

Kaleidoscope

A MAGAZINE FROM AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

OVERACTIVE
BLADDER

Echoes of
the Moonlit Glade

Unveiling My Hidden Disability:
A Journey of Discovery



Functional Communication Training (FCT)

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**In You Are a Star**

In a world full of noise, where chaos can reign,
You find your own rhythm, your joy, and your pain.
With thoughts like bright colours, swirling and free,
You paint life in shades that only you see.

When words feel like puzzles, all jumbled and spun,
Remember, your voice shines like the warmth of the sun.
Each whisper of kindness, each laugh that you share,
Is a bridge to connection, a moment laid bare.

You dance to your music, a beat all your own,
In the silence, you flourish, in the quiet, you've grown.
Though sometimes you stumble, and that's perfectly fine,
Your heart knows the way, and it's beautiful and kind.

Embrace every part of the person you are,
You're a beautiful story, a shining bright star.
With dreams that are lofty, and passions that shine,
You're a force of nature, uniquely divine.

So when you feel different, remember, it's true,
The world's richer and brighter because of you.
You bring depth to the colours, a spark to the night,
Just know that you're special, and you're doing it right.

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FROM THE EDITOR



Get Involved: Share Your Voice!

Have a burning question about autism? A personal story that could inspire others? Or perhaps some snapshots capturing special moments? Send them our way!

Your input adds depth and richness to our magazine, creating a space that truly reflects the collective spirit of our community. **Don't hesitate**—your voice matters, and we can't wait to feature your unique perspectives!

Sent to :
magkaleidoscope@gmail.com

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this month's edition, where we explore the multifaceted world of autism through insightful articles and personal stories. Our focus is on providing support, understanding, and practical advice for families navigating this journey.

In "Coping with Multiple Autism Diagnoses in Family," we examine the unique challenges and strengths of managing multiple diagnoses within a household. This piece offers a compassionate perspective on how families adapt and support one another.

"Overactive Bladder" addresses a common but often overlooked issue for some autistic individuals, offering practical strategies to manage this condition and enhance quality of life.

"Unveiling My Hidden Disability: A Journey of Discovery and Acceptance" shares a personal story of discovering and accepting a hidden disability, reflecting on the growth and challenges associated with this journey.

"When Your Jokes Fall Flat" explores the nuances of humor and social interaction for autistic individuals, providing strategies for navigating situations where humor might not be well received.

In "Unconventional Paths to Ignite a Child's Curiosity," we highlight innovative methods to engage autistic children, demonstrating how creativity can foster learning and exploration.

"Practical Strategies to Help Your Autistic Child Sleep Better" offers actionable advice for improving sleep routines and addressing common sleep-related challenges.

"Echoes of the Moonlit Glade" invites readers into a poetic exploration of sensory experiences, showcasing the calming influence of nature.

"Functional Communication Training (FCT)" explains this important approach for developing effective communication skills, enhancing daily interactions and reducing challenging behaviors.

"Chewing Behaviors in Children with Autism" provides insights into why chewing behaviors occur and offers practical advice for managing them.

"The Art of Behavioral Alchemy" explores creative strategies for transforming challenging behaviors into opportunities for growth.

Finally, "A Mother's Quest to Illuminate Her Daughter's Path" highlights a mother's dedication to her daughter's development, showcasing the power of advocacy and perseverance.

We hope you find these articles both informative and inspiring. Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

GEORGE



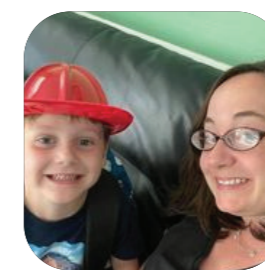
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A big thank you to everyone who adds to our magazine! Your stories and thoughts make our community special. We love hearing from you because each story is like a friendly guide for others. Your ideas and experiences help us all connect and understand each other better. So, thank you for being a crucial part of our Autism Support family!

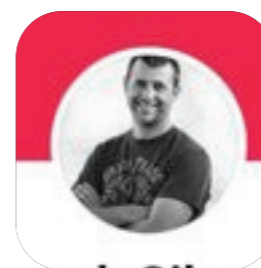
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EDITORS

Pick



Tallulah Willis Reveals She Was Diagnosed With Autism as an Adult

Tallulah Willis, the youngest daughter of Demi Moore and Bruce Willis, has publicly disclosed her autism diagnosis for the first time.

The announcement was made via an Instagram post on Friday, in which the 30-year-old shared a nostalgic video from her childhood.

The clip depicts a tender moment between Tallulah and her father, Bruce, at a red carpet event. As the actor fielded questions from the press, young Tallulah amused herself by gently rubbing her father's shaved head and playing with his ears. Alongside the video, Tallulah wrote, "Tell me you're autistic without telling me you're autistic," followed by a crying-laughing emoji.

Prompted by inquiries from followers in the comments section, Tallulah confirmed her autism diagnosis, marking the first time she has publicly acknowledged it. She revealed that she learned of her diagnosis during the previous summer, describing the revelation as a life-changing experience.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neuro-

logical and developmental condition characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and behavior. The National Institute of Mental Health describes ASD as a spectrum disorder due to the varying nature and severity of its symptoms among individuals.

Research indicates that women are often diagnosed with autism later in life compared to men. A 2019 study focusing on adult women diagnosed with autism revealed that many had struggled with feelings of being "wrong," "broken," or "bad" before receiving a diagnosis, which facilitated a shift towards self-compassion.

"This study marks a significant milestone"



Centering Cultural Sensitivity in Applied Behavior Analysis

The National Center for Education Statistics recently reported that of the 49.6 million students enrolled in public schools across America, approximately 55% identified as members of ethnic or racial minority groups.

The sociocultural makeup of K-12 learners has changed significantly since the 1960s, when researchers laid the groundwork for what would become known as applied behavior analysis (ABA). Today, ABA is widely regarded as the prevailing therapy in autism care. However, the field has not always done enough to consider the diverse range of cultural backgrounds and practices reflected in the clients it serves.

As a result, families of autistic children from underrepresented communities often face the dual challenge of navigating their child's diagnosis while feeling overlooked by healthcare and therapy systems. How can ABA adapt to meet the needs of an evolving population?

A "whole person" approach

Diversity encompasses various factors and experiences. These include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, race, language, nationality, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status. Since those working in healthcare rely on building trust with patients and caregivers, a culturally sensitive approach to care is a requisite.

This is particularly relevant in the practice of ABA for several reasons. Firstly, no two autistic people are the same. Autism is more than just a set of behaviors or symptoms. It is a "whole person" condition,

meaning it intersects with every aspect of an individual's identity, from physical and mental health-related conditions to familial dynamics.

The same is true from a cultural perspective. No two families have identical backgrounds. When ABA practitioners create a treatment plan, the goal is that it reflects a child's unique strengths, needs, and characteristics. Since treatment plans are highly personalized, they must also factor in the individual's sociocultural context.

Delivering care within the home

Cultural sensitivity also directly impacts the quality of care delivery, especially when ABA therapy takes place within the home. As such, it is important that ABA professionals are responsive to a client's cultural norms. A therapist may need to consider factors ranging from dressing appropriately to taking steps to recognize or facilitate a client's cultural or religious practices.

In addition, factors such as language, socioeconomic status, and nationality may impact a family's access to care, something ABA practitioners must consider in order to connect clients with appropriate support. Put simply, a culturally competent approach to autism care is the only way to ensure equal access to services.

Cultural diversity in the workplace

Prioritizing cultural diversity is also beneficial for employees. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) retention is a well-documented issue. Working in behavior analysis can be emotionally and mentally demanding.

In addition, without the proper supports in place, BCBAs and RBTs can feel overworked and undervalued. One study found that around two-thirds of early-career BCBAs were experiencing high levels of burnout.

Research suggests these effects are more pronounced among individuals from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. In their recent article, "I'm One Person, I Can't Be Everywhere," Melanie R. Martin Loya and Hedda Meadan highlighted the experiences of U.S.-based bilingual behavior analysts supporting autistic children from Spanish-speaking homes.



Strange Link Between Board Games And Autism May Finally Be Explained

Anecdotal evidence suggests those with autism tend to enjoy board games more than most, and now two new studies identify some reasons why this might be the case.

The team behind the research, from the University of Plymouth and Edge Hill University in the UK, conducted five separate analyses to examine how popular board games are in people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and the kind of experience they offer.

Board game enthusiasts are more prevalent in those with ASD, they found: in a survey of 1,603 players, 7 percent were autistic, though autistic people account for approximately 1 percent of the population as a whole.

In further interviews with people with ASD, the researchers found that these games help relieve social anxiety, which is experienced at higher rates in those who have autism than in the general population. There's a rigid structure to proceedings, with less need to make small talk.

"We know that board games are a safe and valuable hobby to many people with autism," says psychologist Gray Atherton, from the University of Plymouth. "What this research established was why that's the case, and we really want to use the findings to conduct future work."

The games played included Codenames (a team-based game involving words and clue-giving), Dixit (a clue-giving game involving pictures), and social deception games such as One Night Ultimate Werewolf and Spyfall (where the idea is to try and conceal your identity from the other players).

The rules and structure involved are "both stimulating and comforting" for players,

the authors report, based on interviews with hobbyist board gamers with an autism diagnosis. The researchers suggest it's more evidence of how autistic people immerse themselves in interests that provide a sense of achievement and predictability.

"Board games may represent an area of both challenge and strength for autistic individuals," the authors write in one published paper.

The researchers also looked at small groups of autistic people as they played board games over single sessions or years of play, discovering benefits in terms of building independence and confidence among the players, as well as helping to forge social relationships – something that can be difficult for those with ASD.

"Everyone with autism is unique, and we want to ensure any interventions could be adapted as needed for those who might benefit," says Atherton.

In future, the researchers would like to investigate in more detail the boost in wellbeing that board games can provide for those with autism: they're structured and predictable, and help strengthen social bonds through well-defined frameworks.

Useful Link

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Coping with Multiple Autism Diagnoses in Family



I totally get where you're coming from. When my eldest was diagnosed with autism, I felt like my world was turned upside down. Then, when it seemed like my youngest might also be on the spectrum, it hit me even harder. It's natural to feel overwhelmed and unsure. I want to share some things that helped me, hoping they might help you too.

“
Mixed emotions are completely normal when you're dealing with a second diagnosis.
 ”

First, it's okay to feel the way you do. Mixed emotions are completely normal when you're dealing with a second diagnosis. It doesn't mean you're not handling things well; it just means you're processing a lot. Acknowledge these feelings—don't bottle them up. It's a huge deal, and it's okay to need time to come to terms with it.

Find a support system. Connect with other parents who have been through similar experiences. Whether it's through online groups, local meet-ups, or even just chatting with friends who understand, sharing your experiences and hearing theirs can be incredibly comforting. It helps to know you're not alone.

