

# Use the Skills

- In social skill instruction, try to focus primarily on those skills used 1) most often and 2) generate the biggest individual payback. Instruction in social skills that are infrequently used or for which the payback is less obvious (or less desirable) may be particularly challenging for both the learner and the instructor.

# Naturalistic Strategies

- Effective social skill instruction (and goal development) needs to take place across the day and, in particular, outside the context of the instructional settings. Look for opportunities throughout the day to promote and reinforce social competence (and approximations) and develop new, functionally relevant goals.

# Train the NTs

- Remember, social skills are bi-directional. Attention may need to be paid to both ends of the interaction.

# Sexuality and Social Skills

- All sexual behavior can be considered extremely complex social behavior. However, this set of social skills is highly individualized, extraordinarily context specific, and with a significant downside to its inappropriate application.

# This is Allison



# Which one is Allison?



# This is Claire



# Which one is Claire?



# This is Nancy



# Which one is Nancy?



# Which is Nancy?



I am getting older and I am growing up.

Part of growing older is having my body change. I get taller and I weigh more.

Another change is that hair is growing on my body in new places.

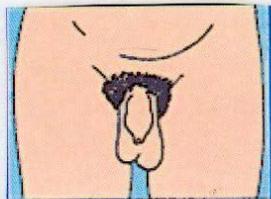
There is hair growing on my face,



under my arms,



and on my private parts.

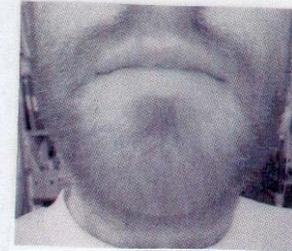


Every adult has hair in these places. It might feel weird to have hair growing, but I should let the hair grow under my arms.

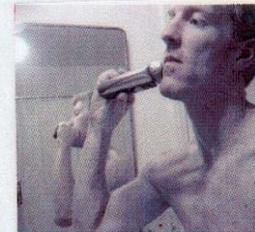
Men sometimes shave the hair that grows on their face like Dad and Uncle [redacted]



Some men don't shave their face and they grow a beard, like [redacted]



My teachers and my family will help teach me how to shave my face so that I can do it safely.



It is exciting to grow up and become an adult.

# Challenges to Adequate Social Skill Instruction or Support

- The nature of ASD
- Social skills, by their very nature, are variable across environment, time, task, and people
- Social skills have diverse criteria of competence
- Social skill instruction involves both when and when not to use the skill as a function of multiple cues
- Failure, on the part of the instructor, to adequately assess social demands
- Failure, on the part of the instructor, to adequately prioritize social skill instruction
- Failure, on the part of the instructor, to provide sufficient examples and opportunities to use the taught skills
- Failure, on the part of the instructor, to consider providing social skill support and instruction to the NT cohort
- But there are some things that can be done ...

# Challenges to Sexuality Education for Learners with ASD.

- The social dimension of sexual behavior
- Differentiation between public and private behavior and reality v. fantasy
- Ensuring the maintenance of learned skills, particularly those associated with sexual safety
- Balancing individual safety with personal respect and individual rights
- Issues related to law enforcement

# Challenges to Supporting Adults

- Discontinuous services
- Dearth of services
- Limited interest
- Staffing concerns
- Access to adequate medical services
- Issues with the criminal justice system
- Substance abuse issues

