



# Issues and Concerns Regarding Speech, Language, and Communication Skills of Adults with Autism

- Gidden & Obee (1996) highlight the following areas:
  - Lack of initiative
    - Prompt dependency
    - Limited spontaneous communication
  - Social skills deficits
    - Poor conversation skills
    - Deficits in theory of mind and perspective taking





# Summary and Conclusions

- Useful speech, language and communication skills in adults are highly correlated to good outcome measures across all aspects of life
- Almost half of adults with autism do not develop sufficient language to meet their daily communication needs
- At least 10-20 % of adults with autism require AAC systems





# Summary and Conclusions

- Speech and language skills in individuals with autism do improve through adolescence and adulthood
- Autism specific deficits, however, often persist, despite other skill development (e.g., limited spontaneous communication, abstract language deficits)
- There is far less access to speech-language supports for adults with autism



# Summary

- Barriers to Effective Communication
  - Non-functional speech
  - Receptive language deficits
  - Language and lexical processing deficits
  - Deficits in non-verbal communication



# Summary

- Barriers to Effective Communication

*Lack of Compensatory Skills*

*Lack of Motivation*





# Lack of Motivation

- Individuals with ASD may lack communicative intent and fail to understand the basic nature of communication
- Must teach to the establishing operation
- For social language, this becomes an even greater challenge: promoting social motivation





# Lack of Motivation

- May have to settle for teaching the learner to be a good social responder
- Must establish fluent and consistent responding skills
- Must build sufficient vocabulary with an effective mode of communication

