:

- Social Competency
- Stress Management
- Self-Awareness
Aspire’s “3S” Model

- Self-Awareness
- Stress Management
- Social Competency

These domains support all that we do and are a part of our short and long-term trajectories. Without these three ingredients life is a challenge. Building skills in these areas requires a multi-disciplinary approach.
Social Competency

- Recognize that social competency is needed in life
- Understand my social strengths/challenges
- Develop social thinking and social skills
- Apply this knowledge in various contexts/relationships
- Show empathy for others
- Form positive relationships, work in teams effectively, deal effectively with conflict
Stress Management

- Understand stress is a part of life—neither good nor bad
- Know, recognize, and predict internal and external triggers
- Link thoughts, feelings, and behavior
- Manage stress responses (reactively and proactively)
- Develop and utilize a coping tool box of self-regulation and stress management strategies
Self-Awareness

- Know my personal strengths and challenges
- Recognize and express my likes, dislikes, passions
- Acknowledge and control my habits
- Set goals
- Understand and manage my emotions and behavior to achieve goals
- Recognize when effort/perseverance is required and be able to apply it
Core Concepts

Executive Functioning

Emotional Regulation

Social Communication

Sensory Processing
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is…

- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Parent and Teacher Participation
- Procedural Safeguards
- Plus: Confidentiality, Transition Services, Discipline
IDEA is NOT…

“Inclusion”
Inclusion

**So, what is inclusion?**

- A conceptual framework, not a legal principle
- A top-down belief system
- Commitment of resources
- Active prioritizing of resources
- NOT “integration”
- NOT “mainstreaming”
“Inclusion—the preferred term—involves supporting students with disabilities through individual learning goals, accommodations, and modifications so that they are able to access the general education curriculum (in the general education classroom) and be held to the same high expectations as their peer.”

–The IRIS Center
Data shows…

Inclusion practices (when implemented with fidelity):

• Increase student success variables (examples: time spent engaged in academically challenging curricula)
• Improved self-esteem
• Greater academic achievement (Everyone benefits from differentiated instruction!)
Pillars of Inclusion

Access

Membership

Participation
Access

• Universal Design
  • Accommodations
  • Modifications
• Community-wide knowledge and standards
  • Training, Professional Development
  • Charter or Mission
• Staff attitudes

For the student, this is *passive* engagement.
Membership

- **NEURODIVERSITY**
  - Student-centered
  - Strengths-based
- Trust-worthy, accessible expertise
- Proactive oversight
- Staff Attitudes

For the student, this is somewhere *between passive and active engagement.*
Participation

- Accommodations and Modifications
  - Input
  - Output
- Specialized providers
- Specific Curricula: Structured Social-Emotional Learning
- Educated, empowered Teaching Assistants
  - On-going support systems

For the student, this is *active* engagement.

**Self-Actualization** - A person’s motivation to reach his or her full potential. As shown in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

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**MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (INFORMED BY BLACKFOOT NATION (ALTA))**

**Western Perspective**

- Physiological Needs
- Safety Needs
- Love/Belonging Needs
- Esteem Needs
- Self-Actualization Needs

**First Nations Perspective**

- Cultural Perpetuity
- Community Actualization
- Expansive concept of time and multiple dimensions of reality

Huitt, 2004; Blackstock, 2008; Wadsworth,
Response to Intervention (RTI)
Teach, Value
Student-Centered

Students should see themselves reflected in their environment.

- Personalized Learning
- Project-Based Learning

Transparency
Holistic/Whole Child

- Preferred interests…
  - …are social currency
  - …are vocational currency
  - …are the key to quality of life and independent living
  - …are a starting point on which to build other cognitive skills
  - …tap in to intrinsic motivations
  - …serve as a model for cognitive organization
Important!

- In Home-School collaboration: QUALITY over QUANTITY
- Reduction of services is not always a bad thing
- Cohorts matter
- Balance individual student needs with a commitment to inclusion (hybrid models)
The Four Most Important Beliefs Adults Can Foster in Children:

- A feeling that they are appreciated/liked-valued for their neurodiversity (comprehensively).
  - *What* they do is different than *Who* they are.

- A sense that they have some control over their lives. Mastery leads to pride.

- A sense that they are increasingly autonomous.

Q+A