

## How to Survive Puberty... This Time as a Parent!

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and  
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Autism Society of Greater Akron  
April 26, 2021

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## About Us/ Contact Information

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## Objectives

**PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO....**

- 1) Build their understanding of key characteristics of autism and how they may play a role in socially significant behaviors.
- 2) Be able to provide a description of puberty and puberty's potential effects for people with autism.
- 3) Identify at least 5 strategies/resources to assist in behaviors for the teenager.

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**Agenda**

- Review of ASD and behavior terms
- Introduction to puberty and potential specific needs related to ASD
- Deep dive into puberty-related strategies and how to support your child navigating through puberty
- Share additional resources
- Q and A

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**Disclosure**

This presentation is intended to provide information related to and a wide range of proactive strategies that can help promote positive behaviors during the time of puberty. Since we haven't directly assessed and developed a formal treatment plan for your child, we are not providing you with formal behavioral recommendations. Individualized interventions must be developed in the context of therapy with an appropriately trained professional (Psychologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker). We will provide resources if you would like to pursue behavioral therapy.

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**Quick Background- Autism: DSM-5**

The diagram features a central black silhouette of a person. Five blue arrows point from this silhouette to five text boxes:
 

- Top-left: Social communication and interaction
- Top-right: Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities
- Bottom-left: Symptoms present in early developmental period
- Bottom-right: Symptoms cause impairment in functioning
- Bottom: Not related to intellectual disability

 A small blue square icon is in the bottom right corner of the slide content area.

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**Behaviors and Autism**  
They don't necessarily go "hand in hand"



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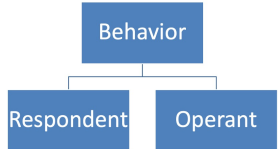
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**What is "behavior"**  
Activity of living organisms.  
Something someone does.



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(Cooper et al., 2019)

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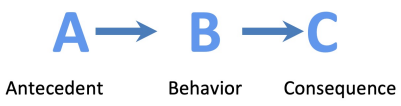
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**Operant Behavior**  
Behavior learned by consequences.  
Environment plays a role.



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(Cooper et al., 2019)

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**Consequences affect Behavior**

IF THE BEHAVIOR IS REINFORCED.....

(Cooper et al., 2019)

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**Socially Significant Behaviors**

- We select behaviors that are socially significant. Behaviors that will improve life experiences

✓ Social	✓ Self-care
✓ Language	✓ Vocational
✓ Academic	✓ Recreational
✓ Daily living	✓ Leisure

11

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If it's a behavior in his/her repertoire...  
**REINFORCE**

If it's a behavior NOT in his/her repertoire...  
**TEACH**

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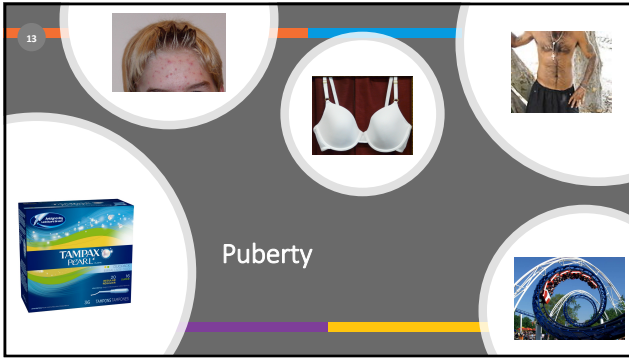
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**Puberty**

Boy/girl becomes sexually mature; refers to physical change in body (Autism Speaks, 2014)

Girls: usually between age 10-14  
Boys: usually between 12-16 (NIH, n.d)

Endocrinological event (Peper, 2013)

**SURGE**

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14

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**Hormone Surges**

Causes changes in:

- Facial structure
- Voice
- Body
- Metabolism
- Sleep

Which can lead to:

- Behavior changes: aggression, etc.
- Need to change daily habits, etc.

(Peper, 2013)

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15

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**Puberty and ASD**

Social communication and interaction  
 Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities  
 Symptoms present in early developmental period  
 Symptoms cause impairment in functioning  
 Not related to intellectual disability (Cigna, 2020)

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**Addressing New Health and Hygiene Needs**

- Bathing
- Brushing teeth or hair
- Shaving
- How much should I put on? (makeup and deodorant)
- Sleep
- Feminine Hygiene (Kelsey, 2016)

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### Washing Hands Independently




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




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### Brushing Teeth and Washing Face

**Brushing Teeth**

1		Put toothpaste on your toothbrush.
2		Rinse your toothbrush.
3		Brush your teeth.
4		Spit out the toothpaste.
5		Rinse your mouth with water.
6		Spit out the water.
7		Wipe your mouth.
8		Rinse your toothbrush.
9		Put away toothbrush and toothpaste.

**WASHING FACE**

1. Turn water on.
2. Get cloth.
3. Put water on cloth.
4. Scrub cloth and make cloth foaming.
5. Open/unfold cloth.
6. Wash:
  - a. Nose
  - b. Left Cheek
  - c. Chin
  - d. Right Cheek
  - e. Forehead
7. Check for any miss spots.
8. Put cloth in trash can.
9. Put hands in water.
10. Rinse hands.
11. Rinse face.
12. Dry face and hands.
13. Water off.