Routine and structure can be incredibly beneficial. Establishing a consistent daily schedule helps not just your children, but you as well. Visual schedules can be useful, especially for younger kids,

to help them understand what to expect throughout the day.

Each child is unique, even if they have similar diagnoses. Focus on what works best for each of them individually. Tailor your approach to their specific needs rather than applying a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Lastly, don't forget about self-care. It's easy to get lost in caring for your kids and forget about yourself. Make time for activities that recharge you, whether that's a hobby, a quiet moment with a book, or just catching up with friends. Taking care of yourself is crucial to being able to support your kids effectively.

Here's an out-of-the-box idea that worked for me: consider incorporating creative expression into your family's routine. Activities like art, music, or even dance can be therapeutic for both you and your children. It's a way to bond, manage stress, and explore emotions in a different way. My family found that painting together or playing music helped us communicate and relax, making challenging moments a bit more manageable.

Another unconventional approach is to create a "comfort corner" in your home. This could be a small, cozy space with sensory-friendly items like soft blankets, favorite toys, or calming lights. It's a dedicated spot where anyone in the family can retreat when feeling overwhelmed. Having a go-to place for relaxation and regrouping has been incredibly helpful for us, and it might provide some solace for your family too.

Remember, it's okay to take it one step at a time. You're doing a great job, even if it doesn't always feel that way. The fact that you're seeking advice and looking for ways to support your children shows how much you care. Take it day by day, be kind to yourself, and don't hesitate to lean on the support around you.

Courtesy to
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OVERACTIVE BLADDER

Urinary issues in children can be complex, especially when they have both autism and an overactive bladder. As a parent, it can be frustrating and concerning to see your child struggle with this. However, it's important to recognize that this behavior is not due to laziness but rather a combination of medical and behavioral factors. Understanding these factors can help you better manage the situation and support your child effectively.

Children with autism often have difficulties with sensory processing, communication, and maintaining routines. These challenges can significantly impact their toileting habits. For instance, the unpredictable nature of these issues, where your child may be dry for a period and then start having accidents again, can be linked to several factors. Changes in routine, environmental stressors, anxiety, or sensory issues can make it hard for your child to consistently respond to their body's signals. Recognizing and addressing these underlying factors is crucial in managing urinary issues.

Managing this situation involves a multifaceted approach. Firstly, it is crucial to work closely with your child's healthcare providers to address the medical aspect of the overactive bladder. This might involve medications or other treatments recommended by the doctor. Ensuring that the medical condition is under control can significantly reduce the frequency of accidents. Regular check-ups and following the medical advice provided can help monitor and adjust the treatment as needed.

Behavioral interventions can also

“ Understanding and Managing Urinary Issues in Children with Autism ”

play a significant role in managing toileting issues. Consistency is key. Establishing a regular bathroom routine can help your child understand and anticipate when it's time to use the toilet. For example, taking your child to the bathroom at regular intervals, such as every two hours, can help create a habit. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or small rewards, can encourage your child to use the bathroom appropriately. It might also be helpful to use visual schedules or social stories that explain the steps and importance of using the toilet. These tools can make the process more predictable and less stressful for your child.

Sensory issues common in autism can contribute to toileting difficulties.

For example, some children may be sensitive to the sounds, lights, or even the feel of the bathroom. Creating a comfortable and predictable bathroom environment can make a big difference. You can experiment with different types of lighting, quiet times for bathroom use, or even different types of toilet seats to find what your child is most comfortable with. For instance, using a soft toilet seat cover or playing calming music during bathroom time can help reduce sensory discomfort. Additionally, consider using visual aids or social stories to help your child understand what to expect during bathroom visits, reducing anxiety and resistance.

It is not uncommon for other parents to face similar challenges. Connecting with support groups or communities, either online or in person, can provide valuable insights and practical strategies. Sharing experiences with other parents who understand what you're going through can be incredibly supportive. These communities can offer advice, share what has worked for them, and provide a sense of solidarity. Online forums, local support groups, and social media platforms can be excellent resources for finding support and exchanging ideas.

Financially, managing urinary issues can be burdensome, especially with the need to replace beds and mattresses frequently. Investing in high-quality protective bedding can help mitigate some of these costs. There are various types of mattress protectors and absorbent pads available that can make cleanup easier and protect the mattress from damage. For example, waterproof

mattress covers can prevent urine from soaking into the mattress, and washable bed pads can be placed on top of the sheets for added protection. Additionally, using absorbent nighttime underwear can help manage accidents during sleep and reduce the frequency of bedding changes. Exploring different brands and products to find the most effective solutions for your child can be beneficial in the long run.

The key to managing this situation is a combination of medical treatment, behavioral strategies, and environmental modifications. It's important to remain patient and understanding with your child. Working closely with healthcare providers and educational professionals will help in developing a comprehensive plan tailored to your child's needs. For instance, collaborating with a behavioral therapist can provide you with specific strategies and techniques to address toileting issues, and an occupational therapist can offer insights into managing sensory sensitivities related to bathroom use. Developing a team approach that

includes teachers, therapists, and medical professionals ensures that your child receives consistent support across all environments.

In summary, urinary issues in children with autism and an overactive bladder are complex and multifaceted. It requires a combination of medical intervention, consistent behavioral strategies, and environmental adjustments. Connecting with support groups and other parents can provide valuable insights and emotional support. Although it can be financially challenging, investing in protective bedding and working closely with professionals will help manage the situation effectively. Remember, your child's behavior is not laziness but a result of their unique challenges, and with the right support, you can help them overcome these difficulties. With patience, consistency, and understanding, you can create a supportive environment that helps your child manage their urinary issues more effectively.

Creating a supportive and understanding environment is essential for helping your child succeed. Celebrate small victories

and progress, no matter how minor they may seem. Encourage your child and let them know that you are proud of their efforts. Maintaining open communication with your child about their feelings and challenges can also help them feel more secure and supported.

Additionally, educating yourself about autism and overactive bladder can provide you with the knowledge and tools needed to support your child better. Understanding the nuances of these conditions will enable you to advocate effectively for your child's needs in various settings, including school and medical appointments.

Building a network of support that includes healthcare providers, educators, therapists, and other parents can make a significant difference in managing urinary issues in children with autism and overactive bladder. By working together and sharing resources, you can help your child navigate these challenges and improve their quality of life.



Unveiling My Hidden Disability: A Journey of Discovery and Acceptance

Dear world

I've got a tale that might set your head spinning. Picture a life filled with a nagging sense of difference where simple tasks turn into monumental challenges and social interactions feel like navigating a minefield. That was my childhood—a jumble of frustrations and confusions.

Here's the kicker: I recently discovered that my parents had hidden the truth from me all along. They knew I had a disability but kept it under wraps, thinking they were sparing me from stigma and setting me up for a "normal" life. Instead, they built a house of cards on a foundation of secrecy, and it all came tumbling down.

Learning about this hidden disability was like finding the last piece of an elusive puzzle. There was relief—finally, things made sense. But then came a storm of emotions: anger at the lost years, confusion about what might have been, and a profound sense of betrayal. If you can't trust your own kin to tell you the truth, who can you trust?

If you suspect there's more to your story than you've been told, the first step is to visit your GP. Get a referral to a specialist who can conduct a thorough assessment. It might seem daunting, but it's a journey worth taking. Getting a diagnosis as an adult is a double-edged sword. It brings clarity and answers but also a sobering reminder of missed opportunities and supports. Yet, it's never too late to take charge of your life and seek the help you need.

Support is crucial. Therapy can help you sort through your emotions and develop new coping strategies. Support groups offer community and shared experience. Surround yourself with friends and family who understand and accept you as you are.

Parents' honesty is the best policy when it comes to your child's disability. Explain their condition in



terms they can understand. Open communication builds trust and helps them feel supported, not different or ashamed. Hiding the truth only fosters secrecy and shame, casting long shadows over their lives.

There are dire consequences to keeping a disability hidden. Without proper guidance and support, children face unnecessary struggles in school and social settings. They miss out on educational accommodations, leading to academic difficulties.

Socially, they may find it hard to make friends or understand social cues, resulting in isolation or bullying. In adulthood, the lack of early intervention can manifest in mental health issues, difficulty maintaining employment, and strained relationships.

Creating a supportive environment is vital. Build a network of understanding friends, family, and professionals who can offer assistance and encouragement. Advocate for yourself in work or school to ensure you receive the accommodations you need. Developing self-advocacy skills is crucial—know your rights, understand your needs, and communicate them effectively.

Reflecting on your journey can be a powerful tool for personal growth. Understanding the challenges you've faced and how you've overcome them can give you a sense of resilience and strength. It can also help you develop empathy for others facing similar challenges. Sharing your experiences can raise awareness and support those who might be going through similar situations. Whether through writing, speaking, or simply being open with friends and family, your story can make a difference.

The discovery of a hidden disability can be a turning point in your life. It may bring a mix of emotions, but it also offers an opportunity for growth and self-improvement. Seek professional help, educate yourself, and build a supportive environment to navigate this new chapter with confidence. Understanding your disability is a journey, and it's okay

to take it one step at a time. Your experiences, though challenging, have shaped who you are, and with the right support, you can thrive with hope and determination.

©Mark Twain





When Your Jokes Fall Flat

Humor is a fundamental part of our interactions with others and our expression of personality. When those close to us don't understand or appreciate our jokes, it can be disheartening.

This situation is especially challenging when it involves a family member, such as your mum. If your mum doesn't get your sense of humor and responds with criticism or lectures, it can make you feel isolated and discouraged.

The impact of being misunderstood goes beyond the jokes themselves. Humor often reflects our identity, and when it's not well-received, it can feel like a part of who we are is being dismissed. This can lead to feelings of sadness and frustration, causing you to question your sense of humor and become less inclined to share it.

Addressing this issue begins with open communication. Although it might seem uncomfortable, it's important to talk to your mum about how her reactions affect you. Instead of placing blame, focus on expressing your feelings. You might say something like, "I feel really down when my jokes aren't understood or when I'm corrected. Humor is a big part of who I am, and I'd appreciate it if we could talk about how we can better understand each other's perspectives." This approach

helps communicate your experience without making her feel accused, which can facilitate a more receptive dialogue.

Understanding that people's reactions often stem from their own perspectives or experiences can be helpful. Your mum might have a different sense of humor or might not fully grasp the context of your jokes. By explaining your point of view, you might help her appreciate why certain styles of humor are important to you. This doesn't mean she has to change her own sense of humor, but it can foster better understanding between you.

If talking things out with your mum doesn't fully resolve the issue, seeking support from others can be beneficial. Connecting with friends who share your sense of humor can provide the validation and understanding that might be missing at home. Engaging with people who appreciate your jokes can uplift your mood and reinforce your sense of self-worth. Look for social groups or online communities where your interests and humor are valued. Whether through a local club, an online forum, or a hobby group, finding people who understand and appreciate your humor can be a great source of support.

