

Understanding Behavior: What Are Autistic Children Communicating?

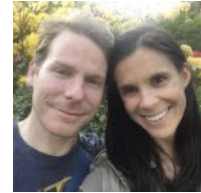
Sarah Wayland, Ph.D.
&
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1

About Sarah & Kim

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2



3

Agenda

- What it looks like from the outside
 - o Behavior
- What's happening inside?
 - o Biology
 - o Experience
- What helps?

4

4

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5

5



6

My Story...What Healthcare Professionals Have Told Me...

"Your Autism is moderate to severe...you belong in a nursing home"

"You're oppositional"

"You're being defiant"

"You're non-compliant"

"You are not trying"


"You have a personality disorder-OCD, schizoid, borderline...(when I didn't)"

"You're manipulative"

"You're SELFISH"

"You are just doing it for attention (meltdowns)"

"You'll never get better. Let's refer to hospice?"



7


Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up

Bottom-Up behaviors

- Instinctual, unintentional, survival-based stress responses
- Respond to understanding, compassion, and helping individual feel safe

Top-Down behaviors

- Deliberate and intentional
- Respond to behavior modification strategies




Mona Delahooke, *Beyond Behaviors*

8

"Kids do well if they can."

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.
LivesInTheBalance.org



9




"Behavior is the symptom — the fever."

10



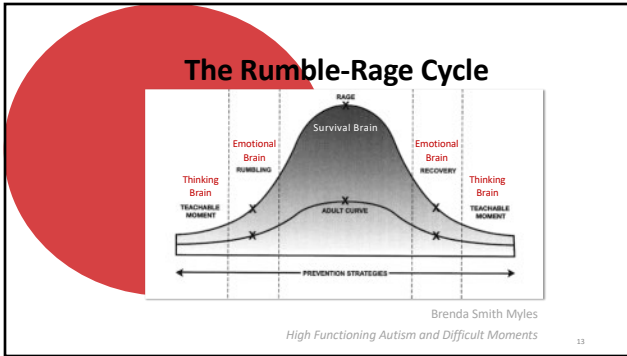
11

Survival Brain	Emotional Brain	Thinking Brain
Brain stem, cerebellum, tenth cranial nerve	Limbic system	Neocortex
Fight, flight, or freeze	Emotions, memories, habits	Language, imagination, abstract thinking, consciousness
Autopilot	Instinctually-based decisions	Reasoning, rational thought

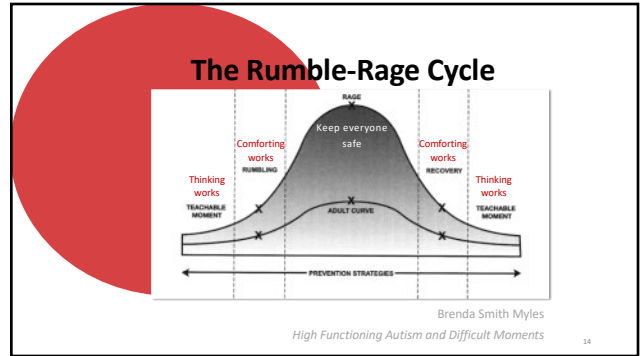


The Triune Brain in Evolution, Paul Maclean, 1960

12



13



14

“Your child isn’t giving you a hard time. Your child is having a hard time.”

15

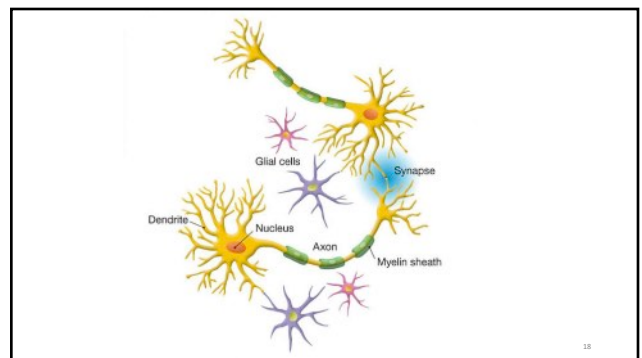
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16

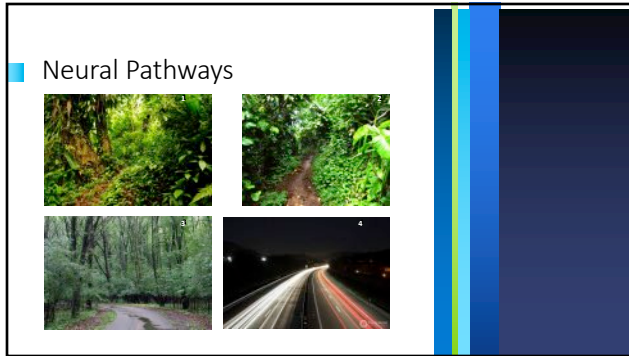
These have been observed.

Not everyone has these challenges.

