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PR2 – A2

Template for the development of the F.H.E.M.T.

addressed to ASD students in hospitality sector

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InTeaM4IEd
Innovative Teaching Methodologies
in Hospitality Schools for Inclusive Education

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Introduction

At a time when inclusive education is central and the needs of students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are of great importance, the development of the FHEMT (Flexible and Hybrid Educational Methodology and Tools) as an expected outcome in the context of the project InteaM4IEd becomes crucial. This methodology is specifically designed to provide teachers, educators and trainers in the hospitality sector with the required skills and competencies for inclusive education and effective interaction with ASD students.

The Consortium of the *"Innovative Teaching Methodologies in Hospitality Schools for Inclusive Education-InTeaM4Ied"* project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission isThis document composed by a group of 6 Organizations, coming from 5 different European countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, and Netherlands . The main aim of the Project Result 2, Activity 2 consists in the development of F.H.E.M.T. (Flexible and Hybrid Educational Methodology and Tools) addressed to ASD students in the hospitality sector..)

As a primary task project, partners have to select some scenarios among some already developed and described in PR1 main outcome: InteaM4IEd Skills and Competences Model and provide a detailed overview of how the chosen approaches and tools identified in PR2-A1 can be applied to improve the skills and competences of teachers, educators and trainers when dealing with specific real-life situations. These methodologies aim to support those in implementing inclusive and innovative teaching methods, with a special focus on students with ASD. The investment objective is to improve education, promote inclusion, and support the European Commission in developing future frameworks for inclusive education.

In the appendix of this document, you will find an overview and selection of existing specific educational methods and tools, learning approaches, and challenges related to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the different partner countries. This overview is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the intricate educational approaches and tools for this specific target group, as well as the challenges that both students and educators may face in specific working context/situations. We hope that this document will provide valuable information and solutions for anyone involved in the education and support of students with ASD willing to approach the world of work

Structure of this document:

This document aims to provide valuable insights for education professionals and other stakeholders involved in supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their educational development.

It applies a substantial overview of available educational methods and tools for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our goal is to explain and describe how each of the selected methods/tools under PR2-A1 can be applied to improve the skills and competencies of the student in each specific scenario (PR1).

Chapter 1: Overview of 15 Methods/Tools

This chapter provides a concise overview of the 15 selected educational methods and tools that will be explored. Each method/tool is briefly introduced to give the reader a general understanding of what will be covered.

Chapter 2: Method/Tool-Specific Analysis

This chapter is composed of different sub-chapters, each specific to one of the six scenarios. For each scenario, the following structure is followed:

Scenario Description: This section outlines a specific scenario relevant to the method/tool (e.g., 'The safe code does not work'). This helps to understand the context in which the method/tool can be applied.

Suitability of the Method/Tool: We will discuss why the chosen method/tool is suitable for the described scenario. What makes this method/tool effective in this particular situation?

Application and Improvement of Skills: This section provides a detailed description of how the method/tool can be applied in the context of the scenario and how it can contribute to improving the skills and competencies of the student.

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the main findings are summarized. . Project Partners also emphasize the importance of selecting the right method/tool based on the situations in which students with ASD can find themselves. Finally, some potential actions for further implementation and research in this field are suggested

Appendix

In the appendix of this document, you will find an overview and selection of existing specific educational methods and tools, learning approaches, and challenges related to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Tabel of contents

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Chapter 1:

Brief Description of the 15 Selected Educational Methods and Tools

This chapter provides a concise overview of the 15 selected educational methods and tools that can be explored. Each method/tool is briefly introduced to give the reader a general understanding of what will be covered.

This set of methodologies is aimed at teachers specialized in teaching support activities, as well as curricular teachers, who need to implement their training on inclusive and innovative methodologies in particular for students with ASD.

A positive educational impact is expected also in favour of pupils with ASD who, through the new methodology will be able to learn in a meaningful and fully responsive way to their educational needs, through flexible tools (simplified text, video lessons, audio files, etc.), calibrated on their own cognitive learning style.

When you **click on the link (**➡️**)** you will find a pre-filled template with more background information.

➡️ **"Autism at work" program**

This program is specifically developed to support individuals with autism in finding employment in the hospitality industry. The recruitment process can pose many challenges for autistic individuals, such as unwritten rules, hypothetical questions, group activities, and panel interviews.

➡️ **Autism Friendly Club program**

To the hospitality sector at the EU level, with a focus on testing it in Sweden. The project seeks to qualify managers and workers in the hospitality sector to provide adapted services and accommodate individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

➡️ **Cultural Pedagogical Theater (CPT),**

Cultural Pedagogical Theater (CPT), is a creative tool that uses theater as a flexible methodology to prevent and act in different scenarios. Its theoretical basis is Freire's Theater of the Oppressed

➡️ **The Son-Rise Program**

The Son-Rise Program® was slowly and carefully developed by parents Barry and Samahria Kaufment in the 1970s for their son with autism. This program is based upon this simple idea: *The children show us the way in, and then we show them the way out*. This means that, rather than trying to force our children to conform to world they do not yet understand, we

begin by joining them in their world first. Instead of focusing on changing behavior, the focus should be on creating a relationship. With this approach, remarkable progress is possible.

➡️ **Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT)**

Sensory integration therapy, which was developed in the 1970s by an Occupational Therapist, A. Jean Ayres, is designed to help children with sensory-processing problems (including possibly those with ASDs) cope with the difficulties they have processing sensory input. Therapy sessions are play-oriented and may include using equipment such as swings, trampolines, and slides.

➡️ **Picture Exchange Communication System (Pecs)**

PECS is an Augmentative and Alternative Communication type that uses visual symbols to teach the learner to communicate with parents, carers, teachers and peers. The aim is to teach intentional, functional communication and to allow users to communicate their wants and needs.

➡️ **The Essential 5**

The Essential 5 is a methodology focused on five pillars: understanding autism, positive contact, creating basic peace, solving problems and promoting development.

➡️ **Stop-Think-Act (Don Meichenbaum)**

The stop-think-act method is often used with students in stressful situations where he or she shows a strong emotional reaction. The method teaches the student to think about the emotions and behavior that arise from this and gives parents/teachers/work supervisors a way to discuss this together and to come up with a solution.

➡️ **Self-instruction method (Don Meichenbaum)**

A cognitive approach in which the student learns to direct himself. This method was devised by Don Meichenbaum, one of the founders of cognitive behavioral therapy, who also applied the approach in education.

➡️ **Skinner**

B.F. Skinner was an American psychologist known for his work in operant conditioning. He emphasized the idea that behavior is influenced by rewards and punishments, with behavior that is rewarded being repeated. His work had a significant impact on the field of psychology and behavior therapy.

➡️ **ABA**

Applied behavior analysis is the area of research aimed at applying the data deriving from behavior analysis to understand the relationships between certain behaviors and external conditions. ABA takes into consideration the following elements: the antecedents, the behavior under examination, the consequences and the context. the intervention program is carried out on data that emerge from the analysis, using the usual techniques of behavioral therapy. the objective of the method is to reduce dysfunctional behaviors and expand adaptive ones, in order to improve the child's experience in the social context of reference.

➡️ **Visual Supports (VS)**

Studies show that using v*isual supports* (*VS*) when interacting with learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) facilitate the process by providing learner with easy-to-understand information and assistance about activities, routines, and expectations. There are different types of *VS* (e.g. symbols, photographs, drawings) used either in printed or digital format.

➡️ **Social Stories**

The tool of *Social Stories* facilitates comprehension of a social situation by exposing hidden elements of it, thus teaching the trainee to show a certain, appropriate behaviour in such and/or similar occasions. In other words, Social Stories function as a preparatory phase for a situation that is going or is about to happen.

➡️ **Differential Reinforcement (DR)**

Reinforcement is a basic principle of behavior that describes a response-consequence that follows a behavior and increases the future probability of that behavior. *Differential reinforcement* (*DR*) of other behaviors means that reinforcement is provided for desired behaviors, while inappropriate behaviors are ignored.

Furthermore, the developed F.H.E.M.T. will support the European Commission for the development of a future framework for inclusive education.

Chapter 2:

Each of the following chapters is specific to one of 6 scenarios showcased into the InTeaM4IEd Model (PR1). For each scenario, the following structure is followed:

Scenario Description: In this section, a specific scenario is outlined that is relevant to the method/tool (e.g., 'The safe code does not work'). This helps to understand the context in which the method/tool can be applied.

Suitability of the Method/Tool: We will discuss why the chosen method/tool is suitable for the described scenario. What makes this method/tool effective in this specific situation?

Application and Improvement of Skills: This section provides a detailed description of how the method/tool can be applied in the context of the scenario and how it can contribute to improving the skills and competencies of the student.

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Scenario 1:

Safe Code Doesn't Work

Scenario Description:

The student is doing very well on his/her internship, completes all his/her tasks with excellence, and goes along with everything. Expectations are very high for him/her. Due to staff shortages, he/she is placed in a shift that does not match his/her responsibilities as an intern. The student has not had a break since the beginning of his/her shift. During closing, the safe code doesn't work, and he/she has a meltdown. There is panic and fear of failure because the trainer trusts him/her, and he/she feels that he/she hasn't lived up to it. What should the student do, and what about the trainer?

Suitability of the Method/Tool: TEACCH

The TEACCH program is suitable for the described scenario where the student with autism, who typically performs well, encounters a stressful situation due to unexpected changes and high expectations.

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here's why TEACCH is suitable for this scenario:

1. Environmental Structure: TEACCH emphasizes environmental structure, both in terms of space and time. In this scenario, the student can benefit from a structured environment that is clearly defined, and where breaks are also provided for.

2. Rest Moments: The program repeatedly emphasizes the importance of rest moments and personal space. In this case, the student can benefit from moments of rest or breaks, especially if he hasn't had a break since the beginning of his shift.

3. Visual Support: TEACCH makes extensive use of visual support, such as visual schedules and images to make tasks and steps clear. In this scenario, the use of visual aids can assist in understanding the situation, such as what to do when the safe code doesn't work.

4. Individual Needs Adjustment: TEACCH recognizes the importance of individual adaptation and flexibility. In this case, the method can be adapted to the specific needs of the student, providing him with the support he requires.

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Scenario 2:

No Reservation Known

Grandfather and grandmother have been married for 60 years and go out to dinner with all the children and grandchildren. They come to dinner with a group of 35 people, have reserved a separate room and come into the student's front office. The reservation is not on the list. The student starts an investigation into the missing reservation. Meanwhile, the family becomes restless: the grandmother is in tears because she arranged everything, the grandfather wants to file a complaint, the children run down the hall and the mother has to breastfeed her baby. The student starts to feel very anxious and freezes.