Respecting your mum's perspective is also important, even if she doesn't fully understand your humor. Acknowledging this and giving her space to understand

can help maintain family harmony. Balancing your own needs with family dynamics is crucial for maintaining healthy relationships.

Taking care of your emotional health is vital, especially when dealing with feelings of frustration or sadness. Engage in activities that bring you joy, whether it's pursuing a hobby, exercising, or spending time with friends who lift you up. If these feelings of being misunderstood or criticized begin to affect your mental health, it might be helpful to talk to a professional. A therapist or counselor can offer strategies and support to help you navigate these challenges and maintain your well-being.

Ultimately, finding a balance that allows you to enjoy your sense of humor while maintaining healthy relationships is key. By communicating openly, seeking support from like-minded individuals, and prioritizing self-care, you can work towards a resolution that lets you continue to find joy in your humor while fostering positive relationships with those around you. Navigating misunderstandings about humor can be complex, but with patience and empathy, you can find a path that works for you and your family.

Courtesy to
Kira Arkhipova



Unconventional Paths to Ignite a Child's Curiosity

Finding effective ways to engage a child who is more interested in playing than in learning or schoolwork can be challenging. This challenge is common among children, especially those with unique needs or preferences. As educators with extensive experience in the field of special education and applied behavior analysis, we understand the need for innovative and practical solutions to inspire learning without relying solely on rewards.

One approach is to incorporate sensory activities into learning. Sensory activities can engage a child's senses and make learning more enjoyable. For example, using sand, water, or tactile materials can help teach concepts in a more hands-on way. This can be particularly effective for subjects like math and science, where physical manipulation of objects can enhance understanding.

Creating a thematic learning environment can also be effective. This involves transforming a learning space into a themed area that relates to the subject being taught. For instance, setting up a space station in a room to teach about space can make the learning experience more immersive and exciting. This method can help children feel more connected to the material and more enthusiastic about participating.

Engaging in outdoor learning can also be beneficial. Nature provides a rich and stimulating environment for learning. Activities like nature walks, outdoor experiments, and observational drawing can teach children about science, geography, and art in a real-world context. Being outdoors can also reduce stress and increase focus,

making it easier for children to engage with the material.

Introducing mindfulness and movement activities can also support learning. Techniques like yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises can help children develop concentration and self-regulation skills. Incorporating movement into lessons, such as through dance, exercise, or movement-based games, can also help children who have difficulty sitting still for long periods.

Using technology in creative ways can enhance engagement. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) can provide immersive learning experiences that traditional methods can't match. These technologies can take children on virtual field trips, allow them to explore complex concepts in 3D, or provide interactive simulations of scientific phenomena.

Encouraging independent projects can also be effective. Allowing children to choose a topic they are passionate about and explore it through a project can foster a love of learning. These projects can be multidisciplinary, involving research, writing, art, and presentation skills. Giving children the autonomy to pursue their interests can increase their intrinsic motivation.

Utilizing pets or animals in the learning process can provide a unique and engaging experience. Interacting with animals can teach children about biology, responsibility, and empathy. For example, caring for a class pet can involve lessons on animal habitats, diet, and behavior. This hands-on experience can make learning more tangible and

memorable.

Creating a collaborative learning environment can also be beneficial. Encouraging children to work together on projects or problems can develop their teamwork and communication skills. Collaborative activities can also introduce a social element to learning, making it more enjoyable for children who thrive in interactive settings.

Finally, developing a reward system that focuses on intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation can be effective. Instead of offering toys or external rewards, focus on building a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work. Praise their efforts, celebrate their progress, and help them set personal goals. This approach can help children develop a love of learning for its own sake.

In conclusion, engaging a child in learning when they seem more interested in playing requires creativity, patience, and a willingness to try new approaches. By incorporating sensory activities, creating thematic environments, engaging in outdoor learning, introducing mindfulness and movement, leveraging technology, encouraging independent projects, utilizing animals, fostering collaboration, and focusing on intrinsic motivation, you can foster a more engaging and motivating learning experience for your child. Each child is unique, so it's essential to remain flexible and open to adapting these strategies to best suit their individual needs and preferences.

Courtesy to
Be Change

Practical Strategies to Help Your Autistic Child Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is essential for every child's well-being and development. However, many parents of autistic children face significant challenges when it comes to ensuring their child sleeps well. As specialists in applied behavior analysis, we understand the complexities involved and offer practical strategies to help your autistic son get the rest he needs.

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often experience sleep difficulties. These can include trouble falling asleep, frequent night awakenings, or early morning wake-ups. Sensory sensitivities, anxiety, and difficulty with routines are common factors that contribute to these sleep issues. Sensory sensitivities can make it hard for an autistic child to relax. The feel of the bedding, the temperature of the room, or even background noises can be distressing. Anxiety and difficulties with routines can also interfere with sleep. Worries or an inability to unwind after a busy day can keep them awake for hours.

The first step in addressing sleep issues is to create a calming sleep environment. This involves reducing sensory triggers that may be causing discomfort. Soft, comfortable bedding, a consistent room temperature, and a quiet, dark room can make a significant difference. Consider using blackout curtains to block out light and a white noise machine to mask background sounds. Comfort items, such as a favorite blanket or stuffed animal, can also help. These items can provide a sense of security and familiarity, which is particularly important for children with autism.

Routine is crucial for autistic children. A consistent bedtime routine can signal to your child that it's time to wind down and prepare for sleep. This routine should be calm and predictable, happening at the same time and in the same order every night. Start with a relaxing activity, such as reading a book, taking a warm bath, or listening to soft music. Avoid stimulating activities like screen time or vigorous play before bed. The goal is to help your child transition from the activities of the day to a state of relaxation.

Visual schedules can be very helpful for children with autism. These schedules use pictures to outline the steps of the bedtime routine, providing a clear and predictable sequence of events. This can reduce anxiety and help your child understand what to expect. For example, the schedule might show a sequence of pictures: brushing teeth, putting on pajamas, reading a book, and turning off the lights. Review the schedule with your child each night, reinforcing the routine and providing a sense of structure.

Anxiety is a common barrier to sleep for autistic children. Addressing this anxiety can significantly improve sleep quality. Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, gentle massage, or using a weighted blanket can help your child feel more relaxed. Another effective strategy is to create positive sleep associations. This means ensuring that the bed and bedroom are associated with sleep and relaxation, not with play or stress. Encourage your child to use the bed only for sleeping, not for other activities like watching TV or playing games.

If your child has developed negative associations with bedtime or the bedroom, gradual desensitization can help. This involves slowly and systematically exposing your child to the bedroom environment in a positive way. Start by spending short, positive periods of time in the bedroom during the day, gradually increasing the duration as your child becomes more comfortable. Reinforce positive behaviors with praise or a small reward, creating a positive association with the bedtime environment.

For more persistent sleep issues, behavioral interventions can be effective. One approach is to use a method called "fading". This involves gradually reducing the presence of a parent in the room as the child falls asleep. Start by sitting next to the bed, then gradually move further away each night until you are outside the room. This helps your child learn to fall asleep independently. Consistency is key, so stick with the plan even if it takes several weeks to see

progress.

Some parents find that melatonin supplements can help their autistic child fall asleep. Melatonin is a hormone that regulates sleep-wake cycles and can be helpful for some children with autism. However, it's important to consult with your child's doctor before starting any supplement. They can provide guidance on appropriate dosages and potential side effects. In some cases, persistent sleep issues may require further evaluation by a medical professional. A sleep specialist or pediatrician can help identify any underlying medical conditions that may be contributing to the sleep difficulties.

Caring for a child with sleep issues can be exhausting. It's important to also take care of your own well-being. Ensure you have a support system in place, whether it's a partner, family members, or support groups for parents of autistic children. Taking breaks and seeking help when needed can help you maintain your own health and well-being, allowing you to better support your child.

Helping an autistic child sleep can be challenging, but with patience, consistency, and the right strategies, it is possible to improve their sleep patterns. Creating a calming sleep environment, establishing a consistent bedtime routine, and addressing

anxiety can make a significant difference. Remember that each child is unique, so it may take some time to find the strategies that work best for your son. With dedication and support, you can help your child achieve better sleep and overall well-being.



Courtesy to
Anna

Echoes of the Moonlit Glade

“The flickering flames cast a warm glow, and the story’s words seemed to weave a comforting spell.”



Mr. Harold Benton, a man of quiet contemplation, had planned this camping trip for months. His daughter, Lily, was his pride and joy, a spirited nine-year-old with bright eyes and an even brighter mind. Lily was on the autism spectrum, and Harold knew that such an excursion required meticulous preparation. Yet, he was determined to create memories that would last a lifetime. He envisioned the fresh air, the rustling leaves, and the crackling campfire, all shared with his beloved daughter.

The journey began early on a crisp morning. The car was packed with essentials: a tent, sleeping bags, food supplies, and a carefully curated collection of Lily’s favorite toys and games. As they drove, Harold couldn’t help but glance at Lily, who was happily immersed in her sensory toy, a squishy ball that provided her with tactile stimulation and comfort. Her calm demeanor reassured him that they were off to a good start.

Upon arriving at the campsite, nestled near a serene lake and surrounded by tall pines, Harold and Lily set to work. Harold pitched the tent while Lily arranged her toys on a blanket spread out on the grassy area. The campsite was picturesque, the kind of place Harold had always dreamed of sharing with his daughter. He watched as Lily meticulously lined up her action figures and animal figurines, her concentration a testament to her imaginative play.

As the day wore on and the sun began to set, Harold knew it was time to create a comfortable and predictable environment for Lily. He spread out a large, soft blanket near the campfire, ensuring it was far enough to be safe but close enough for her to feel included. He laid out her favorite sensory toys, including a small bin of kinetic sand and a textured blanket. The rhythmic motion of shaping the sand seemed to soothe her, and Harold felt a wave of relief wash over him.

Harold had brought along a selection of Lily’s favorite books, and as they settled by the fire, he began to read to her. The flickering flames cast a warm glow, and the story’s words seemed to weave a comforting spell around them. Lily’s eyes were fixed on the vibrant pictures, her attention unwavering. It was in these quiet moments that Harold felt a deep connection with his daughter, a bond that transcended words.

Knowing that Lily enjoyed interactive play, Harold introduced her to a small set of building blocks he had packed. Together,



they constructed towers and castles, their laughter mingling with the sounds of the night. The blocks were simple yet effective in keeping her engaged, and Harold was grateful for the foresight in bringing them along.

As the evening progressed, Harold encouraged Lily to join in some simple outdoor games. They tossed a ball back and forth, the activity providing both exercise and fun. When Lily grew tired, they returned to the blanket, and Harold brought out a portable art kit. Watching Lily express herself through drawing and coloring was a joy. Her creativity flowed freely, and Harold marveled at the beautiful patterns and shapes she created.

Understanding the importance of sensory experiences, Harold had also packed a few musical instruments. He handed Lily a tambourine, and they created their own little campfire concert. The music was simple but magical, each note a testament to the bond they shared. Singing songs together, they felt a sense of unity and peace that only such moments could bring.