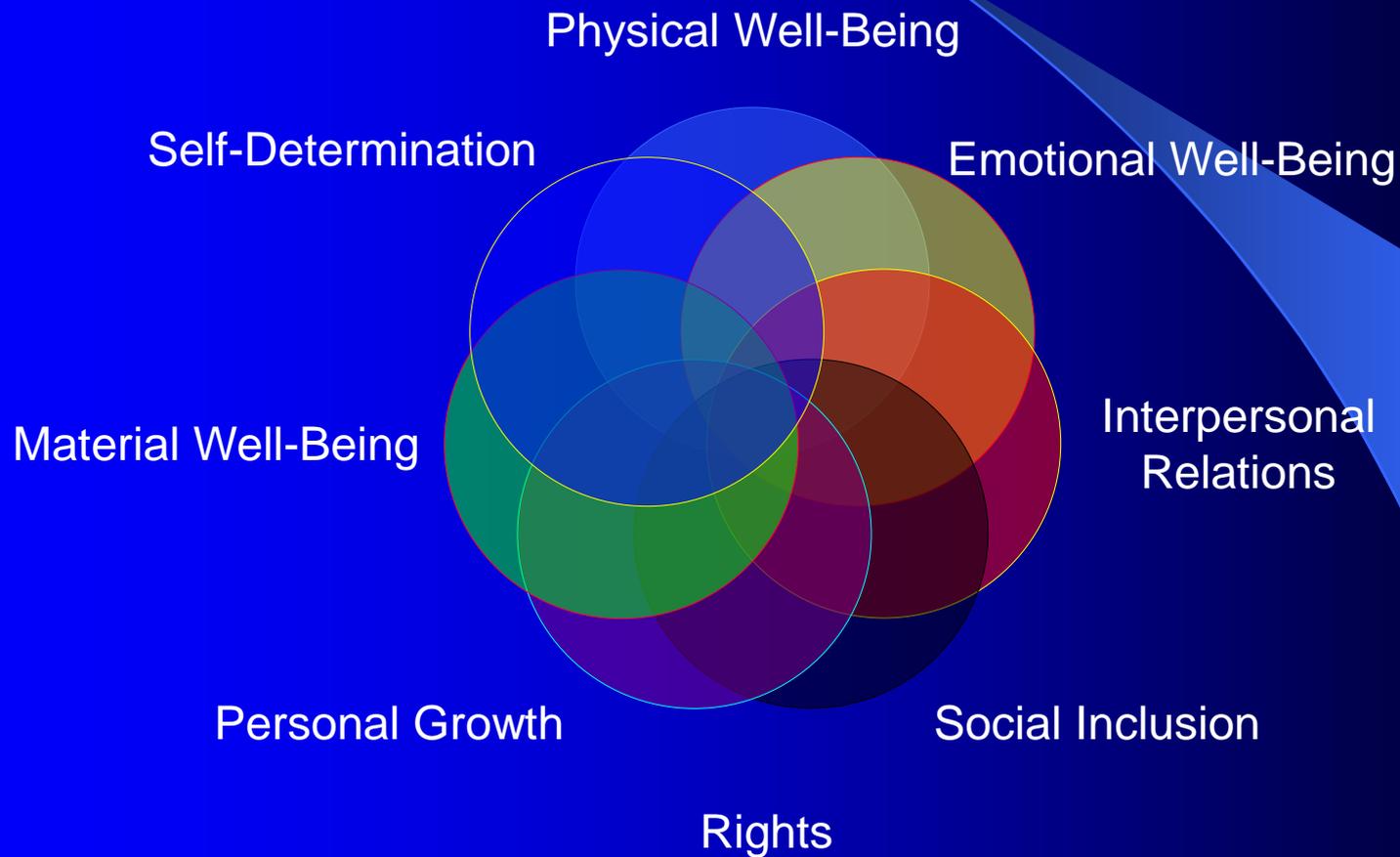
# Issues in Behavioral Intervention With Adolescents & Adults With ASD

- The importance of the appropriate use of positive reinforcement remains significant.
- Function, function, function
- Why do I think I have to intervene?
- To what extent does the display of the behavior limit his or her life?
- When is a “behavior” an “idiosyncrasy”?

# What does QOL mean? (R. Schalock, 2001)

- Quality of life is a term used to describe a temporal condition of *personal satisfaction* with such core life conditions as physical well-being, emotional well-being, interpersonal relations, social inclusion, personal growth, material well being, self-determination, and individual rights.

But the interaction of these core life conditions is extremely complex, generally non-linear and, at least in part, idiosyncratic.



# What variables are most likely to enhance the QOL of different individuals at different times in their lives?

	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Competence</b>
<b>Childhood</b>	Simple “either/or” choices	Limited	Access to tangibles
<b>Middle School</b>	Development of choice making skills & repertoire	Intermittent	Access to tangibles self scheduling & monitoring
<b>Transition</b>	“Dignity of Failure” becomes issue	Intermittent across multiple settings	Job sampling outcomes, access to tangibles x settings, self sched.
<b>Young Adult</b>	Where to work, live, eat, vote, etc. Risk/ Benefit Analysis	Moderate across settings & routines	Job w/ career path, access to tangibles x settings, self sched., desired social life
<b>Adult</b>	Where to work, live, eat, vote, sleep with, etc.	Significant	A life

# And in summary...

- Interventions based on the principles of ABA are applicable across skill domains and across the lifespan.
- It is easy to be successful when you set the bar low so think big and have high expectations.
- Start planning early and, certainly, no later than age 16 years.
- To the maximum extent possible, work cooperatively with all involved in the process to the benefit of the teen/young adult with ASD.
- Remember that transition planning is a process and first drafts of ITPs are rarely the final draft.

- Keep your eyes on the prize of your long term transition goals for employment, living or postsecondary education. Frame all your discussions with reference to those desired outcomes. Involve extended family and friends in the process, particularly in the area of employment as they may have contacts and resources you do not.
- Remember, you are a critical part of this process no matter what title you have (parent, speech pathologist, transition specialist, etc.).
- With reference to community skills, remember to teach where the skills are most likely to be used. It is more effective to teach grocery shopping at an actual supermarket than it is to teach it in the classroom

- Identify the level of “risk” with which you are comfortable and then work to maximize independence within that framework. (For example, while you may be uncomfortable with him or her crossing the parking lot of supermarket without close supervision, he or she may not need the same intensity of supervision in the supermarket) As the teen/young adult gains greater independence across tasks and environments, reassess you acceptable level of risk.
- Good, effective transition planning is effortful and time consuming. There are, sadly, no known shortcuts but when it is done well, the outcomes are well worth the effort.

● **Thank you!**