How should the student proceed?

Suitability of the Method/Tool: Self-instruction method (Don Meichenbaum)
The cognitive approach, where students learn to self-regulate, as developed by Don Meichenbaum, one of the founders of cognitive behavioral therapy, can be applied to help the student cope with the stressful situation in the described case.

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here is how this tool can be used:

Self-Regulation and Self-Management: The student can learn to control his thoughts and emotions and self-regulate in stressful situations. This begins with awareness of his own thoughts and emotions in response to the situation.

Cognitive Restructuring: The student can learn to restructure his thought patterns and shift from negative or overwhelming thoughts to more positive and manageable thoughts. In this case, he can focus on problem-solving instead of being paralyzed by fear.

Step-by-Step Approach: The student can teach himself to tackle the situation step by step. Instead of trying to solve everything at once, he can start with small steps, such as gathering information about the missing reservation.

Stress Management Techniques: Learning stress management techniques, such as breathing exercises or mindfulness, can help the student remain calm in stressful situations.

Communication Skills: The student can learn how to effectively communicate with family members and keep them informed of the situation's progress. Clear communication can reduce tension.

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Self-Assessment: The student can learn to be self-aware in his self-assessment. It's normal to feel some anxiety in stressful situations. The student can learn that anxiety is not necessarily a negative emotion and that he can cope with it.

Scenario 3:

Roundtable in Class - Resistence to Change

As a teacher, you have come up with a nice working method that has enabled you to set up the classroom differently and promote communication between students. The tables and chairs are now changed from two by two into roundtables. However, your student with ASD seems very disrupted and insists on replacing the tables and chairs as they were before.

Suitability of the Method/Tool: The Sonrise program

The Son-Rise Program® is an approach that focuses on establishing a relationship with children with autism and understanding them in their world before trying to bring them into yours.

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here is how this tool can be applied in the described situation with the student with ASD who appears agitated about the changes in the classroom arrangement:

Empathy and Understanding: The Son-Rise Program® recognizes the importance of empathy and understanding the perspective and needs of the child with autism. As a teacher, it's essential to understand why the student is disturbed by the new classroom arrangement and what he needs.

Joining the Child in Their World: According to the principles of the Son-Rise Program®, it's crucial to meet the student in his current world, which may include a preference for the old tables and chairs. This means being prepared to accommodate the classroom arrangement to the student's wishes to build a positive and trusting relationship.

Patience and Communication: While respecting the old classroom arrangement, it's important to be patient and continue communication with the student. Try to understand why the old setup is important to him and what he gains from it.

Gradual Transition: After establishing a strong relationship with the struggling student and gaining trust, you can gradually introduce suggestions for changes in the classroom arrangement. This can be done in small steps to make the student feel comfortable with the transition.

Stay Focused on the Relationship: Instead of trying to directly change the student's behavior, stay focused on building a positive relationship with him. A strong relationship can ultimately lead to more willingness on the part of the student to accept change.

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Scenario 4:

Busy Terrace - Stimulus Processing

The weather is nice and the terrace is full. The student takes the order. A family with 2 small children arrives…children are busy, jittery and hungry…he asks what they want to drink…coke ⬚ is not allowed by mother, chocolate milk ⬚ is no longer in the restaurant stock….apple juice, oh no, still orange…finally noted the order for 2 adults and 2 children. They also want to eat pizza… with the question whether the children can have their pizza a little faster because they are starving. Meanwhile, other customers think that the student has been standing at that table a bit too long and beckon him that they also want to be helped…panic.

How can the student handle this

Suitability of the Method/Tool: Social Stories

The "Social Stories" tool can be useful in helping the student cope with the described situation where there are multiple customers, including a family with impatient children, and the student feels overwhelmed and panicked.

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here is how the "Social Stories" tool can be applied to guide the student:

Preparation with Social Stories: Before the student starts his work, he can be prepped with a "Social Story" describing what is expected of him in busy situations like this one. The "Social Story" can include elements such as greeting customers, taking orders, dealing with special requests, and handling impatient customers.

Remind the student of the Social Story: While the student is in the situation, he can recall the "Social Story" and follow the steps outlined in it. This can help the student stay on track and organized despite the stressful circumstances.

Step-by-Step Approach: The student can learn to break down tasks into small steps and sequences. For example, first picking up and delivering the towels, then taking orders from the family, and then moving on to other customers.

Effective Communication: The student can learn effective communication skills to be clear with customers. In this case, he can, for example, explain why some items are not available and suggest alternatives.

Self-Regulation and Stress Management: The student can learn to manage his emotions and control stress. Recalling the "Social Story" can help him stay calm and make the situation more manageable.

Flexibility and Problem Solving: The student can be trained to be flexible and find creative solutions for challenging situations, such as finding alternative ways to accommodate the family with hungry children.

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Scenario 5

Case solution –Oriented Thinking

Meeting room is reserved by a company. The coffee table should be ready by 10am. At 10.10 someone comes to you and asks where the coffee is.

Research shows that the coffee was served in **another** room. Those guys hadn't reserved coffee and some goodies. Students mixed up the halls. Panic ensues…

- does he take the coffee from the room,
- leave it there (because it has already been used) and charge the costs…..
- where does he get other biscuits from so quickly?

What should the student do?

Suitability of the Method/Tool: Autisme @ work

The "Autism at Work" program appears to be suitable for the described scenario in which the student with autism is faced with an uncomfortable situation in the workplace, namely the confusion regarding the location of the coffee and snacks ordered for a meeting.

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here's why this tool is suitable for this scenario:

Autism-Friendly Work Environment: The "Autism at Work" program is designed to create an autism-friendly work environment. In a similar environment, employees with autism are supported in dealing with unexpected situations and challenges.

Communication and Social Skills: This program can help develop the communication and social skills of the student. In the described scenario, where communication and understanding of expectations are crucial, the program can assist in responding effectively.

Stress Management and Self-Management: The "Autism at Work" program can help the student develop stress management skills and self-management. In a stressful situation like this, the student can learn how to remain calm and make informed decisions.

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Scenario 6

Planning and Organising Multi-tasking

The students work in the kitchen and prepare a meal together. one of the students has the assignment to make a salad. The students are given an assignment to make their own salad according to a step-by-step plan.

All students cook the eggs and in the meantime get to work washing the lettuce and cutting the tomatoes and cucumber.

Student x also cooks the eggs and waits neatly for 8 minutes until that assignment is completed.

result...all salads are ready to be served, except student x's salad.

Suitability of the Method/Tool: Autism Friendly Club program

The described tool, which aims to create a welcoming environment for individuals with autism, can also be applied in the scenario where students are working together in the kitchen to prepare a meal, with adapted services to accommodate individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Application and Improvement of Skills:

Here is how the tool can be applied in this specific scenario:

1. Signposting of Kitchen Areas:

Identify elements in the kitchen environment that may potentially cause sensory overload or discomfort for the student with autism, such as the noise from cooking equipment or harsh lighting.

2. Training and Sensitization of Workers:

Ensure that all students, including the one with autism, understand how to communicate and collaborate in the kitchen. It may be beneficial to raise awareness among fellow students about the specific needs of their classmate with autism, emphasizing the importance of clear communication and structure.

3. Adaptation of Schedules:

Take into consideration the individual needs of the student with autism when planning kitchen activities. The student with autism may perform better if assigned a specific task that aligns with their skills and requirements, reducing the risk of feeling overwhelmed.

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4. Development of Sector-Specific Protocols:

Ensure there are clear protocols that describe how kitchen activities can be adapted to effectively support the student with autism. This can include communication, structure, and potential adjustments to cooking timings.

Conclusions

In this concluding chapter, we will provide a summary of the discoveries we have made. We will emphasize the critical importance of selecting the right method/tool based on the specific situation in which students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) find themselves.

Throughout this project, all partner countries have worked with great dedication and commitment to develop the F.H.E.M.T. (Flexible and Hybrid Educational Methodology and Tools), with the aim of improving the skills and competencies of teachers, educators and trainers in the hospitality sector in dealing with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This project has yielded a wealth of insights and methodologies to enhance the educational experience of ASD students and promote inclusivity in education, thus allowing them to approach the world of work safely.

An essential component of this project was to provide the description of specific scenarios that can happen in real-life situations in regard to specific work environment situations in each partner country and the exploration of how the F.H.E.M.T. tools could be effectively applied in these diverse contexts. This approach has resulted in valuable feedback and experiences from teachers, both specialized in support activities and curricular teachers, involved in training. These insights have led to a profound understanding of how the F.H.E.M.T. can be tailored to the needs of ASD students and the educational environment in the hospitality sector.

These methodologies will not only enhance the competence of educators but also contribute to the creation of more inclusive learning environments, where ASD students have the opportunity to learn and grow meaningfully. This project not only contributes to the quality of education but will also support the European Commission in shaping future frameworks for inclusive education.

The 15 newly identified skills and competencies for ASD students in the hospitality sector, as identified in this project, will serve as a valuable guide for future initiatives. We are confident that the F.H.E.M.T. and the results of this project will have a lasting and positive impact on education, inclusivity, and, most importantly, the lives of ASD students in the hospitality sector.

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Appendix

Introduction:

The following templates aims to gather information to create a meaningful learning environment that takes into account the following principles:

- Addressing individual differences.
- Motivating students, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Avoiding information overload.
- Creating realistic contexts.
- Encouraging interaction.
- Offering ready-made tasks.
- Promoting reflection.