When the time came for a bit of educational fun, Harold introduced Lily to a counting beads game. She enjoyed the challenge, her fingers deftly moving the beads back and forth. The activity was both engaging and educational, a perfect combination for her curious mind.

As the night deepened, Harold sensed it was time for a calming activity. He suggested listening to an audiobook, a favorite of Lily’s. She settled into the story, her eyes growing heavy with the soothing narrative. Harold knew these moments of relaxation were crucial for her well-being. In the morning, Harold and Lily explored the

natural beauty around them. They collected leaves, rocks, and sticks, creating a nature collage on the blanket. The exploration was both educational and therapeutic, allowing Lily to connect with the world around her in a tangible way. Harold provided her with a magnifying glass, and together they examined insects and plants, sparking her curiosity and deepening her appreciation for nature.

Harold also involved Lily in the campfire activities, assigning her small tasks like gathering sticks and helping to prepare snacks. These responsibilities boosted her confidence and gave her a sense of accomplishment. She was not just a participant in this adventure but an essential part of it.

As they packed up to leave, Harold reflected on the trip. It had been more than just a camping excursion; it had been a journey of connection and discovery. He had seen his daughter thrive in an environment carefully tailored to her needs, and he felt a profound sense of fulfillment. The memories they had created were etched in his heart, and he knew they would carry the magic of this experience with them forever.

In the end, Harold realized that the secret to a successful trip with Lily lay in understanding and embracing her unique needs. With the right toys, games, and activities, they had created a harmonious balance of engagement and relaxation. As they drove home, Harold glanced at Lily, who was contentedly playing with her squishy ball, and he knew that this was just the beginning of many more adventures to come.

Courtesy to
Sheila Lennon



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FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING (FCT)



Replacing Challenging Behaviors with Effective Communication

Functional Communication Training (FCT) is a cornerstone of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), designed to replace challenging behaviors with effective communication skills. The premise of FCT is that many problematic behaviors serve a communicative function for individuals who may lack appropriate ways to express their needs. By teaching these individuals more acceptable forms of communication, FCT aims to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviors and enhance their ability to interact with others.

Identifying the Function of Behavior

The first step in FCT is conducting a thorough functional behavior assessment (FBA). This assessment seeks to understand the purpose behind the challenging behavior. The FBA involves observing the individual in various settings, interviewing caregivers and teachers, and collecting data on when and where the behavior occurs. The goal is to identify the antecedents (triggers) and consequences that maintain the behavior. Common functions of challenging behaviors include gaining attention, escaping from a task, accessing a preferred item, or obtaining sensory stimulation.

For example, if a child screams to get a caregiver's attention, the function of the screaming is attention-seeking. Similarly, if a child engages in self-injurious behavior to avoid a difficult task, the function is task avoidance. Understanding the function of

the behavior is crucial because it guides the selection of an appropriate alternative communication method.

Teaching Alternative Communication

Once the function of the behavior is identified, the next step is to teach an alternative communication method that serves the same function but is more socially acceptable. This new communication method should be as efficient and effective as the challenging behavior it replaces. The chosen method should also align with the individual's abilities and preferences.

For instance, if a child with limited verbal skills screams to gain attention, FCT might involve teaching the child to use a simple gesture, a picture exchange system, or a communication device to request attention. For a child who engages in self-injurious behavior to escape tasks, FCT might involve teaching the child to use a break card or a verbal request for a break.

Implementing the Training

Teaching the new communication behavior involves several steps. Initially, the training occurs in a controlled environment to minimize distractions and increase the likelihood of success. Direct instruction and prompting are essential during this phase. The therapist provides clear, consistent prompts to encourage the use of the new communication behavior. Each time the individual uses the new behavior correctly, they receive immediate and appropriate reinforcement.

For example, if a child uses a picture card to request a snack, the therapist immediately provides the snack. This immediate reinforcement helps the child understand the connection between the new communication behavior and the desired outcome.

As the individual becomes more proficient, the prompts are gradually faded. This means the therapist provides less direct guidance, encouraging the individual to use the new communication behavior independently. Concurrently, the reinforcement for the new behavior is maintained to ensure it remains effective. The ultimate goal is for the individual to use the new communication behavior consistently in their natural environment without needing prompts or additional reinforcement.

Generalization and Maintenance

Generalization refers to the ability to apply the new communication skills across different settings, people, and situations. To promote generalization, FCT training should occur in various environments, including

home, school, and community settings. It is also important for different caregivers and teachers to be involved in the training to ensure consistency.

Training caregivers and other individuals in the person's environment is critical. Everyone who interacts with the individual should understand the new communication behavior and how to reinforce it. This consistency across different settings and people increases the likelihood of successful generalization.

Maintenance involves ensuring that the new communication behavior continues over time. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential. Regular assessments help determine whether the individual is maintaining the new behavior and whether any adjustments are needed. For example, if the individual starts to revert to the challenging behavior, the therapist may need to revisit the functional assessment or modify the reinforcement strategies.

Benefits of FCT

FCT offers numerous benefits. By addressing the underlying function of challenging behaviors and providing an effective means of communication, FCT leads to significant reductions in problematic behaviors. Research has shown that FCT can effectively reduce behaviors such as aggression, self-injury, and tantrums.

Moreover, individuals who learn new communication skills through FCT often experience improvements in other areas of their lives. These may include increased social interactions, better academic performance, and greater independence. Enhanced communication skills enable individuals to express their needs and

preferences more effectively, leading to improved relationships with caregivers, teachers, and peers.

FCT is also highly individualized, making it suitable for a wide range of individuals, including those with varying levels of abilities and communication skills. This individualized approach increases the likelihood of success, as the new communication behavior is tailored to the specific needs of the person using it.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite its effectiveness, FCT does present some challenges. It requires careful planning and implementation. Conducting a thorough functional assessment is critical to accurately identify the function of the challenging behavior. This assessment must be comprehensive, involving direct observation, interviews with caregivers, and other data collection methods.

Choosing the right communication method is also crucial. The method should be one that the individual is comfortable with and capable of using effectively. For some individuals, verbal language may be the most appropriate option, while others may benefit more from sign language or a communication device.

Another challenge is ensuring consistency across different settings and people. Training caregivers and other individuals in the person's environment is essential but can be time-consuming. It is important to provide adequate training and support to ensure everyone understands how to prompt and reinforce the new communication behavior.

Summary ...

Functional Communication Training is a powerful tool in Applied Behavior Analysis. By replacing challenging behaviors with appropriate communication, FCT improves the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. It addresses the underlying function of behaviors and provides effective means of communication, leading to reductions in problematic behaviors and improvements in other areas of life.

Through careful assessment, individualized instruction, and consistent reinforcement, FCT can lead to significant behavioral improvements. While it requires careful planning and implementation, the benefits of FCT make it a valuable intervention for individuals with communication challenges. By promoting appropriate communication and reducing challenging behaviors, FCT helps individuals achieve greater independence and enhances their interactions with others, ultimately improving their overall quality of life.

Chewing Behaviors in Children

Understanding and Managing Chewing Behaviors in Children with Autism

Children with autism often exhibit behaviors driven by sensory needs, including chewing and licking objects. A common concern for many parents is when their child develops a habit of chewing on inappropriate items, such as remote controls, which can be both unhygienic and potentially harmful. Addressing these behaviors requires understanding the underlying sensory needs and finding appropriate alternatives.

Understanding Sensory Needs

Chewing and licking are often ways for children with autism to fulfill their sensory needs. The taste or texture of objects like remote controls may be appealing to them, even if it seems unpleasant to us. This behavior is typically not a result of laziness or defiance but rather an attempt to seek sensory input that they find comforting or stimulating. Recognizing this can help in finding effective strategies to redirect these behaviors.

Children with autism might have heightened sensory sensitivities or seek out certain sensory experiences to help them feel calm and focused. Chewing can provide proprioceptive input, which helps them understand where their body is in space and can be calming. It can also be a way to self-regulate when they are feeling anxious or overstimulated. Understanding these underlying reasons is the first step in addressing the behavior constructively.

Experimenting with Sensory Chew Toys

Sensory chew toys are designed to provide a safe and appropriate outlet for these needs. However, not all chew toys will appeal to every child. It's important to experiment with different types until you find one that your child prefers. Chew toys come in various textures, shapes, and flavors. Some are made of silicone, rubber, or other materials that provide different sensory feedback. Introducing your child to a variety of these toys and observing which ones they respond to can be helpful. Sometimes, children need time to get used to new textures or flavors, so gently encouraging them to try them over time might help.

Providing a range of options can be beneficial. Some children might prefer smooth textures, while others might like toys with ridges or bumps. Observing your child's reactions to different textures and materials can provide clues about what they find most satisfying. Additionally, involving your child in the selection process can give them a sense of control and increase their willingness to use the toys.

Offering Similar Alternatives

If sensory chew toys are not immediately appealing, consider alternatives that mimic the





approach is key to establishing new habits.

Developing a structured approach to redirecting chewing behaviors involves clear communication and patience. Consistently reminding your child and reinforcing the use of appropriate chew items can help shift the behavior over time. Positive reinforcement, like verbal praise or a small reward, when your child uses the correct item can strengthen this new habit. Setting a daily routine where your child has designated times to use their sensory toys can help them get used to using the appropriate items.

Keeping the Remote Out of Reach

To reduce temptation, keep the remote control out of your child's reach when not in use. Designate a specific spot for the remote that your child understands is off-limits. At the same time, make sure that the preferred chewing alternatives are always accessible. Creating a dedicated area for sensory chew toys can make it easier for your child to find and use them when they feel the need to chew. This can help them develop the habit of reaching for their sensory toys instead of the remote.

Ensuring the remote is stored in a consistent, out-of-reach place can help establish boundaries for your child. Clearly communicating these boundaries and ensuring they are upheld by everyone in the household is crucial. Additionally, having a designated spot for sensory toys, easily accessible to your child, encourages them to use these items instead.

Maintaining a Supportive Environment

Understanding your child's sensory needs and finding the right tools to meet them can help redirect their behavior in a safe and appropriate way. It may take some trial and error, but with patience and persistence, you can find a solution that works for both of you. Recognize that this process might involve ongoing adjustments as your child's preferences

and needs evolve. Maintaining open communication with your child about their preferences and observing their responses to different sensory toys will be important in finding the most effective solution.

Creating a supportive environment that acknowledges your child's sensory needs while promoting appropriate behaviors is key. This involves being patient, understanding, and responsive to your child's changing needs. Regularly discussing and reinforcing the importance of using designated chew toys can help establish these new habits. Flexibility and adaptability are also important as your child's needs and preferences may change over time. Keeping an open dialogue with your child about what is working and what isn't can help you make necessary adjustments.