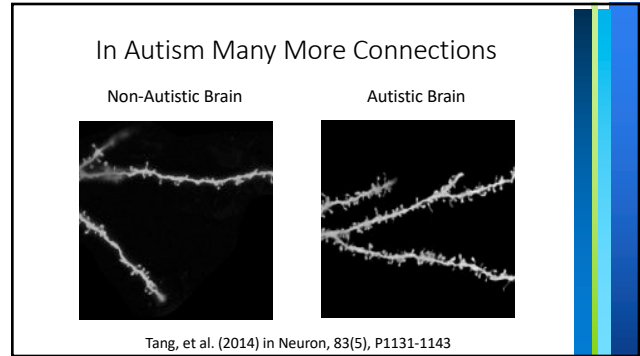
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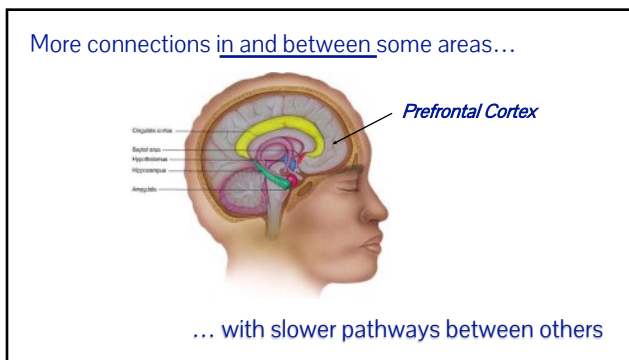
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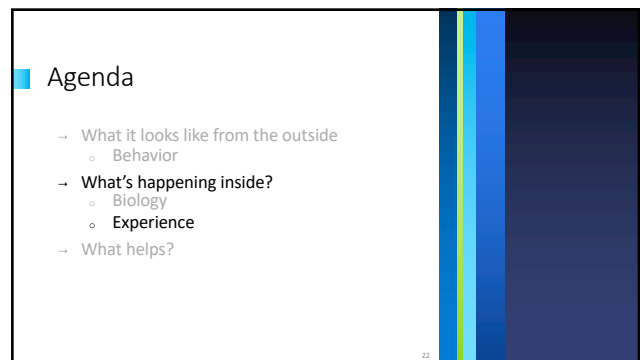
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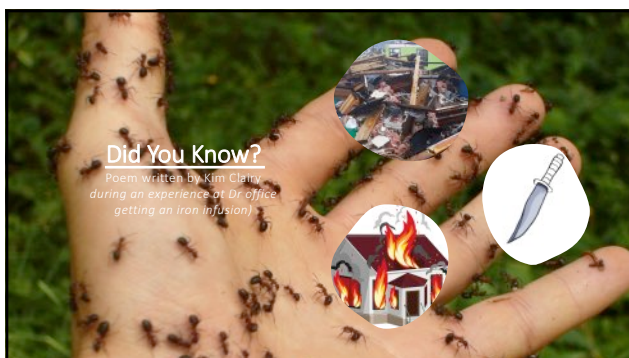
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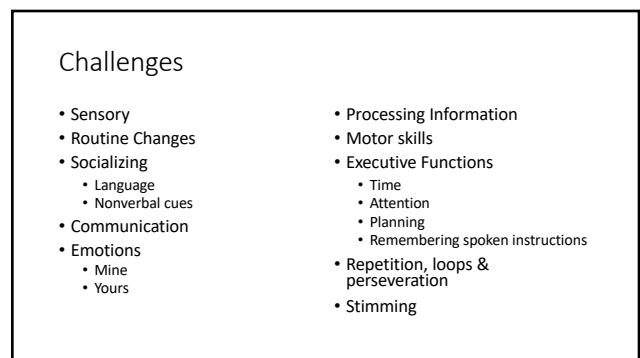
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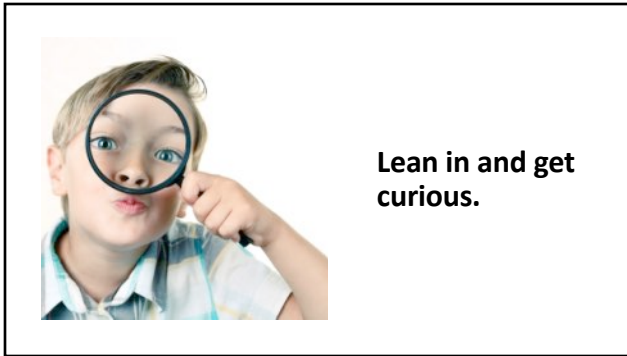
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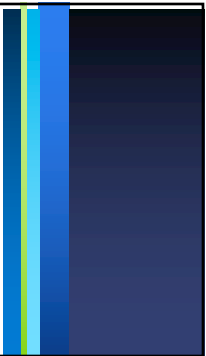
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25

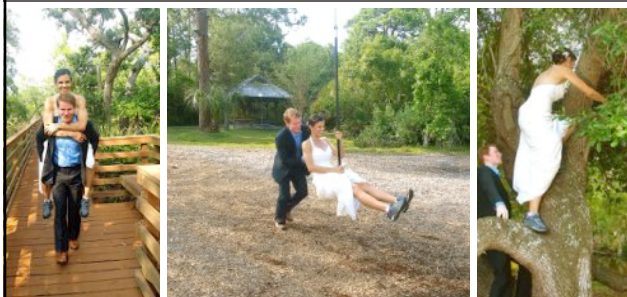
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26

I Will Accommodate You So You Can Be With Me



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Nonjudgmental Acceptance

27

Contact Sarah & Kim

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28