

Autism Initiative: Training Series

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 1.2: Specific Deficits in Autism

Part 1: Review of Concepts

- Individuals with autism exhibit impairment in three core areas.
 1. Social interaction skills
 2. Communication skills
 3. Restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities
- The *social interaction deficits* associated with autism include:
 - Impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors to regulate social interaction (e.g., gestures, eye-to-eye gaze, facial expressions)
 - Difficulty making and maintaining friendships
 - Little to no interest in sharing interests and accomplishments with others
- The *communication difficulties* associated with autism include:
 - Delay in the development of spoken language
 - Odd use of language
- Individuals with autism also exhibit a *restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped pattern of behavior, interests and activities*. These can include:
 - Different ways of reacting to their environment and people
 - Repetitive motor movements or vocalizations
 - Interest in a very limited range of activities

Part 2: Discussion Questions for Staff

1. *As a staff member working in a residential group setting working with individuals with autism, why do you think it would be important to understand the deficits associated with the diagnosis of autism?*
 - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.
2. *For each of the three areas individuals with autism experience difficulties (i.e., Communication, Social Skills, Repetitive Behaviors and Restricted interests and activities) answer the following questions:*
 - *How could difficulties in this area impact and individual’s functioning in a group residential setting?*
 - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.

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- *How might difficulties in this area impact interactions between residents in a group residential setting?*
 - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.
- *How might difficulties in this area impact interactions between residents and staff in a group residential setting?*
 - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.