Consulting with Professionals

Consulting with an occupational therapist who specializes in sensory processing can provide valuable insights and recommendations tailored to your child's specific needs. These professionals can offer strategies and tools to help manage sensory behaviors effectively. They can also help in developing a comprehensive plan that includes both home and school environments, ensuring consistency and support across different settings.

Occupational therapists can conduct thorough assessments to understand your child's unique sensory profile and provide personalized recommendations. They can also work with you and your child to develop strategies that can be implemented at home and school. This holistic approach ensures that your child receives consistent support in managing their sensory needs.

In summary, addressing chewing behaviors in children with autism involves understanding their sensory needs, experimenting with different sensory toys, and creating a supportive environment. By being proactive and responsive to your child's needs, you can help them find appropriate ways to meet their sensory needs while promoting healthy and hygienic behaviors. This approach not only addresses the immediate issue but also supports your child's overall

development and well-being.

Through patience, consistency, and the willingness to try different strategies, parents can effectively manage and redirect their child's chewing behaviors. By providing appropriate alternatives, setting clear boundaries, and maintaining open communication, parents can help their children develop healthier habits that meet their sensory needs in safe and acceptable ways.

This comprehensive approach not only benefits the child but also enhances the

family's overall well-being by reducing stress and promoting a harmonious living environment.



Additional tip

Tips ...

- **Edible Sensory Alternatives**
incorporate edible sensory alternatives into your child's routine. Introducing safe, edible items such as crunchy vegetables, flavored ice cubes, or specially designed chewable food products can offer both sensory satisfaction and nutritional benefits. For instance, frozen grapes or carrot sticks can provide a satisfying crunch that mimics the texture they seek, while also being healthy snacks.

This approach not only redirects their chewing behavior to appropriate items but also integrates healthy eating habits, addressing sensory needs in an innovative and beneficial way.

texture or sensation of the remote control. Rubber kitchen utensils or silicone cooking tools can be good options as they are safe, easy to clean, and often have similar textures. Ensuring these items are free of harmful chemicals and are regularly cleaned is crucial. Items that resemble the remote in shape and size may also be more readily accepted by your child.

For instance, a silicone spatula might have a similar feel to a remote control but is designed to be safe for chewing. These alternatives can be a practical interim solution while you continue to explore and introduce sensory chew toys. Ensuring these items are durable and safe for regular chewing is essential to prevent any hazards.

Using Flavored Sensory Toys

Flavor can play a significant role in making sensory toys more appealing. Some sensory chew toys are designed to be flavored or can be dipped in safe, flavorful substances. Experimenting with flavors your child likes may increase their willingness to use these toys. There are products available specifically for this purpose, such as flavor sprays or dips for sensory toys, which can enhance their taste and make them more attractive to

your child.

Introducing flavors your child enjoys, such as mint, vanilla, or even fruity tastes, can make sensory toys more enticing. Some sensory toys are pre-flavored, while others can be dipped in flavor solutions that are safe for ingestion. Ensuring the flavors used are non-toxic and safe for regular use is important. You might even try adding small amounts of food flavoring to make the sensory chew toys more appealing. By finding a flavor that your child enjoys, you can make the sensory toys a more attractive alternative to inappropriate objects.

Establishing Routines and Boundaries

Creating a consistent routine and setting clear boundaries can help manage inappropriate chewing behaviors. Explain to your child that the remote control is not for chewing and that they have special toys just for that purpose. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or small rewards, can encourage them to use the appropriate items. For example, praising your child or giving them a small treat when they chew on the sensory toy instead of the remote can reinforce the desired behavior. Consistency in this



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An Autistic Adult's Guide to Engaging Hobbies
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The Art of Behavioral Alchemy

Managing challenging behavior in a teen with ADHD and autism can be daunting, especially when traditional methods don't seem to yield the desired results. Exploring creative and unconventional strategies can offer new pathways to improvement. This guide provides detailed insights into innovative approaches that might help manage and improve behavior while fostering a positive and supportive environment.

One of the most effective ways to address behavior issues is by tapping into your teen's unique interests and strengths. For example, if your son has a passion for cars and racing, you can use this interest as a foundation for behavior management. Develop a reward system where he earns privileges related to his interests. This could involve allowing him extra time on a racing video game or opportunities to work on a model car. The key is to align the rewards with what excites him the most. By doing so, you create a direct connection between positive behavior and something he values, which can enhance his motivation and engagement.

To give this approach more depth, consider how you can make the reward system as dynamic and appealing as possible. For instance, you might create a "racing challenge" where he earns points for each positive behavior or completed task. These points can be accumulated and exchanged for larger rewards, such as a day out at a car show or a new accessory for his model car. This method not only makes behavior management more interactive but also integrates his passions into the process, making it more meaningful and effective.

Creating a collaborative behavioral contract is another strategy that can offer significant benefits. Instead of imposing a contract from above, work together with your teen to develop one that outlines clear expectations and consequences. This process involves discussing what behaviors need to change and what rewards or consequences are fair. By involving him in the creation of the contract, you provide him with a sense

of ownership and responsibility over his actions. This can increase his commitment to adhering to the terms and make him more invested in following through.

To further elaborate on this approach, consider setting up regular review meetings to discuss progress and make any necessary adjustments to the contract. This can help ensure that the agreement remains relevant and effective over time. It also provides an opportunity for ongoing dialogue, allowing you to address any emerging issues and celebrate successes together.

Technology can play a significant role in managing behavior, especially when traditional methods seem to fall short. Various apps and tools designed for behavior tracking and motivation can be leveraged to create an interactive and engaging system. For instance, you might use a gamified app where your son earns points for positive behavior. These points can be redeemed for rewards that align with his interests, creating a game-like experience that makes behavior management more engaging and less confrontational.

To maximize the effectiveness of this approach, choose apps or tools that offer customization options. This allows you to tailor the system to your son's specific interests and needs. Additionally, involve him in setting up and using these tools to increase his engagement and ownership of the process.

Sometimes, real-life consequences can be more impactful than abstract ones. Create scenarios where your son experiences the direct impact of his behaviors. For example, if he neglects his chores or is irresponsible with his belongings, let him face the real-life consequences, such as not finding something he needs for a particular activity. This approach helps him understand the immediate effects of his actions and makes the consequences more tangible.

To illustrate this strategy further, consider incorporating a "natural consequences"

approach into daily routines. For instance, if he fails to complete a homework assignment, he might miss out on a planned activity or have to face a lower grade. By allowing him to experience the direct impact of his actions, you help him connect behavior with its immediate effects, which can lead to more meaningful behavioral changes.

Engaging in collaborative problem-solving can also be highly effective. Instead of imposing solutions, have open discussions with your teen about the problems and potential solutions. Encourage him to share his thoughts and work together to develop strategies that address both his needs and family expectations. This method fosters a sense of partnership and respect, increasing his buy-in and commitment to the solutions.

To deepen this approach, establish a regular time for problem-solving discussions. This could be a weekly or bi-weekly meeting where you review any ongoing issues, discuss potential solutions, and set goals for the coming period. By making problem-solving a routine part of your interactions, you create a structured and supportive environment that encourages open communication and collaborative decision-making.

Visual supports can provide clear and immediate guidance, which is especially beneficial for teens with ADHD and autism. Create visual schedules that outline daily routines, expectations, and consequences. Use charts and checklists to help him understand what is expected and what comes next in his day. Visual supports can reduce anxiety and provide a structured approach to managing daily tasks.

To enhance the effectiveness of visual supports, consider involving your son in the creation of these tools. For example, he could help design a visual schedule that reflects his daily activities and responsibilities. This involvement can increase his engagement and make the visual supports more relevant and useful.

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“Instead of imposing solutions, have open discussions with your teen about the problems and potential solutions.”

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Improving social skills and emotional regulation is crucial for addressing behavior issues. Incorporate social skills training into your routine, focusing on areas such as empathy, communication, and understanding social cues. Techniques like role-playing and social stories can help practice and reinforce these skills. Enhancing social skills can assist your son in navigating interactions more effectively and reduce behavior issues related to social misunderstandings.

To make social skills training more effective, consider incorporating real-life scenarios into the practice. For example, role-play situations that he might encounter in everyday life, such as interacting with peers or handling conflict. This practical approach helps him apply social skills in real-world contexts and build confidence in his abilities.

Establishing a consistent and predictable routine is also important. Develop a daily routine with structured times for activities, responsibilities, and leisure. Consistency provides stability and predictability, which can help manage behavioral issues. Ensure that any changes to the routine are communicated clearly and in advance to help your son adjust more easily.

To support this strategy, create a visual schedule that outlines the daily routine and post it in a prominent location. This visual aid can help your son understand what to expect and reduce anxiety related to changes or transitions.

If traditional methods haven't been successful, seeking additional professional guidance can be beneficial. Specialized therapists, behavioral analysts, and other experts can provide new strategies and insights tailored to your son's specific needs. Collaborate with these professionals to develop a comprehensive plan that incorporates innovative approaches and addresses his unique challenges.

An unconventional but effective strategy involves involving your teen in real-life projects that require responsibility. Choose



a project that aligns with his interests, such as designing and building a model car or managing a small business venture like a neighborhood car washing service. Break the project into manageable tasks and emphasize the importance of commitment and responsibility. This approach helps him experience the real-world impact of his actions and develop skills such as problem-solving and time management.

To make the project approach more impactful, provide guidance and support throughout the process. Celebrate milestones and achievements to foster a sense of accomplishment and pride. This method not only addresses behavior but also encourages personal growth and responsibility.

By integrating these creative methods into your approach, you may discover new ways to manage challenging behaviors and foster positive change. Staying flexible and persistent in finding strategies that work best for your teen is key to supporting his development while maintaining a positive and respectful relationship.

Quick Tip

A quick tip for managing challenging behavior is to use a "behavior jar." Create a jar where your teen earns tokens or marbles for positive actions and behavior. Set specific milestones or goals, and when he reaches them, he can exchange the tokens for a preferred reward, such as extra screen time or a small treat. This visual and tangible system can motivate and reinforce good behavior in a straightforward way.



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JASON JONES

WHY WHAT HOW

Any tips for stims? Like I like stuffies, cute clothes, fidget toys I want to find something to help me through college

First, In college, managing stress and maintaining focus can be challenging. Here's how you can use stims like stuffies, cute clothes, and fidget toys effectively:

Stuffies: Keep a small, comforting stuffie in your bag or on your desk. It can be a source of comfort during breaks or when you're feeling overwhelmed. Use it as a quick stress-relief tool when needed.

Cute Clothes: Wear clothes that make you feel good and comfortable. Opt for soft fabrics and designs that you enjoy, especially on days when you have long classes or exams. Feeling comfortable in your clothes can reduce anxiety and help you stay focused.

Fidget Toys: Use discreet fidget toys like stress balls, fidget spinners, or small tactile items during study sessions. These can help manage restlessness and improve concentration. Keep them within reach so you can use them as needed without distracting others.

Incorporate these items into your routine to create a personal support system. Use them consistently to help manage stress and maintain focus throughout your college experience.