The document is structured as follows:

- Short description of the tool
- Level/Degree of Autism
- Competences Area
- (see annex I_Skills and Competence Map)
- Skills acquired or improved and in which way
- Learning outcomes expected for students
- Justification
- Pros and cons
- Level of support required
- Scenario that can be addressed with the tool
- Why? How? a complete overview on how to use the tool selected to be addressed to the scenario chosen in order to improve skills and competences to copy with the situation

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Autism degrees

The different degrees of autism are the following:

Autism degrees	
Austic or Grade 1 disorder	It is also known as severe autism, and constitutes the deepest degree of the autistic spectrum, this being the most recognized. Leo Kanner in 1941 was the one who called it Early Childhood Autism, this being the first disorder to encompass characteristics of children with any of the types or degrees of autism that exist, without distinguishing severity. Today, this type of autism is the one that encompasses the deepest manifestations. Autistic disorder is characterized mainly by the absence of language development, in addition, these children avoid looking into the eyes of others and isolate themselves from their environment. In addition, they manifest stereotyped movements that can be strange, without any objective, as well as the lack of expression of emotions and interests or activities in a reduced way.
Regressive or Grade 2 disorder	This type of autism is also known as childhood disintegrative disorder, and it is an alteration that, unlike the other types or degrees of autism that exists, takes a little longer to appear, because in the early years the child develops normally, but at a certain point he begins to gradually lose the skills he has acquired. In general, regressive autism appears before the age of 10 and it is from this regression that the same symptoms of severe autism appear but with less intensity. In this way, the child loses his language skills, ability to communicate and interact with children and adults in his own environment. On the other hand, repetitive behaviors appear, both motor, such as mannerisms and stereotypes, coupled with the isolation of the people around him.
High functioning autism	Among the types or degrees of autism that exist, this is the mildest because its symptoms are not acute or deep, at least in its beginnings. Unlike the other types or degrees of autism that there are, in this case the development of language in the child is normal, as well as their cognitive processes, staying within the parameters, and if they have the appropriate attention they can be integrated into school without issue. Finally, people diagnosed with this condition are distinguished, since their memory capacity is very good, however, they tend to have mental rigidity and ideas associated with obsessiveness, which can be accompanied by motor clumsiness.

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The Essential 5

Short description of the tool	*The Essential 5 is a methodology focused on five pillars: understanding autism, positive contact, creating basic peace, solving problems and promoting development.* *This method is based on five important principles:* *Clarity: This helps to provide clear communication and expectations. People with autism often need plain, simple language and instructions.* *Predictability : Creating a predictable environment is essential. People can handle structure and routine* *Understandability: Adjusting the communication style* *Honesty : Honesty* *Positivity: The culmination of positive reinforcement and rewarding desired behavior is an important part of the method.*
Level/Degree of Autism	□ **Autistic – Grade 1** □ **Regressive – Grade 2** □ **High - functioning**
Competences Area	□ **Communication Area** □ **Socio – emotional Area** □ **Self – management Area** □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	*Communication Area* *Clarity in Communication: The method complicates the importance of reliable and simple communication. Individuals with autism learn to use complex language and give clear instructions.* *Predictability: The method encourages communicating with predictable patterns and structures. This helps individuals with autism to anticipate what is being said and better understand what is expected of them.* *Comprehensibility: "Give Me the Five" teaches avoiding figurative language and abstract concepts in communication. This ensures that the message is intended for people with autism.* *Social-emotional Area:* *Honesty and Positivity: The method indirectly emphasizes the importance of honest and sensible communication. This can help build trust and foundation positive relationships.* *Rewarding Desired Behavior: The positivity component encourages rewarding desired behavior. This can help individuals with autism develop positive social interactions and emotional expression.*

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	Emotion recognition: Through structured and predictable social interactions, people with autism learn to better recognize and understand emotions, both in themselves and in others. *Area Self-management* *Predictability and structure: The method indirectly creates a predictable environment and daily routines. This supports self-management because individuals with autism know what to expect and how to prepare.* *Self-regulation: The method supports self-regulation by learning coping strategies and the relevance of stressors. This improves self-management virtually and behaviorally.* *Comprehensibility and Clarity: By emphasizing clear and problematic communication, individuals with autism are helped to better express their own needs and wishes, which affects their self-management.*
Learning outcomes expected for students	*By using this "The Essential 5" tool, ASD students can:* *Improve their communication skills by using clear and understandable language, increasing their ability to express their needs and communicate effectively with others.* *Develop self-regulation and emotional recognition, leading to better emotional feeling* *Improve their social-emotional competencies, including empathy, building positive relationships and understanding social dynamics.* *Strengthen self-management skills by creating and adhering to structured routines and adapting to change more effectively.* *Increase their independence in everyday life by applying the principles of predictability, clarity, honesty and positivity when dealing with and navigating different situations and challenges.*
Justification	*Justification for the choice:* *Structured Approach: The Essential 5 provides a structured and systematic approach that is beneficial for people with ASD. It breaks complex social and communication skills into manageable steps, making them accessible to individuals across the spectrum.* *Clarity and predictability: This method emphasizes clear and predictable communication that meets the needs of people with ASD. Clarity and predictability are essential for those who have difficulty interpreting abstract or ambiguous information.* *Visual support: Visual support is an integral part of this method and can provide significant benefits for people with ASD, many of whom are visual learners. Visual aids can help convey information and instructions effectively.*

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	Emphasis on positive reinforcement: The Essential 5 promotes positive reinforcement, which is a powerful motivator for people with ASD. It encourages the repetition of desired behaviors and social interactions. *Considerations for different ASD degrees:* *High-functioning ASD: Individuals with high-functioning ASD may require less intensive support. In such cases, the method can be adapted to their higher level of cognitive and communication skills. Tools may include individualized goal setting and flexibility in application of the method.* *Low-functioning ASD: For individuals with greater support needs, solutions may include simplifying visual support, providing additional visual cues, and working closely with specialists and therapists to tailor the method to their specific needs.* *Individualization: Regardless of the degree of ASD, individualization is crucial. Understanding each individual's unique strengths, challenges, and communication preferences is essential to successfully implementing the method.* *Family involvement: For individuals with lower functioning ASD, family involvement is crucial. Educating and training family members to use the method at home can ensure consistency and generalization of skills.* *Additional resources:* *Ongoing training: Teachers, therapists, and caregivers should receive appropriate training in the Essential 5 method to implement it effectively, especially when dealing with varying degrees of ASD.* *Progress monitoring: Collecting data and monitoring progress is essential for tracking the effectiveness of the method for each individual. Periodic assessments can help to adjust and adjust the approach if necessary.*
Pros and cons	Challenges/Barriers: Resistance to change: People with ASD may have difficulty adapting to new routines or interventions. Implementing a new method may be met with resistance, especially in cases where the individual is used to different approaches. Sensory sensitivities: Many people with ASD have sensory sensitivities, and the sensory environment can pose challenges during method implementation. Overstimulating sensory environments can be a barrier to success. Communication difficulties: For individuals with limited communication skills, it can be challenging to express their understanding or preferences regarding the method. Effective communication is essential for successful implementation. Generalization: transferring skills Resources and Training Needs: Implementing the Positive aspects of implementation:

	Structured Approach: "Give Me the Five" offers a structured and systematic approach, which can be very helpful for people with ASD who thrive in a structured environment. Individualization: The method can be adapted to the unique needs of each individual, allowing for individualized support and addressing specific challenges effectively. Visual supports: Visual Emphasis on Positive Reinforcement: The method encourages the use of positive reinforcement to motivate and reward desired behavior, which can be a powerful tool for people with ASD. Progress monitoring: Collecting data and monitoring progress can help teachers and therapists make data-based decisions, track improvements, and adjust the method as necessary.
Level of support required	*Level of involvement:* *The level of involvement of teachers, therapists, caregivers and support staff is critical. Effectively implementing the method requires a high degree of commitment and consistency.* *Number of sources:* *The number of assistive devices required may vary depending on the individual's degree of ASD and their specific needs. Some individuals may require more resources, including specialized equipment, visual support and additional staff.* *Number of work sessions:* *The frequency and duration of work sessions should be tailored to the needs of the individual. Some individuals may require more frequent sessions, while others can progress effectively with fewer sessions.* *Mechanisms or aspects to take into account according to the ASD degree:* *Individualization: Consider the individual's unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges based on his or her ASD level. The approach may need to be tailored to the specific needs of each person.* *Sensory considerations: Take sensory sensitivities into account, especially in people with ASD. Create an environment that meets sensory needs and reduces sensory challenges.* *Communication Support: Consider augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools or strategies for individuals with limited communication skills to facilitate their participation in the method.* *Family involvement : Family members play a critical role, especially for individuals with lower functioning ASD. Work with families to ensure consistency in implementing the method at home.* *When to use this tool:*

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	The tool can be introduced in several phases: *At the beginning of the training: By introducing the method at the beginning of the training, you can set up a structured approach from the start.* *During Training: Continued use during training strengthens skills and provides opportunities for individuals to apply what they have learned.* *Post-training: Continued use post-training helps generalize skills to real-life situations.* *Expectations and goal achievement of the supporter:* *Supporters should have clear expectations of each individual based on their unique goals. Expectations may include improved communication, self-regulation, and social interaction.* *Goals should be set for each individual based on their specific needs. Success is characterized by achieving these goals, which can be measured through data collection, observation, and periodic assessments.*
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	No reservation known: Grandpa and grandma have been married for 60 years and go out for dinner with all the children and grandchildren. They come to eat with a group of 35 people, have reserved a separate room and enter at the student desk. The reservation is not on the list. Student starts an investigation into the missing reservation. In the meantime, the family is becoming restless: grandmother is in tears because she has arranged everything, daughter wants to file a complaint, children are running through the hallway and mother has to breastfeed her child. The student begins to feel very anxious and freeze.
Why? How?	Here's a step-by-step overview of how to use the method in this situation: 1. Stop (Stop - Stop): In the 'Stop' phase, the student must recognize the escalating stress and anxiety. The student must be trained to recognize his or her own emotional state and to recognize times when he or she needs to take a break. 2. Do (Think - Think): In the "Do" phase, the student applies self-instruction techniques. The student can silently guide themselves with positive self-talk to stay calm and think about the situation. For example: "I have to stay cool and calm." "Let's find a solution step by step." "I can handle this situation." 3. Law (Trade - Trading): In the "Acting" phase, the student will implement the following steps to manage the situation and support the family: Approach the family calmly and acknowledge their grief.

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	Show empathy and understanding for the grandmother's emotional response.
	Guide the grandmother to a quieter area where she can regain her composure.
	Discuss the daughter's complaint and assure her that the student is taking steps to resolve the problem.
	Please ask the family to provide the reservation details, such as the name under which it was made.
	Contact the restaurant staff to investigate the missing reservation, while maintaining a professional and collected demeanor.
	Communicate calmly with the children, redirect their attention or provide a designated play area.
	Help the mother with her breastfeeding needs by ensuring she has a private and comfortable space.
	4. Evaluate (Evaluate - Evaluate):
	After the situation is resolved, the student should reflect on his actions and assess his response. They can ask themselves questions like: "How did I handle the situation?" "What went well and what can I improve?" "Have I used the Essential 5 method effectively to stay calm?"

