

# *10 EVIDENCE- BASED TIPS FOR COUNSELING ADULTS WITH AUTISM*

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# *Rationale*



- Importance of early recognition and accurate diagnosis
- Understanding the common comorbid conditions (CCCs)
- Choosing an effective approach, assessment and interventions

# 1. *Presume competence & capability*

Splintered skill sets

Common strengths & limitations

Procedural versus declarative knowledge

Personal power, agency and a voice

Person-first language and approach

## **Clinical interventions:**

Rapport building: Assessing for strengths and interests

Engaging through Socratic questioning

## *2. Understand the support system*

Social support

- Family structure and dynamics

- Friends, partners, spouse

**Clinical interventions:**

Reciprocity in social support

Assist in identifying a “social coach”

# 3. *Increase optimism*

“Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional”

Caregiver pessimism is one of the strongest predictors of problems in adulthood; optimism promotes a person's ability to:

- identify alternatives to past behaviors,
- increases problem-solving skills,
- decreases helplessness,
- increases coping skills, and
- promotes a positive worldview

## **Clinical interventions:**

Thoughts quiz

Self-Talk Journal: tracking, disputation and reframing

# 4. *Assess & plan for treatment*

Treatment goals to address the core symptoms of ASD

The power of adult self-report & third-party reporting

## **Clinical interventions:**

Social Responsiveness Scale 2

- Useful in distinguishing from common comorbid conditions
- Designed to help inform treatment outcomes & progress
- Five subscales: social awareness, social cognition, social communication, social motivation, and restricted interests and repetitive behaviors

# *5. Treat social motivation*

How interested are they in the social landscape?

Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

## **Clinical interventions:**

Explore intrinsic & extrinsic social motivations and expectations

Identify common interests and build upon success as a way to foster social interactions or relationship(s)



# 6. *Treat social awareness*

Navigating the social landscape starts with identification

Presentation can range from hyper to hypo sensitivities

## **Clinical interventions:**

Utilize direct instruction with concrete rules to aid in identification

Provide opportunities for practice with visual cues (written, photographic or video) for real world application and generalization

# 7. *Treat social cognition*

Interpreting and predicting the social landscape

Theory of mind (TOM)

## **Clinical interventions:**

Examine social errors and successes through questioning:

1. What was that like for the other person?
2. What did that other person think about you?
3. Does the person want to interact with you again?

# 8. *Treat social communication*

Expressing oneself successfully in the social landscape

All social communication involves verbal and non-verbal elements

## **Clinical interventions:**

Role-play to demonstrate errors & model effective strategies

Rehearsal in session for practice & corrective feedback

# 9. *Treat restricted interests & repetitive behaviors*

Preoccupation with restricted patterns of interest, adherence to nonfunctional routines and unexpected motor mannerisms

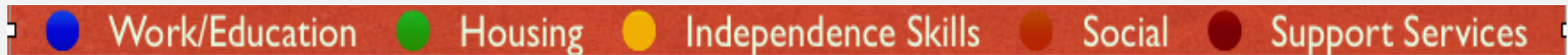
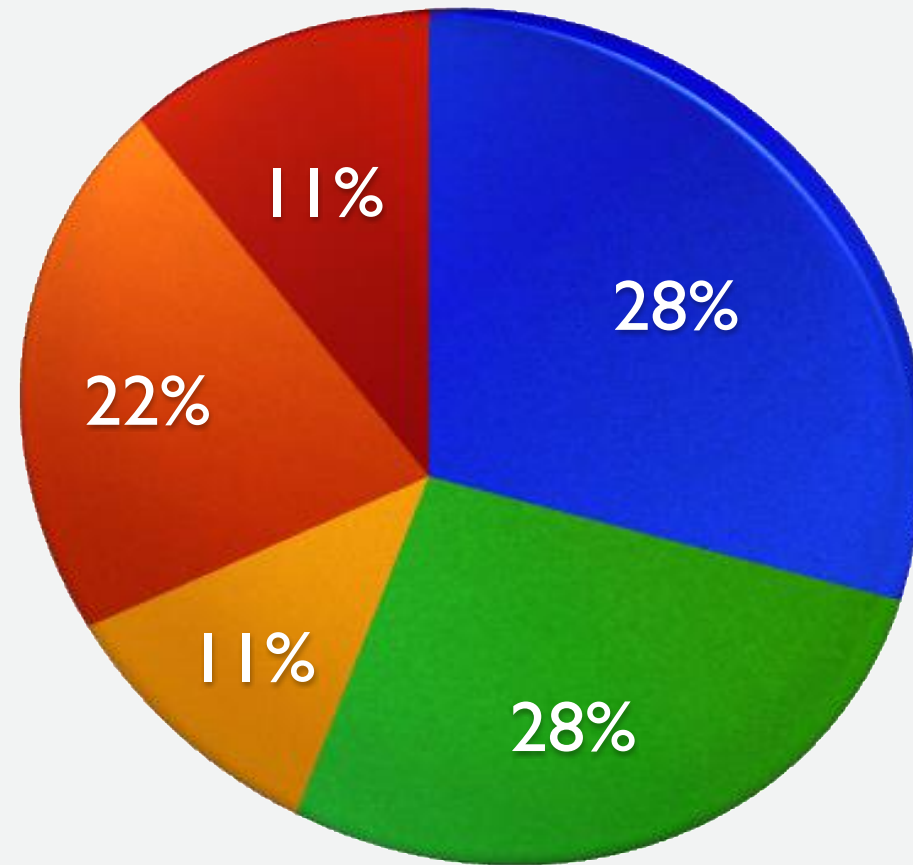
## Clinical interventions:

Applied behavior analysis

Identifying alternatives

Utilize current interests as a means to further develop and broaden skill set and interests

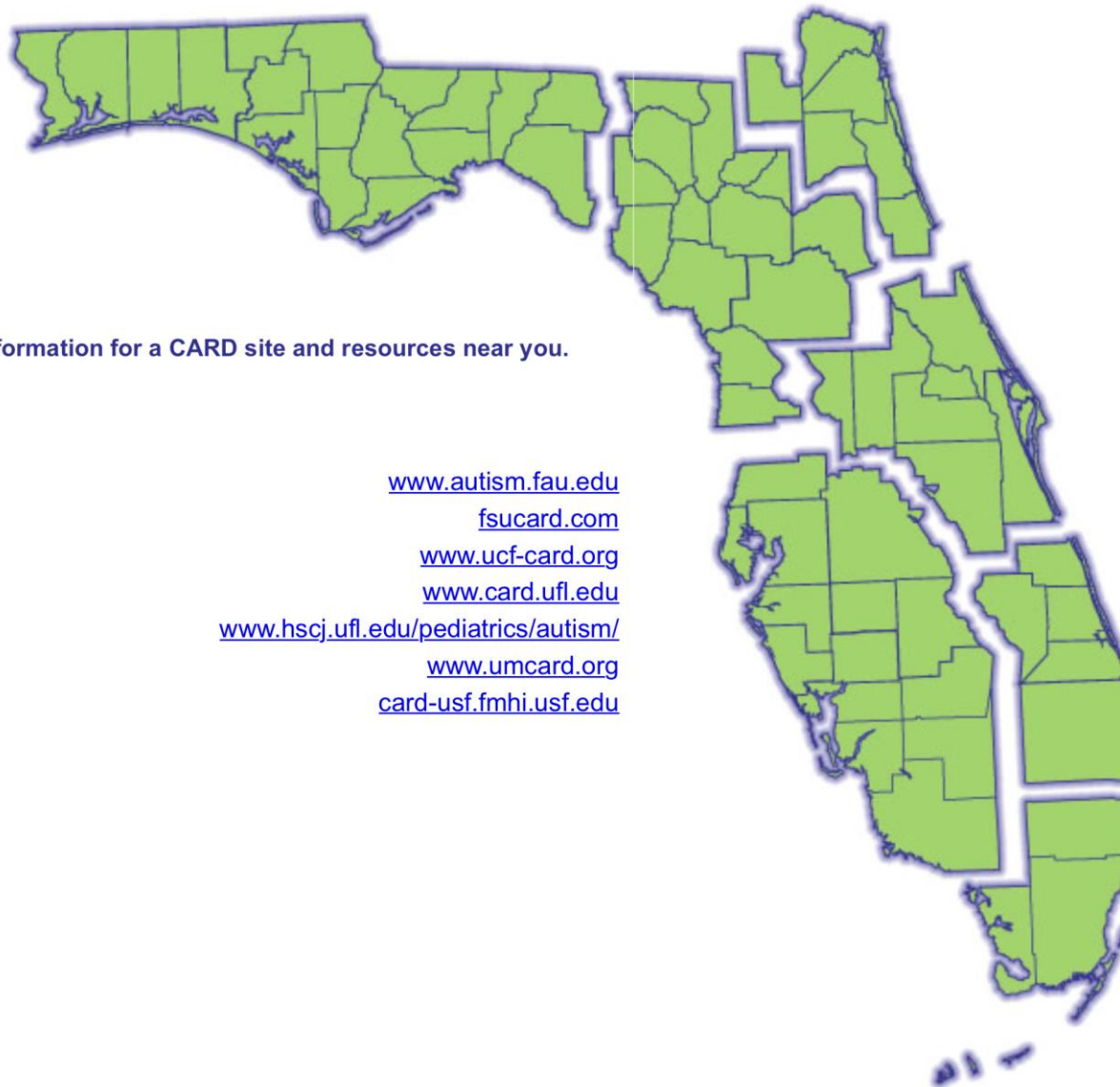
# 10. Promote independence





Center for Autism and  
Related Disabilities

*Florida's First Choice  
for Autism Support*



Select a region on the map to view contact information for a CARD site and resources near you.

## **CARD sites**

Florida Atlantic University

Florida State University

University of Central Florida

University of Florida at Gainesville

University of Florida at Jacksonville

University of Miami

University of South Florida

[www.autism.fau.edu](http://www.autism.fau.edu)

[fsucard.com](http://fsucard.com)

[www.ucf-card.org](http://www.ucf-card.org)

[www.card.ufl.edu](http://www.card.ufl.edu)

[www.hscj.ufl.edu/pediatrics/autism/](http://www.hscj.ufl.edu/pediatrics/autism/)

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