Nee doh squishes (Amazon or toy store)

Elmer's gue (like deep sea gue) - it's amazing and fun and beautiful slime

Model magic clay

Coloring books

Silly puddy

My son is 2 and he was told he needed to wear glasses. I get his first pair in 7-10 days any tips on how to help him adjust? He hates things touching his head and face.

It's To specifically address the challenge of your son's sensitivity to things touching his head and face:

Desensitization: Start with a gradual desensitization process. Place the glasses on his face for a few seconds each day, increasing the duration as he becomes more comfortable. Begin with the glasses off and then gently rest them on his head without fastening them.

Use a Preferred Object: Introduce the glasses alongside a preferred object, such as a favorite stuffed animal or toy. This can help create a positive association with the glasses.

Adjust Fit: Ensure the glasses are properly fitted. Ill-fitting glasses can be uncomfortable and exacerbate his sensitivity. Consult with an optician to make any necessary adjustments.

Distract and Engage: Use distractions, such as engaging in an activity he enjoys while wearing the glasses. This helps him focus on the activity rather than the sensation of the glasses.

Consistent Routine: Incorporate the glasses into his daily routine at consistent times, such as during meals or playtime, to help him adapt to wearing them as a normal part of his day.

Visual Supports: Use visual supports or social stories to explain why wearing glasses is important and how it can help him. This can be a way to provide him with a framework for understanding the glasses' purpose.

Comfort Materials: Try adding soft, hypoallergenic materials to the areas where the glasses touch his skin to reduce irritation and improve comfort.

If you wear glasses or someone in your house wears glasses make it a game to wear your glasses. He'll eventually want to wear them. If you don't have anyone that wears glasses get a fake pair and wear them all the time. Or my daughter's glasses came with the straps to hold them on so they don't move or fall off

These strategies are based on behavioral approaches to gradually increase tolerance and comfort.

My I want to use flash cards for my son speech training at home. If keep using

flash cards at home then when he goes to speech therapy and the therapist also do the same flash card activity then would he loose interest and not learn from Therapist? His speech therapist always use flash cards with pictures to train him so I want to know if I can do the same technique at home or not ?

It's Using flash cards effectively involves more than just presenting them during dedicated learning sessions. Here's how to integrate them into your child's daily routine and therapy:

First, incorporate flash cards into everyday activities. For example, if your child is learning about fruits, use flash cards while you're preparing meals or shopping for

“

She never remembers and tries to avoid it.

”

groceries. Instead of just showing the cards, discuss the items on the cards in context. For example, while holding a flash card with a picture of an apple, you might say, "We're going to eat this apple for snack time."

Next, align flash card activities with your child's interests. If your child is fascinated by animals, use animal flash cards during playtime. This could mean incorporating the cards into games where they identify and sort animals, or using the cards to talk about different animal sounds and behaviors during play. This approach keeps the learning engaging and relevant to your child's preferences.

Additionally, model language during routine activities. When interacting with your child, use complete sentences and descriptive phrases. For example, during a routine like getting dressed, say, "Let's put on your blue shirt" rather than just naming the item. This helps your child understand how to use words in practical situations.

To maintain your child's interest and ensure progress, vary the use of flash cards. You can change the sets of cards regularly or mix in different types of activities, such as matching games or simple quizzes, to keep

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the sessions dynamic.

Lastly, coordinate with your child's speech therapist to ensure that the flash card activities at home align with the goals of therapy. Discuss the methods and types of flash cards used, and adapt them based on the therapist's feedback to ensure that home practice supports and enhances what is being done in therapy sessions. This collaborative approach will help create a consistent and effective learning environment for your child.

How can I effectively manage my non-verbal child's pain and recovery from a possible sprain or strain, considering the limitations of non-verbal communication and recent experiences with daycare and medical care?

As a parent who's been through a similar situation, I understand how distressing it can be to see your child in pain and not have clear communication or answers about what's going on. When my child faced a similar issue, it was a challenging experience, but there were a few things I learned that might help.

First, it's important to observe your child closely. Since he's non-verbal, he can't tell you exactly where it hurts, so you have to rely on other clues. If he's refusing to walk and is in pain, even though the X-rays came back okay,

it could still indicate a minor injury like a sprain or strain. These types of injuries often don't show up clearly on X-rays but can still cause significant discomfort.

In terms of pain management, applying ice to the injured area for the first 48 hours can help with swelling and numb the pain. After that, gentle heat can be soothing and help relax any tense muscles. Since your son might be sensitive to these treatments, try to apply ice and heat in short intervals and watch how he responds to ensure it's helping rather than causing additional discomfort.

Since he can't communicate where it hurts, you should also look for other signs. Pay attention to how he's reacting when you touch different areas of his leg. If he seems to react more strongly when you touch a particular spot, that might be where the pain is concentrated.

Additionally, observe any changes in his behavior, such as increased irritability or reluctance to move, which can provide further clues.

Regarding the daycare, I can understand your frustration. It's tough when you feel like you're not getting the full picture or when the response seems inadequate.

In my experience, having a direct and honest conversation with the daycare about your concerns can help. Make sure they understand the importance of promptly informing you about any incidents and keeping you updated on your child's condition.

If the pain persists or if you notice any new symptoms, it's a good idea to follow up with your healthcare provider. They might recommend further evaluation or specific treatments to ensure your child's recovery is on track and to address any ongoing issues.

Through all this, remember that you're doing your best for your child, and it's okay to advocate strongly for their needs.

Any ideas of how to get a 11 year old to clean her teeth properly. We have tried all different flavours of tooth paste. It's a scenery as she hates the way the brush feels. We have found a chocolate flavor tooth paste she can tolerate.

We always have to remind her every morning and night. She never remembers and tries to avoid it.

If your child struggles with sensory issues related to toothbrushing and personal hygiene, there are several strategies you can try to make these tasks more manageable. Start by selecting a toothpaste flavor that your child tolerates.

For instance, if they prefer chocolate-flavored toothpaste, continue using that. Additionally, consider using an electric toothbrush with a soft brush head, as it might be more comfortable for your child and effective in cleaning their teeth.

Establishing a consistent brushing routine can also be beneficial. You might use a visual schedule or a timer with a fun design to help your child understand and remember when it's time to brush their teeth. Consistency can

help make brushing a regular part of their day.

Incorporating a small reward after brushing can create a positive association with the task. Rewards such as extra screen time, a favorite activity, or a small treat can motivate your child to brush their teeth regularly.

When dealing with clothing and deodorant, opt for soft, tagless clothing to reduce discomfort. For deodorant, choose hypoallergenic and fragrance-free products. You might also experiment with different application methods, such as roll-ons or sprays, to find what your child prefers.

Explaining the importance of brushing teeth and maintaining personal hygiene can be helpful. Use simple stories or explanations to help your child understand why these tasks are important. This understanding can encourage them to participate more willingly.

If you continue to face challenges, consider consulting with an occupational therapist who specializes in sensory integration. They can provide tailored strategies and support to address your child's specific needs and make daily routines easier.

By implementing these strategies, you can manage sensory issues related to toothbrushing and personal hygiene more effectively and make these daily tasks more manageable for both you and your child.

Has she tried a finger toothbrush that's silicone instead of bristles? BOKA toothpaste makes fun flavors, would disclosing solution tablets make it a fun game that should could see where she missed brushing and try to make the coloring go away? Will she use lotion? LUME makes deodorant I think in a cream for that could be used for "lotion"

FAQ ...

- what is meltdown

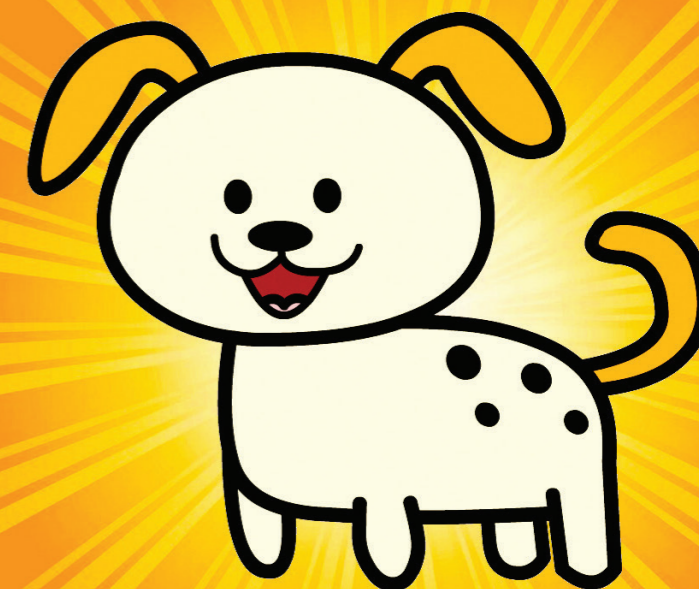
A meltdown is a intense response that individuals with autism may experience when they feel overwhelmed by emotions or sensory stimuli. It's not simply a tantrum or a deliberate act of disobedience; instead, it's a reaction to feeling out of control. During a meltdown, a person might exhibit behaviors like crying uncontrollably, screaming, or even hitting themselves or others. These behaviors can be frightening or distressing, both for the individual experiencing the meltdown and those around them.

Meltdowns can be triggered by various factors such as sudden changes in routine, sensory overload (like loud noises or bright lights), or frustration when they cannot communicate their needs or understand a situation. The intensity and duration of a meltdown can vary from person to person.

For caregivers, teachers, and others supporting individuals with autism, it's crucial to respond calmly and compassionately during a meltdown. Creating a safe environment, using calming strategies like deep breathing or offering sensory support (like a quiet space or comforting objects), and understanding the individual's triggers can help manage and potentially prevent meltdowns in the future.

LEARN TO DRAW

CARTOON PUPPY



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LEARN TO DRAW

CARTOON CHARACTER





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We are thrilled to present our monthly magazine dedicated to the vibrant and diverse Autistic community. In our magazine, you'll find inspiring stories, insightful articles, and beautiful photos contributed by readers like you.

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Thank you for being a part of Autism Support Group. Together, let's create a space where every voice is heard, celebrated, and supported.

With gratitude,



A Mother's Quest to Illuminate Her Daughter's Path

Through the Veil of Shadows

Navigating the trials of a mother's heart, amidst the shadows of a daughter's strife, is a journey fraught with both anguish and hope. As the mother of my dear child, Emma, whose spirit shines as brightly as the star-lit skies, I wish to recount the path we tread together, with hopes that it may light the way for others who wander similar realms of sorrow and healing.

Emma, my beloved daughter, is a soul of extraordinary intellect and a heart tenderly attuned to the wonders of the world. Her dream, as enduring as the ancient oak, has always been to dwell amongst creatures of the earth, to tend to them with care and affection. Her fascination with the magical realms of anime and her steadfast companionship with her parrots—an illustrious blue and gold macaw, and a vibrant orange-winged Amazon—are but reflections of her boundless spirit. Yet, even the fairest flowers must weather storms, and Emma's secondary school years were marred by a relentless tempest of cruelty and malice.