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Stop-Think-Act (Don Meichenbaum)

Short description of the tool	*The stop-think-act method is often used with students in stressful situations where he or she shows a strong emotional reaction. The method teaches the student to think about the emotions and behavior that arise from this and gives parents/teachers/work supervisors a way to discuss this together and to come up with a solution.*
Level/Degree of Autism	□ **Autistic – Grade 1** □ **Regressive – Grade 2** □ **High - functioning**
Competences Area	□ Communication Area □ **Socio – emotional Area** □ **Self – management Area** □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	*1. Social-emotional area:* *Stop Phase: In the "Stop" phase, individuals learn to stop impulses and unwanted thoughts before they result in negative social or emotional responses. This helps reduce impulsive responses to social situations, allowing individuals to exercise greater control over their behavior.* *Do phase: The 'Do' phase involves individuals actively and positively instructing themselves to perform desired social behavior. This includes, for example, encouraging themselves to be more assertive, show more empathy, or manage conflict better. It helps individuals respond proactively to social situations and improve their social skills.* *Acting phase: In the 'Act' phase, individuals convert the learned positive instructions into actual behavior. They put the new social skills into practice, leading to better interactions and more successful social-emotional outcomes.* *2. Self-management area:* *The Stop-Do-Act method supports self-management by helping individuals consciously control their behavior. By recognizing impulses, stopping them and then providing positive self-instructions, people learn more effective self-control and self-regulation.* *Individuals develop insight into their own emotions, thoughts and reactions, which contributes to their ability to hone self-management skills. These skills can extend to managing stress, impulse control, and dealing with negative emotions.* *By applying the Stop-Do-Act method, individuals can learn to better plan and regulate their own behavior, resulting in improved self-efficacy and greater autonomy in dealing with social and emotional situations.*
Learning outcomes expected for students	*By using this tool the ASD students will be able to...* *Improve their self-regulation and impulse control, leading to more adaptive behavior in different social and emotional situations.* *Improve their social skills, including communication, empathy and conflict resolution, enabling more positive interactions with peers and adults.*

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	Develop a deeper understanding of their own emotions and thought processes, allowing them to deal with stress and negative emotions more effectively.
	Increases their autonomy and self-efficacy in dealing with social and emotional challenges, ultimately promoting their independence and self-confidence.
	Apply the skills learned to real-life scenarios, resulting in more successful and meaningful social and emotional interactions both inside and outside the classroom.
Justification	*Expedients necessary for implementing this tool effectively for students with ASD may include:*
	1. Individualized Assessment: Before implementing the tool, it's essential to conduct individualized assessments of each student's strengths, weaknesses, and specific social and emotional needs.
	2. Visual Supports: Prepare visual supports and cues to accompany the method, such as visual schedules, social stories, or visual reminders to facilitate understanding and implementation.
	3. Repetition and Consistency: Plan for frequent and consistent practice sessions to reinforce the learned skills. Repetition is often a key element of success for individuals with ASD.
	4. Flexibility: Be prepared to adapt the method to individual students' needs. Some students may require more support or modifications, and flexibility is crucial to address their unique challenges.
	5. Collaboration: Collaborate with other professionals, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, and behavior specialists, to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing the students' needs.
	6. Data Collection: Collect data to monitor progress and adjust the method as necessary. This data-driven approach can help track improvements and make data-informed decisions.
Pros and cons	Challenges/Barriers:
	1. Resistance to Change: Some students may initially resist the method as it introduces new strategies and routines. Change can be challenging for individuals with ASD.
	2.Individual Variability: ASD is a spectrum, and students exhibit a wide range of characteristics and needs. Adapting the method for each student's unique profile can be demanding.
	3. Sensory Sensitivities: Some students with ASD have sensory sensitivities that can make it difficult to engage in certain activities or environments, potentially affecting their ability to use the method consistently.

	4. Generalization: Transferring skills learned through the method to real-life situations can be a barrier. Some students may struggle to apply the learned skills in diverse social contexts.
	5. Communication Challenges: Many students with ASD have communication difficulties, making it challenging to express their thoughts and feelings during the method's "Do" phase effectively.
	6. Resource Allocation: Implementing the method effectively often requires additional resources, including specialized training for educators and therapists, which can pose a financial and logistical challenge for schools and institutions.
	Positive Aspects of Implementation:
	1. Structured Approach: The method provides a structured framework that is particularly beneficial for students with ASD who often thrive in structured environments.
	2. Individualized Learning: The tool can be customized to each student's specific needs, allowing for individualized support and addressing unique challenges.
	3. Enhanced Self-Regulation: The method effectively targets self-regulation and impulse control, which are common challenges for individuals with ASD.
	4. Visual Supports: Visual supports within the method can aid understanding and retention of skills, making it accessible to students with varying communication abilities.
	5. Progress Tracking: The data-driven nature of the method allows for progress tracking, which can help educators and therapists make data-informed decisions and adjust interventions accordingly.
	6. Increased Independence: Successful implementation can lead to increased independence and self-efficacy for students with ASD, as they become more capable of managing their social and emotional responses.
	7. Collaboration: The method often encourages collaboration among educators, therapists, and parents, fostering a holistic approach to support students with ASD.
	8. Skill Generalization: With consistent practice and gradual exposure to real-life situations, students can generalize the skills acquired through the method, leading to improved social and emotional interactions outside of the structured environment.
Level of support required	*When implementing the Stop-Do-Act method for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), several mechanisms and aspects need to be considered, particularly in relation to the ASD degree:* *Level of Commitment:*

	- Educators, therapists, and support staff should be fully committed to the implementation. Commitment is essential for maintaining consistency and ensuring the method's effectiveness. *Number of Resources:* *- The number of resources required can vary based on the degree of ASD. Higher levels of support and resources may be necessary for students with more significant challenges. This includes having access to specialized staff, visual supports, and materials.* *Amount of Working Sessions:* *- The frequency and duration of working sessions should be tailored to individual student needs. Students with higher support requirements may need more frequent sessions.* *Mechanisms or Aspects to Consider According to ASD Degree:* *- **Individualization**: ASD is a spectrum, and each student is unique. The method must be individualized to address the specific challenges and strengths of each student.* *- Sensory Considerations: Students with ASD may have sensory sensitivities. Supporters should consider the sensory environment and adapt it to accommodate students with sensory challenges.* *- Communication Support:For students with limited communication skills, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools or strategies may be needed to facilitate their participation in the method.* *- Gradual Progression: For students with a higher degree of ASD, a gradual progression may be necessary. Start with simpler tasks and gradually increase complexity as the student gains skills.* *- Family Involvement: Involving parents and caregivers is essential, especially for students with higher support needs. Supporters should collaborate with families to reinforce the method at home.* *When to Use the Tool:* *- The tool can be introduced at various stages:* * By the Beginning of the Training: Introducing the method at the start of the training helps establish a structured approach from the beginning.* * - During the Training: Ongoing use during the training reinforces skills and provides opportunities for students to apply what they've learned.* * - After the Training: Continued use after the training helps with skill generalization to real-life situations.* *Supporter's Expectations and Goal Achievement:* *- Supporters should have clear expectations for each student based on their individual goals. The primary expectation is to enhance the social and emotional skills of the students.* *- Goals may include improved self-regulation, better communication, and increased independence in managing social interactions.*

	- The achievement of these goals can be measured through data collection, observation, and periodic assessments. Success is marked by students demonstrating improved social and emotional skills and the ability to apply them in real-life situations.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	No Reservation Known: Grandpa and grandma have been married for 60 years and go out for dinner with all the children and grandchildren. They come to eat with a group of 35 people, have reserved a separate room and enter at the student desk. The reservation is not on the list. Student starts an investigation into the missing reservation. In the meantime, the family is becoming restless: grandmother is in tears because she has arranged everything, daughter wants to file a complaint, children are running through the hallway and mother has to breastfeed her child. The student begins to feel very anxious and freezes.
Why? How?	Meichenbaum's Stop-Think-Act method is a cognitive behavioral approach that helps individuals deal with stressful situations and solve problems effectively. In the scenario of the missing reservation and the chaotic situation in the restaurant with a large party, this method can be useful to improve the student's skills and competencies. Here's an overview of how to apply the Stop-Think-Act method: 1. Stop: The student must first acknowledge that they are feeling anxious and overwhelmed. This is the starting point of the Stop phase. It is important to understand that it is normal to experience stress and anxiety in such stressful situations. The student must literally teach themselves to say "stop" and even take a moment of rest to get their emotions under control. This can be done by performing some gentle breathing exercises to reduce anxiety. 2. Think: In the thinking phase, the student must pay attention to the problem: the missing reservation. This requires the ability to think clearly despite the stressful circumstances. The student must think about possible solutions. This includes considering actions such as checking the reservation information, contacting the supervisor, and communicating with the family to explain and determine the situation. It is important to understand that flexibility and the ability to think of alternative solutions are crucial at this stage. 3. Trading: After the student has controlled his emotions in the Stop-Think phase, and has thought through possible solutions after thorough consideration, it is time to take action. Student action can be taken by: Checking the reservation list, maybe there is a typo or misunderstanding.

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	The manager informs about the situation and requests for assistance.
	Making the family comfortable and conventional that a solution is being worked on.
	Suggest possible alternative arrangements, such as temporarily waiting in the lounge or offering persuasive compensation for the wait.
	It is important to continue and adjust the actions based on the results.