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### Shaving



Gillette

SHAVING TIPS

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**Deodorant, Make-up, Perfume, Cologne**

- Add an icon to current list of morning/evening tasks
- Put amount needed on or next to icon
- Picture model for make-up



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**Sleep**



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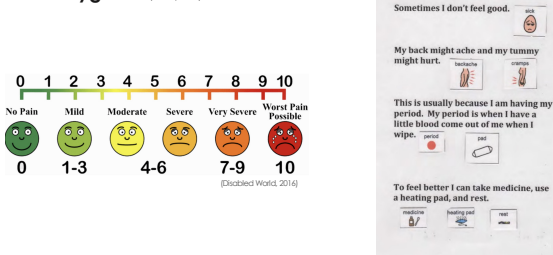
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**Feminine Hygiene** (Vocasey, 2014)



Sometimes I don't feel good.

My back might ache and my tummy might hurt.

This is usually because I am having my period. My period is when I have a little blood come out of me when I wipe.

To feel better I can take medicine, use a heating pad, and rest.

24

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**Considerations Regarding Masturbation**



Public	Private
	
Available in restrooms at schools, public buildings, and public restrooms.	Available in homes, private bathrooms, and private restrooms.



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28

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**Clothing/Disrobing** (Tarnai, 2007)



"My body belongs to me and some areas are not to be exposed in public. These areas are called private parts and include my genitals and my breasts. It is OK to take off all my clothes when I am on my own at home and not seen by anyone, for example when preparing to take a bath." (Tarnai, 2007)

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29

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**Teaching About Disability**





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## Addressing New Safety Concerns

- Internet safety (Clinard, 2016)
- New or extreme interfering behaviors

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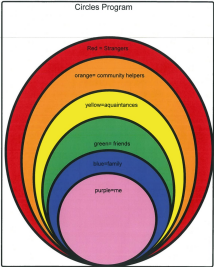

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## Directly Teaching "People" Types

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## Internet Safety



**PLAY IT SAFE**  
Teens with ASD should talk about internet safety with a trusted adult. PLAY IT SAFE can be helpful, but it's not a substitute for supervision.

**P** - Personal information don't share it, even your cell phone text messages, when you log on when you go to school.

**L** - Let a trusted adult know not someone if anyone asks for your personal information.

**D** - Don't download before opening any attachments.

**T** - Your feelings are important if something happens that makes you uncomfortable, tell an adult right away.

**I** - Information-remember that not everything you see online is true. Explain any errors with a trusted adult.

**T** - Take breaks from the computer-it is important to take breaks so that you don't forget your stress and to give other friends a chance to talk to other people and do other things. Get a chance to explain you are not on the internet too long.


**S** - Spending money without asking for things without permission. Money should only be spent if it's needed.

**A** - Act politely-don't say anything online that you would not say to someone in person.

**F** - Friends never should give credit if someone asks to mail you, but there is and always let an adult know.

**E** - Enjoy yourself! Play safe and have fun!

(Clinard, 2016)



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**Preparing for independence in the community** (Johnson, 2019)



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*(Note: A purple bar is present under item 2 and a yellow bar is present under item 3.)*

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**Teenage Emotions**




(Dixon & Palliunas, 2018)

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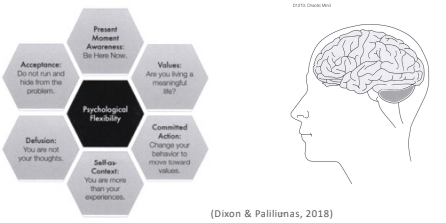
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**Direct Teaching and Building Understanding**

(Dixon & Palliunas, 2018)

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**Additional Resources....**



Third Thursday - Learn Strategies for Addressing Puberty and Sexuality

EVERY MONTH

**THIRD THURSDAYS MONTHLY WEBSTREAM**

JANUARY 21 6:30 - 7:30

Addressing Puberty and Sexuality

Site: <https://www.ocali.org/project/TT-nuberty>

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**The OCALI Lending Library**



LENDING LIBRARY

**We're OPEN**

The Lending Library is available for online browsing and order requests with no-cost delivery.

Site: [https://www.ocali.org/project/lending\\_library](https://www.ocali.org/project/lending_library)

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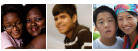

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**Additional Resources....**



Parent's Guide to Puberty and Adolescence for Children with Autism

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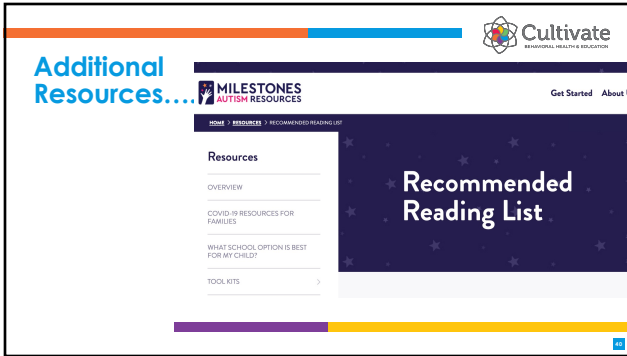
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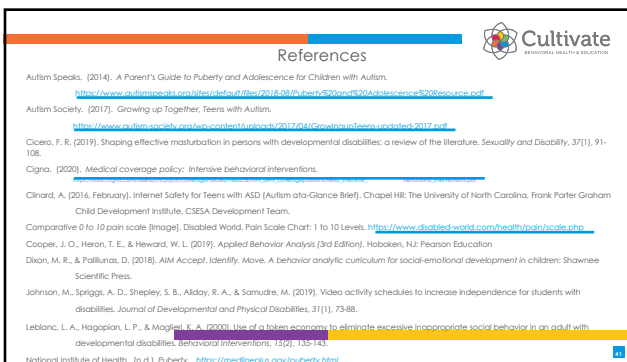
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