In the darkened halls of her school, where shadows of ill will loomed large, Emma found herself ensnared by the cruel hands of bullying. The harrowing trials she faced left deep scars upon her heart, casting her into the dim recesses of her own room, where she sought solace in the comforting presence of her feathered friends. I recall the many nights when Emma, wrapped in her cocoon of safety, would confide in her parrots as if they were the wise old sages of legend, their soft chirps a balm to her wounded spirit.

Yet, in the midst of this solitude, a flicker of hope remained. Emma's journey toward healing was marked by a steadfast resolve to pursue her passion for animals. She embarked upon the quest of obtaining an animal management diploma, a noble endeavor akin to the forging of a new sword in a time of peace. Though she persevered through these trials, the shadow of her past hung heavy upon her, for the road to her dream of becoming a veterinarian was fraught with obstacles. The matter of further qualifications

weighed upon her like the heaviest of burdens. With the specter of resitting exams looming ever larger, Emma's heart was beset by doubts and fears. I remember the night when she sat by her window, gazing out into the starry expanse, her eyes reflecting the tumultuous sea of her thoughts. The very idea of additional examinations seemed an insurmountable peak, its summit shrouded in mists of uncertainty. Yet, she accepted with grace that the path of veterinary nursing might be a more attainable goal, a path less fraught with peril but still rich with promise.

In our daily lives, I have sought to be a guiding light in her quest for alternative pathways. Much like the wanderers of old, we have scoured the land for knowledge and counsel, seeking out universities and programs that might offer her a more lenient entry to her desired field. One evening, as we pored over tomes of academic lore and navigated the labyrinthine corridors of higher education, we discovered a program that prized practical experience above mere qualifications. This revelation was a beacon of hope, illuminating a potential path forward that acknowledged Emma's dedication and hard-won skills.

Encouraging Emma to forge connections with kindred spirits has been another quest of great importance. As the ancient heroes sought allies in their adventures, so too have I sought to help Emma find communities that align with her passions. We ventured into the realm of online forums and local gatherings dedicated to her interests. In these virtual and tangible realms, she encountered others who shared her love for anime and the care of animals. One particular triumph came when she made a new friend on an anime forum, their shared conversations acting as a bridge over the chasm of her isolation.

Yet, even in these moments of connection, Emma's struggle with social anxiety remained a formidable foe. I recall one summer when we sought to involve her in a local animal care workshop. The

anticipation was high, but as the day approached, Emma's anxiety grew into a storm. On the fateful morning, she was overwhelmed, unable to leave her sanctuary. Her withdrawal was a poignant reminder of the depth of her struggle, yet even these setbacks were steps upon her path to healing.

To aid her further, we sought the counsel of a wise healer—an expert in the arts of social anxiety and PTSD. With the guidance of this sage, Emma began to learn strategies to manage her fears, much like a knight learning the art of combat. Gradual exposure to social situations became a vital part of her training, each small victory a testament to her resilience and courage. These sessions provided her with tools to face her anxieties and, slowly but surely, to venture forth into the world beyond her room.

Every day, as I walk alongside Emma in this journey, I strive to balance encouragement with patience. Each small step she takes is a testament to her inner strength and my unwavering support. The sight of her discussing a new anime series with a glimmer of excitement is a reminder of her spirit's enduring flame. Each interaction with a fellow bird-watcher or the discovery of a new online friend is a victory, a sign of her gradual emergence from the shadows of her past.

For those who find themselves on similar journeys, I offer this counsel: be persistent and patient. Support your child in finding their own path, encourage them to connect with others who share their interests, and seek the wisdom of those who can provide professional guidance. The journey is long and fraught with challenges, but every small step forward is a triumph, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of unwavering support.





Share Your Moments With Us

Dear members of our incredible **Autism Support Group** and cherished readers,

We invite you to be a part of our vibrant gallery! Whether it's heartwarming moments, achievements, or snapshots of daily life, we'd love to showcase the beautiful diversity of our community.

Send your photos to magkaleidoscope@gmail.com, and let's create a visual tapestry that celebrates the spirit of togetherness. Your moments matter, and each image contributes to the mosaic of our shared journey.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community!

With warmth,
Kaleidoscope

Makinzki
Photo Credits





Awesome Key
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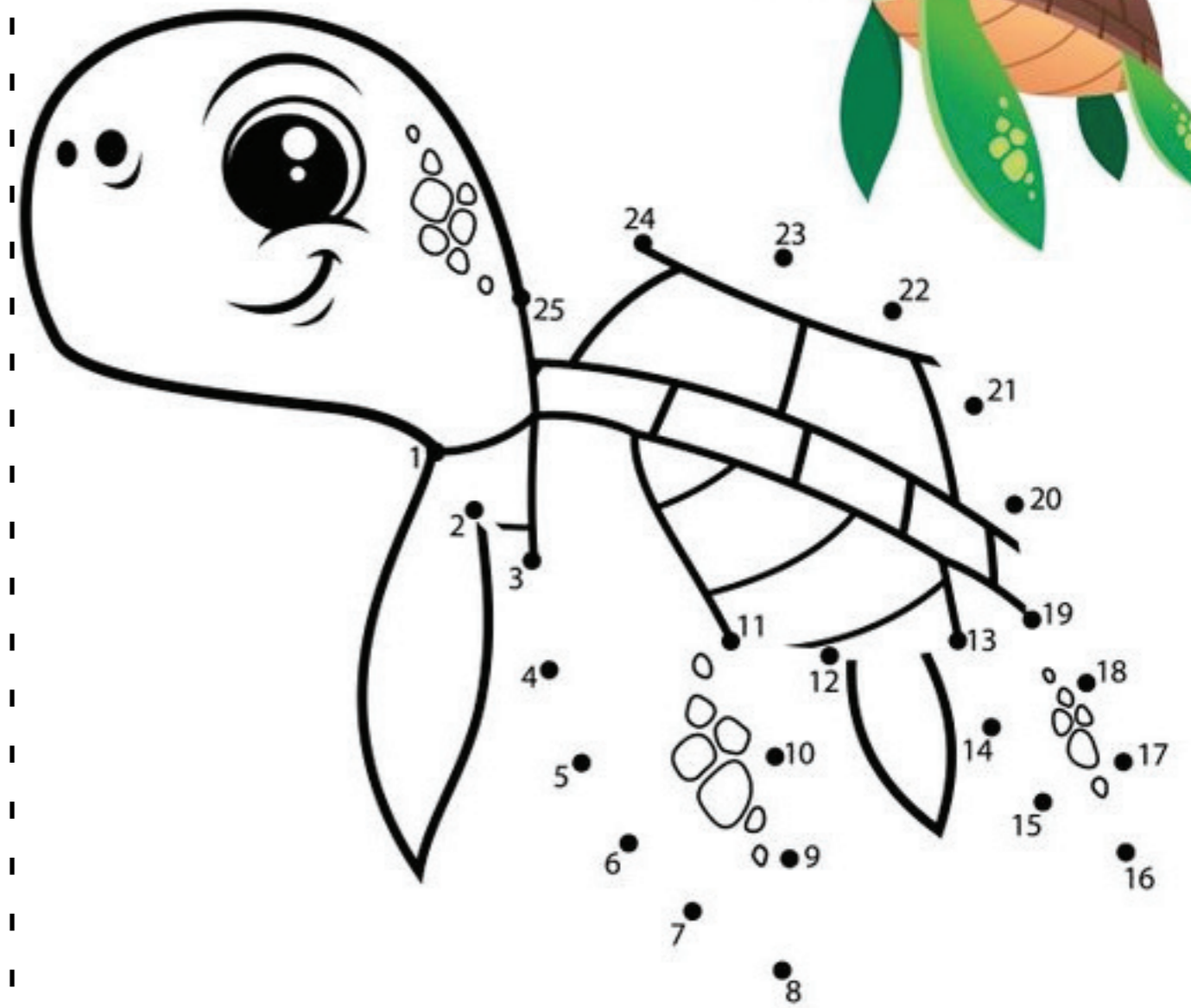
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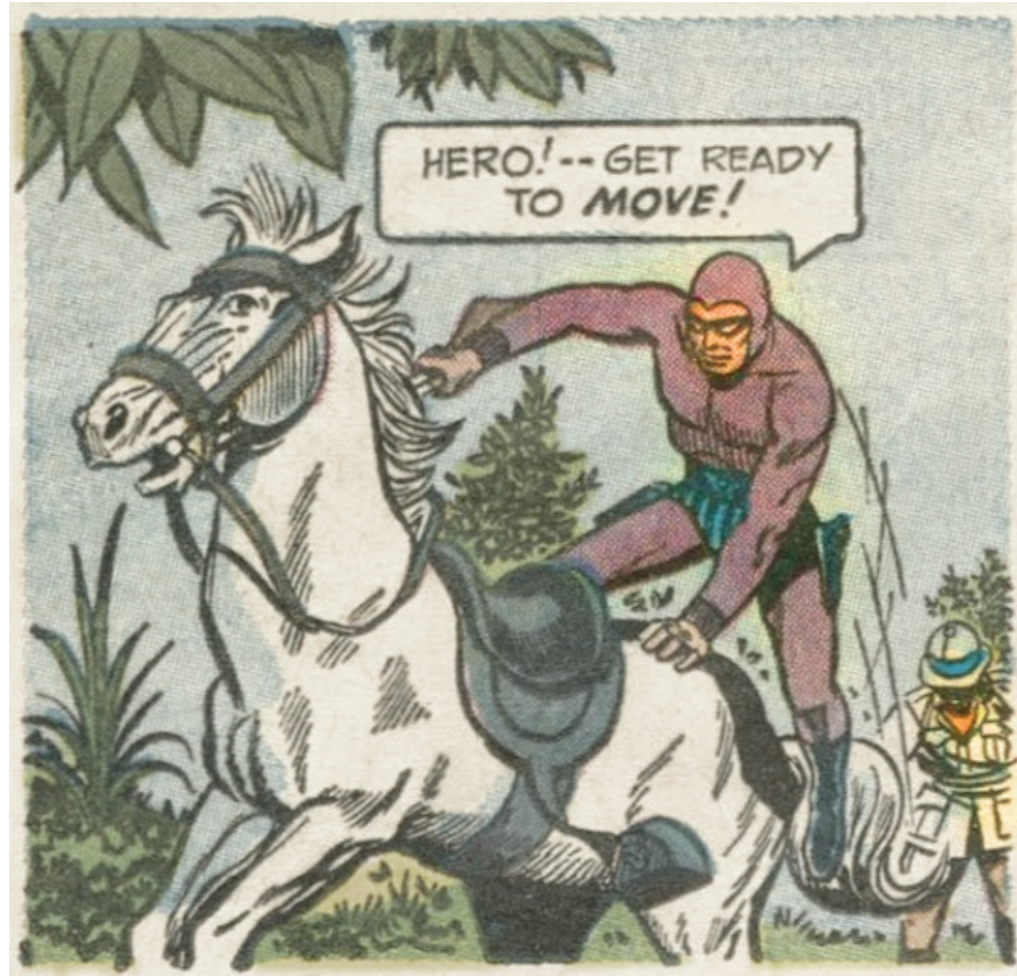


