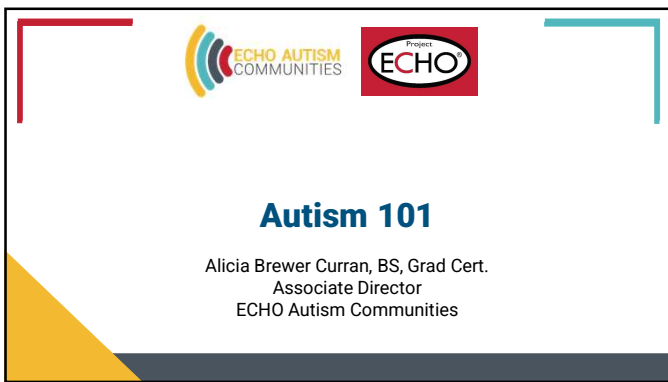
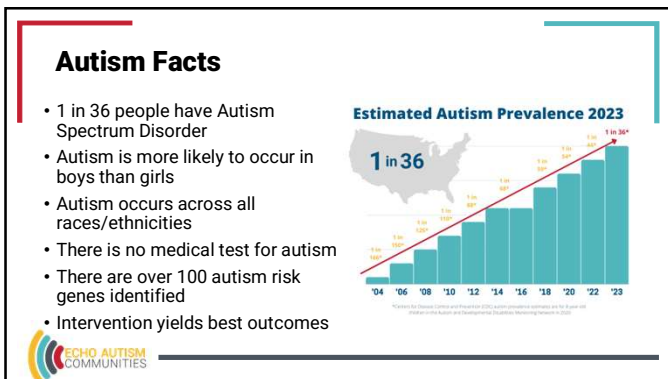




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3

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Two Core Areas

Neurodevelopmental Disorder

ASD

Absence of expected social interactions

Presence of unexpected Behaviors

- Developmental Disability
- Causes differences in the brain
- Occurs early in life
- Interferes with daily life
- Not better explained by an intellectual disability

4

Best-Practice Diagnostic Evaluation

Comprehensive History

DSM -5 Diagnostic Interview

Structured Behavioral Observation

Informs Clinical Judgement

5

Social Communication


- 1 Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
- 2 Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- 3 Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

6

Social Communication

Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity

- Displays unique social approach
- Struggles with back-and-forth conversations
- Lack of interests & emotions in others
- Difficulties initiating or responding to social interactions




7

Social Communication

Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction

- Struggles with matching non-verbal/verbal communication
- Difference in eye contact
- Difficulties reading body language
- Difficulties using or understanding gestures
- Trouble reading facial expressions
- Struggles to understand non-verbal communication




8

Social Communication

Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships



- Difficulty adjusting behavior to match various social contexts
- Lack of imaginative play
- Struggles to make & keep friends
- Less of an interest in peers



9

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

- 1 Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech
- 2 Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- 3 Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
- 4 Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual sensory interests





10

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech

- Lining up toys
- Flipping objects
- Repeating back the last word/sentence
- Unique phrases




11

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction

- Extreme distress with small changes
- Difficulties with transitions
- Ridged thinking patterns
- Need for taking the same route to a destination
- Only eat foods that taste the same




12

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus

- Strong attachment or intense focus on objects that may be different from same aged peers
- Excessively restricted or intense repetition of words, phrases, or topics




13

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual sensory interests


- High or low to pain
- Cannot tolerate specific textures
- Cannot tolerate or is extra sensitive to sounds
- Prefers to smell or touch objects/people
- Focuses on lights or things that move



14

Functioning Levels of Autism

ASD Level 1	ASD Level 2	ASD Level 3
<p>Requiring Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty initiating social interactions • Organizing & planning problems can hamper independence 	<p>Requiring Substantial Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social interactions limited to narrow interests • Frequent restricted/repetitive behaviors 	<p>Requiring Very Substantial Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely limited verbal, non-verbal social communication • Great distress/difficulty with changes



15

The Autism Spectrum

- A spectrum of symptoms
- Symptoms vary
 - In severity
 - In number
 - Across time
 - Between individuals

Autism Spectrum
The Autism Spectrum is NOT linear


less autistic very autistic

The Autism Spectrum looks more like:

- Social differences
- interests
- repetitiveness
- sensory sensitivities
- emotional regulation
- perception
- executive functioning
- other




Terms like "high functioning", "low functioning" and "Asperger" are harmful and outdated.


Autism_sketches



16

Across the Lifespan...

- 
 • Early Childhood: The brain is most malleable during infancy and early childhood
- 
 • School Age: Secondary behaviors tend to develop when primary symptoms are not addressed
- 
 • Adulthood: Eligible for supports, services and protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



17

Opportunities for Advocacy

- [Federal Departments & Agencies](#)
- [Private and Non-Profit Agencies & Organizations](#)
- [State Resources](#)
- [Federal Advisory Committees](#)



18

Resources


ECHO Autism Communities Website
<https://echoautism.org/resources/>

Evidence-Based Practices
[EBP Report 2020.pdf \(unc.edu\)](#)

Autism Speaks
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Baby Navigator
<https://my.babynavigator.com/>

Learn the Signs. Act Early. Program
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.htm>



19



20