Self-instruction method (Don Meichenbaum)

Short description of the tool	*A cognitive approach in which the student learns to direct himself. This method was devised by Don Meichenbaum, one of the founders of cognitive behavioral therapy, who also applied the approach in education.*
Level/Degree of Autism	☐ **Autistic – Grade 1** ☐ **Regressive – Grade 2** ☐ **High - functioning**
Competences Area	☐ Communication Area ☐ Socio – emotional Area ☐ **Self – management Area** ☐ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	*Don Meichenbaum's Self-Instruction Method is a cognitive behavioral therapy approach aimed at improving self-management skills.* *Awareness of Thoughts and Behaviors: The Self-Instruction Method encourages individuals to become aware of their thoughts and behaviors. This is the first step in developing self-management skills. By becoming aware of their own thoughts and reactions, they can begin to identify the relevant behavior patterns that need to be reduced.* *Self-instruction: The method teaches individuals to use self-instruction to guide their behavior. They learn to give internal instructions, similar to an internal dialogue, to influence their behavior. This can include positive reinforcement to self-encouragement and even problem-solving instructions.* *Self-regulation: The Self-Instructional Method supports self-regulation by teaching individuals how to manage their behavior in response to specific situations. They develop skills to reduce impulsive behavior and instead make conscious and well-considered choices.* *Self-reflection and Problem Solving: The method encourages self-reflection. Individuals learn to analyze situations, their thoughts and emotions often and come up with solutions to possible problems. This contributes to their ability to deal with challenges effectively.* *Self-control: The method helps develop self-control and impulse control. Individuals learn to better manage their emotions and behavior, which is crucial for effective self-management.*

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	Generalization to Daily Life: The meaningful goal of the Self-Instruction Method is to generalize the learned skills to everyday life. This means that the methods can be applied in real situations, such as at work, at home or in social interactions.
Learning outcomes expected for students	By using this tool, the ASD students will be able to: 1. Enhance their self-regulation and impulse control, leading to improved behavioral management in various social and emotional situations. 2. Develop problem-solving skills and self-instruction strategies, empowering them to navigate challenging scenarios more effectively. 3. Increase self-awareness of their own thoughts and emotions, allowing them to better understand and manage their reactions in social interactions. 4. Improve their capacity for self-reflection, enabling them to analyze and adapt their responses to various social contexts. 5. Foster a sense of autonomy and self-efficacy, leading to increased independence in managing their social and emotional challenges. 6. Apply the acquired skills to real-life situations, resulting in more successful and meaningful social and emotional interactions, both within and beyond the classroom.
Justification	The choice of the self-instruction method by Don Meichenbaum as a tool for people with an autism spectrum disorder Cognitive-behavioral approach: the self Structured and systematic: This method provides a structured and systematic approach that is beneficial for people with ASD who often thrive in a structured environment. It breaks down complex social and emotional skills into manageable ones Personalization: The method can be tailored to unique needs Visual Support: Visual support is often an integral part of this method, such as visual schedules, social stories, and visual cues. These support Focus on self-regulation: The method places a strong emphasis on self-regulation and impulse control, which are common challenges for people with ASD. It provides specific strategies for doing this
Pros and cons	Challenges/Barriers: Resistance to change: Some people with ASD may resist changes in routines or interventions, making it challenging to introduce a new method such as self-instruction. Sensory sensitivities: Sensory sensitivities are common in people with ASD. Environmental factors, such as noise or lighting, can hinder successful implementation.

	Individual variability: The degree of ASD can vary widely between individuals, making it challenging to find a one-size-fits-all approach. Tailoring the method to individual needs can be time-consuming.

Communication challenges: Many people with ASD have communication difficulties, which can affect their ability to express their thoughts or understand the self-instruction process.

Generalization: Transferring skills learned through self-instruction to real-life situations can be a barrier. Some individuals may have difficulty applying what they have learned in various social contexts.

Resources and training needs: Effective implementation of the method may require additional resources, including specialized training for teachers and therapists, which can pose financial and logistical challenges.

Positive aspects of implementation:

Structured approach: The method provides a structured and systematic framework, which is beneficial for people with ASD who often thrive in a structured environment.

Personalization: The tool can be tailored to the unique needs of each individual, enabling individualized support and addressing specific challenges.

Visual Support: Visual support, a common component of the method, promotes understanding and communication, making it accessible to individuals with different communication skills.

Focus on self-regulation: The method focuses directly on self-regulation and impulse control, which are common challenges for people with ASD.

Generalization to real life: With consistent practice and gradual exposure to real life situations, individuals can generalize the skills acquired through self-instruction, leading to improved social and emotional interactions outside the structured environment.

Data-driven approach: Collecting data and monitoring progress is often part of the method, allowing teachers and therapists to make data-driven decisions and track improvements. |
| Level of support required | *When implementing Don Meichenbaum's self-instruction method for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), several mechanisms and aspects should be taken into consideration, especially regarding the degree of ASD:*

Level of involvement:

The level of involvement required from teachers, therapists and support staff is crucial. Commitment is essential to maintain consistency and ensure the effectiveness of the method.
Number of sources: |

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The number of resources needed may vary depending on the degree of ASD. Individuals with higher levels of ASD may require more extensive support and resources, including specialized staff and equipment.
Number of work sessions:

The frequency and duration of work sessions should be adapted to the individual needs of each person with ASD. Those with higher support needs may require more frequent sessions.
Mechanisms or aspects to take into account according to the ASD degree:

Individualization: ASD is a spectrum and each individual is unique. The method should be individualized to address each person's specific strengths and challenges.

Sensory Considerations: Individuals with ASD may have sensory sensitivities that need to be taken into account. The sensory environment must be adapted to their sensory needs.

Communication Support: For those with limited communication skills, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools or strategies may be needed to facilitate their participation in the method.

Gradual progression: For those with higher degrees of ASD, gradual progression may be necessary. Starting with simpler tasks and gradually increasing complexity can be helpful.

Family involvement: Involving families and caregivers is essential, especially for individuals with higher support needs. Support staff should work with families to strengthen the use of self-instructional strategies at home.

When to use this tool:

The tool can be introduced in several phases:
At the beginning of the training: By introducing the method at the beginning of the training, a structured approach is created from the start.
During Training: Continued use during training strengthens skills and provides opportunities for individuals to apply what they have learned.
Post-training: Continuing to use the method post-training helps generalize skills to real-life situations.
Expectations and goal achievement of the supporter:

Supporters should have clear expectations of each individual, based on their individual goals. The primary expectation is to improve the social and emotional skills of the individuals.
Goals may include improved self-regulation, better communication, and greater independence in managing social interactions.
The achievement of these goals can be measured through data collection, observation, and periodic assessments. Success is characterized by individuals demonstrating improved social and emotional skills and the ability to apply them in real-world situations.

Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	No Reservation Known: Grandpa and grandma have been married for 60 years and go out for dinner with all the children and grandchildren. They come to eat with a group of 35 people, have reserved a separate room and enter at the student desk. The reservation is not on the list. Student starts an investigation into the missing reservation. In the meantime, the family is becoming restless: grandmother is in tears because she has arranged everything, daughter wants to file a complaint, children are running through the hallway and mother has to breastfeed her child. The student begins to feel very anxious and freeze.
Why? How?	The self-instruction method can be used to improve the student's skills and competencies so that he can better cope with the situation when a large family arrives unexpectedly for a dinner, the missing and stressful interaction reservation takes place. Here is an overview of how this tool can be applied: Step 1: Awareness and Self-regulation The student can start developing self-regulatory skills. This includes the associated nature of one's own stress responses and awareness of thoughts and emotions in stressful situations. Using the Self-Instructional Method, the student learns to give himself instructions to reduce anxiety and stress and to remove himself. Step 2: Self-Instruction and Troubleshooting The student can learn to use internal self-instructions to deal with the situation. When the reservation is missing and the family becomes restless, the student can instruct themselves with positive reinforcement, such as "Remain calm and act step by step" or "Look for possible solutions." This helps the student to direct thoughts and develop a problem-solving approach. Step 3: Self-regulation in Behavior The self-instruction method encourages the student to put the learned self-instructions into practice. In this case, when the reservation is missing and the family is restless, the student can apply the learned self-regulation techniques. This may include addressing the family members, resolving the reservation issue, and determining the situation. Step 4: Self-Reflection and Improved Communication The difficult self-reflection method, which helps the student to analyze situations, thoughts and emotions too often and to think of possible solutions. This helps the student develop improved communication skills so that he can address the family members and their concerns. Step 5: Self-control and Independence The Self-Instruction Method supports self-control and impulse control. The student learns how to avoid impulsive reactions and instead make informed decisions. This leads to an increased sense of autonomy and independence in dealing with social and emotional challenges.

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"Autism at work" program

Working in the hospitality industry.

Guide for employees and employers

National Autistic Society (UK)

Short description of the tool	The recruitment process includes many potential challenges for autistic people, such as unwritten rules, hypothetical questions, group activities and panel interviews. NAS employment experts had produced this workbook to provide clear guidance and strategies that may help autistic people to find a job in the hospitality industry. Every autistic person is an individual, so not all of this information will be useful for everyone. Routes into employment It is common for many people starting work in the hospitality industry to gain experience by starting in an entry-level role and working their way up. There are many different part- and fulltime positions available that require minimal experience but require you to have a strong desire to learn and commit to the role. Other key routes into the hospitality industry include NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) and apprenticeships. An apprenticeship lets you combine paid employment with training for specific hospitality jobs, so you can start a career without having to study full-time. You will also work towards a vocational qualification like an NVQ.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ Autistic – Grade 1 □ Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area (see annex I_Skills and Competence Map)	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	Improve the personal skills to have success in the recruitment process that includes many potential challenges for autistic people
Learning outcomes expected for students	Improve personal skills to **Applying for jobs** The hospitality industry has a wide variety of jobs that require lots of different skills. When an ASD student is thinking about the sort of job they would like, it may be important to consider: • location • working hours? • day-to-day • working environment • entry requirements • salary **Where and how to look for jobs**

	There are a number of different places to look for jobs and this will change depending on the type of job the ASD student looking for. • Online • Word of mouth • Adverts in windows **Make interviews** Most interviews take place in a quiet office with just the ADS student and one or two people from the company. But interviews can be in different formats or settings such as public cafes. The face-to-face interview process may be a barrier for many. Remember that ASD student can request reasonable adjustments at interview if he/she disclose that He/she is autistic – this is their right under the *Equality Act*. There are a number of reasonable adjustments that may be helpful for they.
Justification	Improve the personal skills needed to act in recruitment process such as unwritten rules, hypothetical questions, group activities and panel interviews.
Pros and cons	**Disclosure of ASD diagnosis** It is always a personal decision whether or not they choose to share your autism diagnosis with your employer, but if they do, it protects them under the Equality Act and means that your employer you have a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments for them. When they're planning the adjustments they would like, they must consider whether they are reasonable. If they choose not to disclose that they are autistic, it is important to consider that their employer will do not have the same obligation to make reasonable adjustments for them and instead the focus may be that they need to change their behaviors. **Workplace expectations** Is important taking in account employer and ASD students' expectations about work
Level of support required	An Employment Training Team must support training to develop accessible employment opportunities for autistic applicants and retain the autistic talent they have in their organization through raising awareness and implementing effective reasonable adjustments. All of the training and services must be developed in close consultation with autistic people and is useful that a % of Employment Training Team have an autism diagnosis.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	Case solution - Oriented Thinking
Why? How?	ASD students need support to understand and be conscient of some jobs in the hospitality industry may involve starting or finishing shifts late at night or early in the morning (such as bar work or restaurant service). Others may also require they to work for periods on their own (housekeeping, reception staff, food delivery). Many roles require a considerable amount of contact with customers, the majority of whom are likely to be strangers. There may also be times when a situation becomes intolerable for they, meaning that they aren't able to effectively manage their anxiety and remain well – in these situations it are helpful for they to be able to communicate clear boundaries to their employers and colleagues or possible any tutor.

