

Gentle Enhancement[®]

Benefits:

Autism Spectrum Disorder is an extreme anxiety disorder that includes basic survival and everyday human functions as interrelated with fright/flight/fight responses, so working with individuals on the spectrum must incorporate respect for their perceptions, for their tolerance of stimulation, passive and active, internal and external. That is the essence of Gentle Enhancement, which is the key to resolving the many issues of individuals with autism, and resolving them at their roots. Resolving problems at their roots allows for continued developmental growth without a need for continuous coaching for each situation the person may confront later in life or in another environment. Gentle Enhancement respects the person and his perceptions. It builds on the neuroscientific research that overloaded systems shut down. Gentle Enhancement is the basic therapeutic modality of HANDLE[®].

Procedures and Precautions:

1. Monitor each and every activity in a therapeutic program and in the events of daily life as well (to the degree that it is possible). Watch for the following signs of stress or of a State Change—that is a signal from the body that it is experiencing distress in one or more of its foundational survival systems. The signals we observe most often are:
 - a. Reddening of the ears and/or the anus
 - b. Change of facial color (pallor or flushing)
 - c. Change in breathing rate or depth
 - d. Change in muscle tone (increased tension or flaccidity)
 - e. Loss of visual focus or glassing over of the eyes
 - f. Worsening of an activity once it is becoming integrated
 - g. Complaints of nausea, dizziness, disorientation or other somatic concern
2. Stop any activity as soon as you see the first sign of a State Change. Do not wait until the body-brain-mind-spirit has progressed to a state of complete overwhelm, meltdown, or shutdown.
3. Alter elements in the environment if you suspect they may be causing the state change. Some of the more common stressors are:
 - a. Shrill or unexpected sounds
 - b. Bright or fluorescent lights
 - c. Strong odors, especially those used to mask other odors
 - d. Crowded spaces with threats of movement and tactile invasion
 - e. Preponderance of synthetic materials (toys, clothing, carpeting, etc.)
 - f. Foods frequently found to be allergens to people with ASD
 - g. Environments with a lot of young or active children, because they usually include all of the above factors

This information is provided to supplement the community information services of The HANDLE[®] Institute International, LLC licensed to provide a Holistic Approach to Neurodevelopment and Learning Efficiency with regional centers and clinical services on four continents. Corporate office: 1300 Dexter Avenue North, Suite 110, Seattle, WA USA 98109 (206) 204-6000 Fax: (206) 860-3505 e-mail: support@handle.org

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