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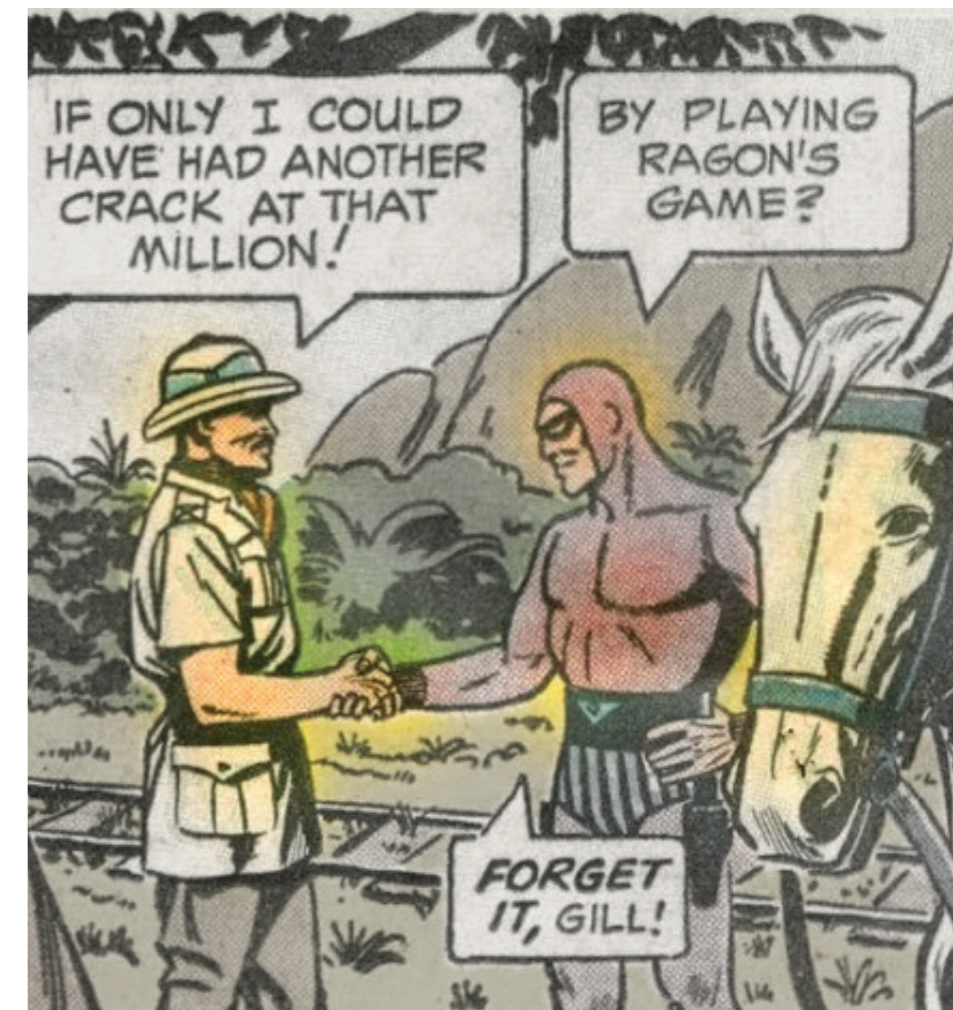




LATER...

I NEVER DREAMED WE'D ESCAPE! IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE!

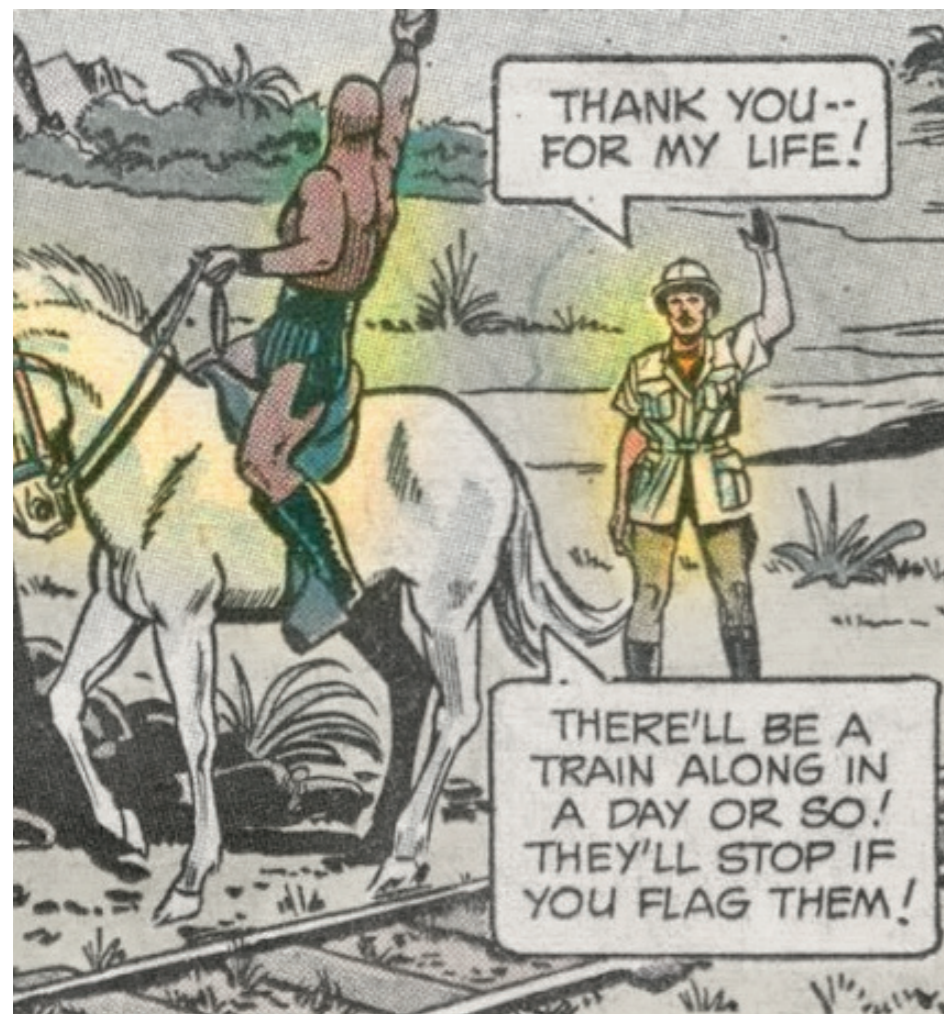
ANYTHING IMPOSSIBLE IS WORTH TRYING!



IF ONLY I COULD HAVE HAD ANOTHER CRACK AT THAT MILLION!

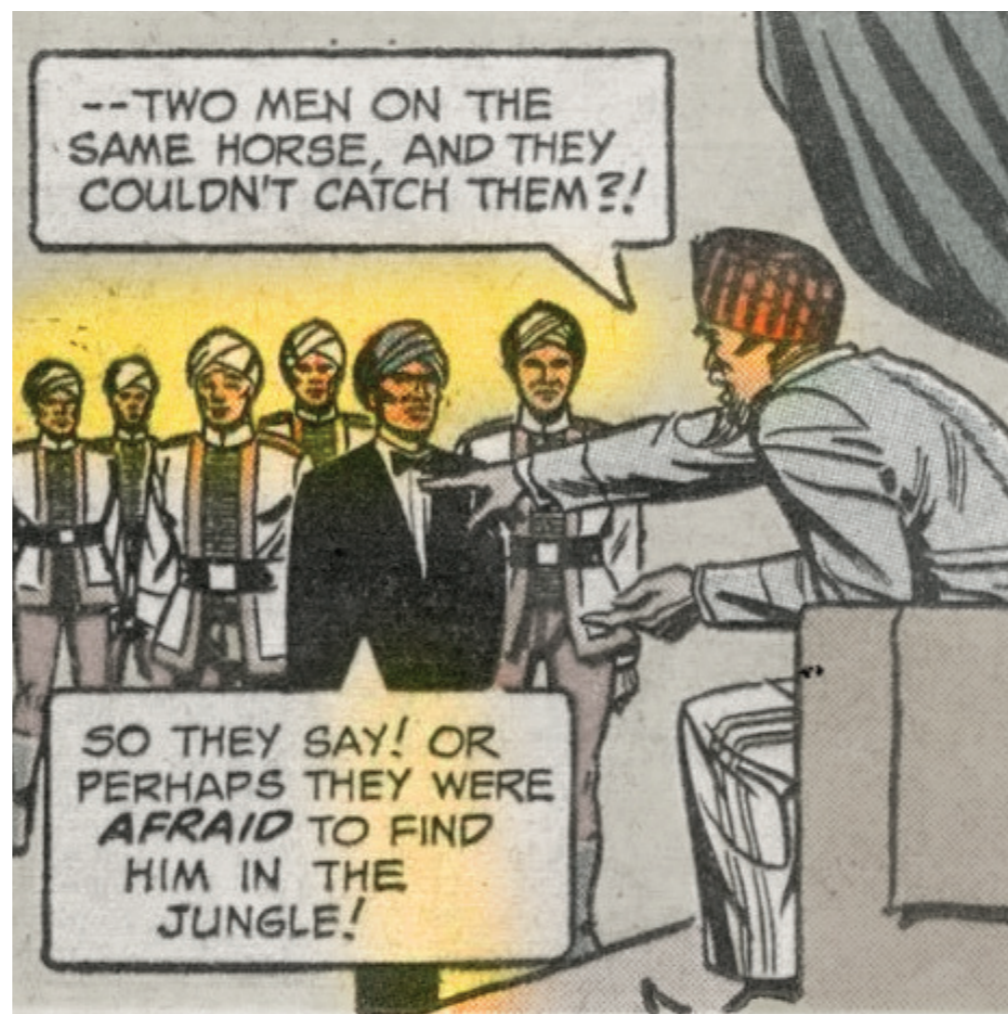
BY PLAYING RAGON'S GAME?

FORGET IT, GILL!



THANK YOU-- FOR MY LIFE!

THERE'LL BE A TRAIN ALONG IN A DAY OR SO! THEY'LL STOP IF YOU FLAG THEM!



--TWO MEN ON THE SAME HORSE, AND THEY COULDN'T CATCH THEM?!

SO THEY SAY! OR PERHAPS THEY WERE AFRAID TO FIND HIM IN THE JUNGLE!



FIND OUT WHAT THE PHANTOM WANTS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE! THEN **GET IT!** THAT'LL BRING HIM BACK!

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