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Autism Friendly Club program

Short description of the tool	Autism Friendly Club program to the hospitality sector at the EU level, with a focus on testing it in Sweden. The project seeks to qualify managers and workers in the hospitality sector to provide adapted services and accommodate individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). To achieve this goal, the project will be developed in three main blocks. The first block will focus on the signposting of spaces. This will involve identifying areas within hospitality facilities that may cause sensory overload or discomfort for individuals with ASD, such as noisy areas or bright lighting. The project will work to signpost these spaces and create quiet zones where individuals can retreat to when feeling overwhelmed. The second block of the project will focus on training and sensitization of workers. This will involve educating hospitality staff on the characteristics of ASD and providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide appropriate support and service to individuals with ASD. The training will cover areas such as communication strategies, sensory sensitivities, and behavioral support. The third block will focus on the adequacy and adaptation of schedules. The project will work to identify the best times and schedules for individuals with ASD to visit hospitality facilities, considering factors such as peak times and busy periods. This will involve adapting the opening hours, meal times, and other scheduling aspects of hospitality facilities to better accommodate individuals with ASD. Finally, the project will also design sector-specific protocols. These protocols will outline the specific steps that hospitality facilities can take to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for individuals with ASD. These protocols will cover a range of areas, including communication, sensory environments, and behavioral support.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ Autistic – Grade 1 □ Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	□ Communication Area □ Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	To prepare hospitality staff to work with autistic persons and improve the knowledge on the characteristics of ASD and providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide appropriate support and service to individuals with ASD.
Learning outcomes expected for students	Improve the personal skills to answer the problems that can appear with the ASD workers Improve the level of social interaction and reduce the stress, noise and time management improving emotional control
Justification	After the training of the workers, the environments adapted for people with ASD may be restaurants, stores, shopping centers, supermarkets, hotels... and many more
Pros and cons	Benefits of training and obtaining the AFC seal QUICK VIRALITY (In RRSS, among associations, schools, word of mouth...) LARGE GROUP THAT NEEDS IT (and increasing) INCREASE IN CUSTOMERS
Level of support required	The specific objectives of the training will be developed in three big blocks: Signage of spaces Training and awareness raising for workers. Adjustment and adaptation of schedules

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	Is needed the commitment of companies management
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	Planning and Organizing Multi-tasking in training at work with hospitality sector managers
Why? How?	The project aims to improve the hospitality sector's ability to provide appropriate support and accommodation to individuals with ASD. By signposting spaces, providing training and sensitization to workers, adapting schedules, and designing sector specific protocols, the project seeks to make hospitality facilities more accessible and welcoming to individuals with ASD. Furthermore, the project aims to promote social inclusion and diversity in the hospitality sector by providing training to improve outreach to people with ASD and those facing inequalities or discrimination. It will support active citizenship among hospitality staff and increase opportunities for ASD individuals to participate in open social environments. The project will create inclusive environments that promote equity and equality and respond to the needs of the ASD community, helping them to thrive in society

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Cultural Pedagogical Theater (CPT),

Short description of the tool	Cultural Pedagogical Theater (CPT), is a creative tool that uses theater as a flexible methodology to prevent and act in different scenarios. Its theoretical basis is Freire's Theater of the Oppressed The core and essence of CPT is to make the audience / target group / take an active and decisive role in the performance based on their experience, thoughts, doubts, competencies and level of participation. The 4 pilars of CPT are: •Establish a problem - conflict to be solved •It consists of two parts: two scenarios. •It has three actors in 3 status: High, Low and Medium: The potential solver of the situation in the second scenario. •Research the knowledge base on the chosen topic
Level/Degree of Autism	☐ Autistic – Grade 1 ☐ Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area ☐ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	We can select problem solving and resolution capability
Learning outcomes expected for students	Improve the personal skills to answer the problems that can appear with the customers Improve the level of social interaction and reduce the stress, noise and time management improving emotional control
Justification	CPT identifies situations, themes for use in the development of skills in the chosen context.
Pros and cons	The ASD students as audience are the protagonists of the conflict but there is no need for them to act directly, which could be stressful for them, but rather they do so through actors who can be selected among the students or among other teachers or tutors.
Level of support required	Teachers must have knowledge of the interactive theater method and its applications in disadvantaged groups and situations of special difficulty. They must know how to apply the method in three phases: Interactive design theater "RTD", interactive writing EIS and interactive theater "FDI" and know how to adapt the method to face learning situations. A short training of 4 face-to-face sessions is proposed or, failing that, an online course prepared by FRESS. Day 1. • Theoretical background of the CPT methodology: Freire,

	Boal, JohnstoneJohnstone. • CPT: TP's interactive theater methods TP-teatre. • The 3 pillars of the CPT. • Warm-up and group acting exercises • Pedagogical skills: practice of IFT type questions. • Evaluation of expectations and previous competencies Day 2 • Acting skills according to Keith Johnstone and Augusto Boal. • Basic practices in improvisation: narrative skills, spontaneity and character. • Basic practices in presence and state of alert. • Initial improvisation. Practice at IFT. • Introduction to the knowledge base: CPT research. Introduction to principles basics of screenwriting according to IWT • Start writing a script Day 3 • Individual work: writing IDT scripts according to the fundamentals of script writing. scripts. • Research of the knowledge base. • Warm-up, theater exercises and RTD rehearsals. Day 4 • Warm-up, theater exercises and conducting IDT and acquisition evaluation skills and satisfaction
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	Case solution - Oriented Thinking
Why? How?	Because it will be useful for any problem at work with customers that ASD students must solve

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TEACCH

Short description of the tool	Among the treatments that seem most effective in this case, there is the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH), the developmental and psychoeducational program in which space-time structuring is at the center. While underlining the great variability of situations and the relative need to have heterogeneous and specific methodological approaches, the Guidelines highlight the important results achieved with behavioral methods and recommend their use. Intensive behavioral programs appear particularly valid: these are approaches that aim to modify "problem behaviors" and improve real, daily life, through programs that involve them for many hours a week.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ Autistic – Grade 1 □ Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	□ Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	*Insert the skills covered (e.g. social interaction, green skills etc) Social interaction, autonomy, problem solving.* *The TEACCH program provides for global care in both a "horizontal" and "vertical" sense, that is, at every moment of the day, in every period of the year and of life, which mainly concerns the communicative and social area and the of interests and activities, and tend to pursue as objectives the facilitation of awareness of intentions, facilitate the ability to talk about one's experiences, develop the use of language to resolve conflicts and develop the use of language to express feelings and empathy with the others.* *The program aims to develop the best possible degree of autonomy in personal, social and working life, through educational strategies that enhance the abilities of the autistic person.*
Learning outcomes expected for students	*By using this tool the ASD students will be able to In this specific case, the student has learned the structuring of the environment; structuring of space; structuring of time, i.e.: when and for how long with the use of the diary; structuring the work material with a work scheme.* *Positive reinforcement, some suggestions were useful to overcome difficulties. Having planned in advance any changes to the routine of the tasks to be carried out, providing information with the student's involvement, made him more autonomous.* *In the routine of the student with ASD in case of problems, it is necessary to help re-establish a peaceful state of mind; remove the student from the "difficult" environment; also trying to address the situation with humor.* *In achieving autonomy the student was helped by the tutor both physically, visually (pointing with the finger) and verbally (simple words). The representation of the task through a series of images that illustrate the various stages, arranged from right to left, constitutes the type of help most compatible with work autonomy.* *You need to make sure that the student has moments of rest and/or moments to be in their own space while doing homework....*
Justification	*Please justify the choice of the method/tool* why can we choose this specific tool according to the ASD degree and what kind of expedients are necessary to put in place

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	This methodology was chosen because among the treatments that seem most effective in this case, there is the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH), the developmental and psychoeducational program in which the spatio-temporal structuring is at the centre, useful in this type of scenario.
Pros and cons	challenges/barriers/ positive aspects of implementation It is an approach that aims to modify "problem behaviors" and improve real and daily life and resolve any difficulties encountered. among the cons is a long treatment which involves ongoing changes depending on the answers given by the student concerned.
Level of support required	*e.g.* level of commitment, the number of resources, the amount of working sessions) Students, family psychology specialists, psychotherapist, support teachers number of work sessions one per week for four/five years. what kind of mechanisms or aspects the supporter need to consider according to the ASD degree and when implementing the toll when can we use this tool? By the beginning of the training, basic competences, during the training, after the training, what the supporter expects, are the goals achieved??? It is advisable to start treatment around 10-11 years of age with meetings spaced at least 2 weeks apart, then intensify them once a week. The objectives will be achieved.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	SELECTED SCENARIO N 1 THE SAFE CODE DOES NOT WORK
Why? How?	The student is doing very well in his internship, due to staffing shortages, he is placed on a shift that does not match his responsibilities as an intern. During the closing shift, the safe code doesn't work and the student collapses. The student is panicking because the tutor has trusted him and he doesn't feel up to it. Among the treatments that seem most effective in this case, there is the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH), the developmental and psychoeducational program in which space-time structuring is at the center. While underlining the great variability of situations and the relative need to have heterogeneous and specific methodological approaches, the Guidelines highlight the important results achieved with behavioral methods and recommend their use. Intensive behavioral programs appear particularly valid: these are approaches that aim to modify "problem behaviors" and improve real, daily life, through programs that involve them for many hours a week. In this specific case, the student is panicking, despite having been placed on a shift that does not correspond to his responsibilities as an intern and has not had a break since the start of his shift, and has difficulty managing his expectations and communicating the problem , thanks to the application of the methodology and the evolutionary and psychoeducational program TEACCH is able to deal with real life situations. The TEACCH program provides for global care in both a "horizontal" and "vertical" sense, that is, at every moment of the day, in every period of the year and of life, which mainly concerns the communicative and social area and the of interests and activities, and tend to pursue as objectives the facilitation of awareness of intentions, facilitate

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the ability to talk about one's experiences, develop the use of language to resolve conflicts and develop the use of language to express feelings and empathy with the others.

The program aims to develop the best possible degree of autonomy in personal, social and working life, through educational strategies that enhance the abilities of the autistic person.

The actors involved are students, employers and family members who support the student in difficulty. Autism is no longer considered a mental illness, but a handicap of communication, socialization and imagination, the autistic boy can no longer be seen as an able-bodied or gifted individual who refuses to collaborate, but as a disadvantaged person, disoriented in an incomprehensible world, frustrated by failures: as such she will have to be helped to develop her abilities by exploiting her strengths, her predispositions and her potential. It will therefore be very important that during learning the child can be rewarded by frequent successes: once his abilities have been assessed, the proposed tasks will therefore be chosen not among the activities in which he fails, but among the "emerging" abilities, that is, among the tasks that the child is able to complete with the help of the adult.

For the same reason, visuospatial abilities, generally good in autistic people, are the basis of the choice to use communication strategies and visual structuring. however, the principle of choosing the most suitable form of communication to support verbal communication depends on the individual evaluation of the perceptive channel best used by the individual.

The extreme variability of the symptoms and level of development within the autistic syndrome require a strictly individual elaboration of the educational program, with continuous and frequent re-evaluations and adjustments: if the child has a good program, he learns in a reasonable time; if learning does not happen in the short term, it is the program that is not working and that needs to be revised

To formulate a good educational program it is necessary to have:

a correct diagnosis

the assessment of the level of development

an individualized educational program

In the past it was thought that autistic children suffered from the rejection of feelings and desires, and they were consequently given the possibility of free expression in an unstructured framework in the hope that they could find a way to free their inhibited potential.

In this specific case, the student needs a structuring of the environment, even if this does not mean rigidity, but must represent a means of helping a person in difficulty.

Structuring of space in clearly and visually delimited spaces

Structuring of time, that is: when and for how long? That is, an organization of time, with the use of an agenda.

Structuring of work material with a work scheme, indicating the duration of each task, providing simplified units of measurement

Reinforcement, i.e. why and for what reason he must carry out those assigned tasks, also indicating any difficulties that the student may encounter in managing a certain situation and providing some suggestions, so that he knows how to act and/or react to the difficulty.

We must then plan in advance any changes to the routine of the tasks to be carried out, providing information and involving the student from the beginning.

In the routine of the student with ASD in case of problems, it is necessary to help re-establish a peaceful state of mind; remove the student from the "difficult" environment; try to approach the situation with humor.

	Help from the tutor is both physical, visual (pointing with the finger) and verbal (simple words). The representation of the task through a series of images that illustrate the various stages, arranged from right to left, constitutes the type of help most compatible with work autonomy.
	You need to make sure that the student has moments of rest and/or moments to be in their own space while doing homework.
	A fundamental requirement is collaboration with parents.
	Educational continuity and the coordination of services for children and adults, although they appear extremely difficult to achieve in practice, represent fundamental requirements for effective social and work inclusion.

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Skinner

Short description of the tool	This methodology is useful for modifying unwanted behavior; reinforcement and punishment techniques must be used. Reinforcement, like reward, increases the probability that a behavior will be repeated, while punishment decreases the probability that a behavior will repeat. According to Skinner, language is a verbal behavior, but above it is a learned behavior. Skinner tried to analyze the verbal event by highlighting its two complementary aspects: the behavior of the speaker and the behavior of the listener. The study of behavior takes place through the following functional categories: ● Manding (asking something or protesting): Receptive – Follow instructions or comply with the requests of others. ● Tact ing– Naming an object or something that the individual comes into contact with . ● Intraverbal – A response to something a person says about an object (answer questions or carry on a conversation). ● Echoic – Repeating exactly what someone else said. ● Textual: is a verbal behavior that involves reading without understanding what is being read ● Transcription: consists in writing a word that has been heard
Level/Degree of Autism	x Autistic – Grade 1 x Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area □ Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	Insert the skills covered (e.g. social interaction, green skills etc) Social interaction, autonomy, problem solving. The skinner methodology aims to develop the best possible degree of autonomy in personal, social and working life, through educational strategies that enhance the abilities of the autistic person. Emotional control, Problem-solving and resolution capability, Self-confidence, resilience. Language can be strengthened through the mediation of another person.
Learning outcomes expected for students	Operant conditioning is a form of learning This is useful for students because it plays a fundamental role in behavioral psychology. It is based on the idea that behaviors are influenced by the consequences that follow their development.
Justification	*Please justify the choice of the method/tool* The goal was achieved and dysfunctional behaviors were reduced : the pupil's experience in the social context of reference was improved. Language can be reinforced through the mediation of another person. This intervention program was chosen for this pupil because the context was ideal. Operant conditioning involves the conditioning of voluntary behavior, which can be controlled through its consequences: reinforcements and punishments. Learning occurs through trial and error and is implemented following the law of effect, whereby the connection is established between a stimulus and a response. The response, if attractive, has a pleasant or positive consequence and the subject tends to repeat the

	behavior. If, however, the response is aversive it has an unpleasant or negative consequence and the subject tends to abandon the behavior. This approach was chosen because it is among the treatments that seem most effective for outlining correct behaviors that can also become habitual in the workplace.
Pros and cons	challenges/barriers/ positive aspects of implementation In order to condition behavior, you need to spend a lot time. There are various consequences that can be activated: Positive reinforcement: involves giving something or rewarding positively in order to produce an increase in the behavior. Negative reinforcement: involves following the behavior, eliminating or reducing a negative event or condition that is already happening, which will also increase the presence of the behavior. The omission: when a positive event does not occur after the conduct, the presence of the conduct will thus decrease. Punishment: when after the bad behavior a negative event occurs which leads to a reduction in the presence of the behavior and therefore the extinction of the behavior.
Level of support required	*e.g.* level of commitment, the number of resources, the amount of working sessions) Students, family psychology specialists, psychotherapist, support teachers number of work sessions one per week for four/five years.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	--------
Why? How?	Years of studies and research have demonstrated the effectiveness of the The goal was achieved and dysfunctional behaviors were reduced: the boy's experience in the social context of reference was improved. Skinner method in reducing dysfunctional behaviors and in improving and increasing communication, learning and socially appropriate behaviors. In order to condition behavior, you need to spend a lot time. There are various consequences that can be activated: Positive reinforcement: involves giving something or rewarding positively in order to produce an increase in the behavior. Negative reinforcement: involves following the behavior, eliminating or reducing a negative event or condition that is already happening, which will also increase the presence of the behavior. The omission: when a positive event does not occur after the conduct, the presence of the conduct will thus decrease. Punishment: when after the bad behavior a negative event occurs which leads to a reduction in the presence of the behavior and therefore the extinction of the behavior.

ABA

Short description of the tool	Applied behavior analysis is the area of research aimed at applying the data deriving from behavior analysis to understand the relationships between certain behaviors and external conditions. ABA takes into consideration the following elements: the antecedents, the behavior under examination, the consequences and the context. the intervention program is carried out on data that emerge from the analysis, using the usual techniques of behavioral therapy. the objective of the method is to reduce dysfunctional behaviors and expand adaptive ones, in order to improve the child's experience in the social context of reference.
Level/Degree of Autism	x Autistic – Grade 1 x Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	Insert the skills covered (e.g. social interaction, green skills etc) Social interaction, autonomy, problem solving. The ABA approach aims to develop the best possible degree of autonomy in personal, social and working life, through educational strategies that enhance the abilities of the autistic person. Emotional control, Problem-solving and resolution capability, Self-confidence, resilience.
Learning outcomes expected for students	Using this behavioral approach, ASD students will be able to behave correctly by avoiding dysfunctional behaviors and broaden adaptive ones and effectively manage difficult situations in the workplace.
Justification	*Please justify the choice of the method/tool* This approach was chosen because it is among the treatments that seem most effective for outlining correct behaviors that can also become habitual in the workplace.
Pros and cons	challenges/barriers/ positive aspects of implementation It is an approach that aims to modify "problem behaviors" and improve real and daily life and resolve any difficulties encountered. among the cons is a long treatment which involves ongoing changes depending on the answers given by the student concerned.
Level of support required	*e.g.* level of commitment, the number of resources, the amount of working sessions) Students, family psychology specialists, psychotherapist, support teachers number of work sessions one per week for four/five years. what kind of mechanisms or aspects the supporter need to consider according to the ASD degree and when implementing the toll when can we use this tool? By the beginning of the training, basic competences, during the training, after the training, what the supporter expects, are the goals achieved??? It is advisable to start treatment around 4 years of age. Interventions based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) are therefore considered extremely

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	effective for children with autism. Children who appear to benefit the most from treatment are those who receive early, intensive intervention (approximately 25-40 hours of ABA per week).
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	--------
Why? How?	Years of studies and research have demonstrated the effectiveness of the ABA method in reducing dysfunctional behaviors and in improving and increasing communication, learning and socially appropriate behaviors. The principle of reinforcement in ABA is useful if in a given situation, a specific behavior is immediately followed by a positive consequence, then the probability that the person will exhibit the same behavior in the future, finding themselves in similar situations, increases. In ABA, behavior is analyzed based on the environmental stimuli that precede it (the ANTECEDENTS) and the individual's actions in response to the environmental stimulus (the CONSEQUENCES). Connected to these principles, the key concepts are those of REINFORCEMENT, EXTINCTION, STIMULI CONTROL and GENERALIZATION.

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Visual Supports (VS)

Short description of the tool	Studies show that using *visual supports* (*VS*) when interacting with learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) facilitate the process by providing learner with easy-to-understand information and assistance about activities, routines, and expectations. There are different types of *VS* (e.g. symbols, photographs, drawings) used either in printed or digital format.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ **Autistic – Grade 1** □ **Regressive – Grade 2** □ **High - functioning**
Competences Area	□ **Communication Area** □ **Socio-emotional Area** □ **Self-management Area** □ **Technical Area**
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	1. **Communication area:** Social interaction, Personal communication, Interpersonal communication 2. **Socio-emotional area:** Problem solving and resolution capability, Self-confidence 3. **Self-management area:** Concentration, Time management 4. **Technical area:** Green skills
Learning outcomes expected for students	*VS* can be used in many learning situations so the expected outcomes vary. Indicatively, they support learners to: ● Have structure and follow a routine ● Become independent ● Build confidence ● Improve their understanding on social situations ● Avoid frustration and anxiety ● Interact effectively with others.
Justification	*VS* can help learners find effective ways to communicate using visuals rather than auditory information. Most learners with ASD are visual learners. According to the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability, most people with ASD are visual learners, thus using visual information when communicating with them takes advantage of how they naturally prefer to communicate. The Center also notes that processing language quickly can be difficult for learners with ASD, which might explain why many parents find themselves repeating the same information. On the other hand, when information is presented visually, it is available for as long as the learner needs it.
Pros and cons	1. Challenges/ Barriers a. Visual supports are very personal and what works for one person may not work for another. a. Some people with ASD have difficulties generalising, thus they might face challenges with symbols on *VS*. For this reason, trainer shall introduce visual supports gradually by starting with one symbol and then building up a collection. a. Trainers shall coordinate with parents and caregivers to use a type or style consistently to avoid confusing the learner. 0. Positive Factors

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	a. There are various types of *VS*. Trainer can alternate and adjust them based on learning objectives and, importantly, learner's characteristics and preferences.
	a. *VS* are portable. For instance, the trainer can:
	      .Use a *VS* app on learner's tablet
	      .Store photos and pictures on learner's smartphone
	.Put symbols, pictures and schedules in a folder for learner to carry with them.
	    c. *VS* are very accessible and easy to find; trainer can place them in prominent places at eye level, put them into learner's staff (e.g. pocket), or distribute them throughout particular environments (e.g. areas in class can be labelled).

Level of support required	<u>Tips for implementation:</u> ● Create and use developmentally appropriate visual supports, customised to learners' needs and preferences for graphical styles and images. ● Trainer is highly encouraged to use *VS* also in case of more competent communicators. Although more competenet learners will not rely upon them day to day, they often become helpful when learner is under pressure. ● Trainer is suggested to incorporate *VS* into the learning process of students between 0-2 and 18-22 years (Hume, 2013). <u>Expectations and Desired Impact:</u> From learners' view, *VS* expand learner's ability to interact with his/her surroundings, become autonomous, make choices, express needs and desires, and, in general, comprehend daily rhythms. For the social environment of learner, *VS* open lines of communication between them and people with ASD.
Sources	● https://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/supporting-learners-and-families/effective-partnerships-and-communication/visual-supports/ ● https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/visual-supports ● https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/benefits-of-autism-visual-supports/ ● https://autismlittlelearners.com/free-visual-supports/

Social Stories

Short description of the tool	The tool of *Social Stories* facilitates comprehension of a social situation by exposing hidden elements of it, thus teaching the trainee to show a certain, appropriate behaviour in such and/or similar occasions. In other words, Social Stories function as a preparatory phase for a situation that is going or is about to happen. The social situations described in Social Stories are real-life scenarios which ASD students face difficulties in understanding and managing. To this end, comprehending and dealing with them in advance and in a safe environment could empower students and enable effective management.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ **Autistic – Grade 1** □ **Regressive – Grade 2** □ **High - functioning**
Competences Area	□ **Communication Area** □ **Socio – emotional Area** □ **Self – management Area** □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	1. **Communication Area**: Social interaction, Personal & Interpersonal communication 2. **Socio-Emotional Area**: Emotional control, Problem-solving and resolution capability, Self-confidence 3. **Self-Management Area**: Resilience, Stress management
Learning outcomes expected for students	By using this tool, ASD students will be able to behave properly and manage effectively challenging situations in their workplace.
Justification	*Social Stories* are adequate for ASD students since they present information in a literal, 'concrete' way, which may improve trainee's understanding of a previously difficult or ambiguous situation or activity. They "structure" the experience and describe cleary the actions to be made. To be effective, trainers shall develop social stories on students' needs and characteristics.
Pros and cons	1. Challenges/ Barriers a. It is difficult to capture and simplify complex behaviours through Social Stories. The tool is more applicable to simple behaviours. a. Social Stories as tool is more effective when applied in educational settings than in self-contained settings (e.g. home). a. Learners will less developed communication skills face more difficulties applying Social Stories. a. Progress rate might be significantly reduced after learners having met their objectives. 0. Positive Factors a. Social Stories can be used in self-learning.

	a. Social Stories has a dynamic character and can be adapted to emerging learner's needs and each situation's requirements. a. They are suitable across ages, from childhood to early adulthood (appr. 22 years old). a. Social Stories enable learners to achieve long-term impact as regards their behaviour.
Level of support required	<u>Tips for implementation:</u> ● It is recommended that Social Stories are provided to learners before training (in case of students with high functioning level of autism) for self-learning. In case of students with 1 or 2 grade of autism, Social Stories shall be introduced, explained, and discussed during training. ● Trainers are highly encouraged to enrich written texts with visual illustrations to improve the learning experience. ● Trainers are recommended to use the technique of spaced repetition together with Social Stories. Specifically, trainer shall bring the Social Story under discussion into light after a considerable amount of time and do comprehension checks to confirm that learners have gained a deep understanding of the situation described in the Social Story under focus. <u>Expectations and Desired Impact:</u> ● Social Stories facilitate both the development of certain social skills and the reduction of inappropriate behaviours. At the end of this learning experience, learners will acquire the skills required to be able to manage effectively the challenging situations under focus.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	Busy Terrace - Stimulus Processing
Why? How?	The scenario "Busy Terrace" describes a challenging social occasion that trainee has to manage. The skills required to deal with such or similar situations are communication, socio-emotional and self-management ones. Moreover, to effectively manage it, trainee needs to take some distance and process the received stimuli with calm and at their own pace. *Social Stories* is a useful tool when it comes to situations that involve social interaction as the one described in the scenario. Through the Social Story of "Busy Terrace", trainee will dive into this situation in a safe environment (i.e. during training), understand the "who", "why", "what" of the situation and thus, simplify its complexity.

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In our case, the first step is to prepare the Social Story on Busy Terrace in first person (i.e. "I") using descriptive, perspective, coaching, and affirmative sentences. The story will be developed by trainer. Then, trainee will read the Social Story and initiate a discussion with trainer regarding who is involved in this situation (directly and indirectly), what the requests per involved person are and which requests need to be prioritised. Trainee will also identify which feelings are caused to an employee by such situations (current emotional condition). Finally, (s)he will outline which actions need to be taken to fulfil the requests with priority and what steps need to be made by trainee to satisfy the rest customers (targeted behaviour).

At the end of this learning experience, trainee will become confident in effectively managing such stressful situations by showing the desired behaviour. The key behind it is that trainee has the opportunity to "rehearse" before facing this or any similar case.

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Differential Reinforcement (DR)

Short description of the tool	Reinforcement is a basic principle of behavior that describes a response-consequence that follows a behavior and increases the future probability of that behavior. There are two types of reinforcement: a. Positive: A pleasant or desirable stimulus following a behavior, which increases the likelihood of the behavior reoccurring. a. Negative: Removing an unpleasant or aversive stimulus after a behavior, decreasing the likelihood of that behavior being repeated. *Differential reinforcement* (*DR*) of other behaviors means that reinforcement is provided for desired behaviors, while inappropriate behaviors are ignored.
Level/Degree of Autism	□ **Autistic – Grade 1** □ **Regressive – Grade 2** □ **High - functioning**
Competences Area (see annex I_Skills and Competence Map)	□ **Communication Area** □ **Socio-emotional Area** □ **Self-management Area** □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	1. **Communication area:** Social interaction, Personal communication, Interpersonal communication 2. **Socio-emotional area:** Emotional control, Problem solving and resolution capability, Self-confidence, Team working 3. **Self-management area:** Flexibility, Resilience, Stress management
Learning outcomes expected for students	● Learners understand the connection between their actions and the consequences, making it more likely for them to repeat the desired behaviors in the future as well as reducing the likelihood of undesired behaviors reoccurring. ● Learners can discriminate between situations where certain behaviors are reinforced and those where they are not. This context-specific learning helps individuals adapt their behavior to different environments, making the behavior change more effective and long-lasting.
Justification	Using differential reinforcement in autism therapy offers many benefits, including: ● **Customization**: This approach can be tailored to suit the individual needs and preferences of every child on the spectrum. ● **Effective behavior modification**: *DR* effectively encourages positive behavioral changes while reducing unwanted behaviors. ● **Empowerment**: *DR* empowers children with autism by giving them control over their actions and consequences.
Pros and cons	1. Challenges/ Barriers a. Trainers/Parents may not find it easy to ignore challenging/inappropriate behaviors.

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	a. For some challenging behaviors, trainers may not be able to eliminate all reinforcement. In such cases, setting a rich schedule of reinforcement for appropriate/other behaviors is recommended.
	a. Learners are unlikely to learn new skills (including appropriate replacement behaviors) solely through the application of *DR technique*. For this, it is suggested that trainers combine differential reinforcement with techniques that promote systematic teaching of new skills.
	
	0. Positive Factors
	a. Trainer shall talk with all members of learner's social environment (e.g. other trainers, parents, other caregivers) to determine which behaviours require reinforcement (negative/positive) so that all adults use the same plan (e.g. visual reminders, coaching) and not confuse learner.
	a. Setting a schedule of reinforcmenet faciliates its smooth incorporation into the teaching process.
	a. When enegative reinforcement is applied, trainer shall present an appropriate replacement behavior (when applicable) considering the following:
	     - Learner's current abilities,
	     - The alternative shall be less effortful than the challenging behavior
	     - The alternative shall be commonly understood by people in learner's social environment.

Level of support required	<u>Tips for implementation</u>: - The differential reinforcement examples and techniques can be used at home or school. - Trainer shall start by setting objectives, keeping a close eye on learner, and maintaining behavioral tallies and charts. - Specifying a Time Period: When targeting to reduce negative behavior rates with differential reinforcement, trainer shall set a time frame for the teaching and offer the reward only if there are no occurrences of the undesirable behavior within the time. - Better results may be attainable when trainer uses reinforcement procedures **at intervals**. <u>Expectations and Desired Impact</u>: According to a [research study](#) published in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, differential reinforcement helps children with autism improve their social skills, communication with others, functional play, school readiness, and adaptive skills. Negative behaviors are not reinforced, therefore, the idea is that the child might seek alternative target behavior over time. The right timing and targeting of reinforcement might help diminish some stereotypical behaviors in the autism spectrum and improve learning and development.
Sources	- https://www.nu.edu/blog/what-is-differential-reinforcement/ - https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/differential-reinforcement/#Benefits_of_Differential_Reinforcement_in_Autism

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The Son-Rise Program

Short description of the tool	The Son-Rise Program® was slowly and carefully developed by parents Barry and Samahria Kaufment in the 1970s for their son with autism. This program is based upon this simple idea: *The children show us the way in, and then we show them the way out*. This means that, rather than trying to force our children to conform to world they do not yet understand, we begin by joining them in their world first. Instead of focusing on changing behavior, the focus should be on creating a relationship. With this approach, remarkable progress is possible. The Son-Rise Program improves a students' skills by prioritizing a child-centered and empathetic approach that fosters trust, engagement, adaptability, and emotional well-being. By joining the child in their world and building a strong relationship, the program creates a foundation for skill development and growth.
Level/Degree of Autism	x Autistic – Grade 1 x Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area x Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	**Personal and Interpersonal Communication:** The program's focus on social interaction and engagement in a non-threatening environment helps improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills. By interacting with the person on their terms, it fosters better understanding and expression. **Problem Solving:** Through play and interaction tailored to the person's interests, it encourages creative thinking and problem-solving, as people are guided to explore and find solutions in a supportive setting. **Emotional Control:** The program's accepting and non-judgmental approach aids in emotional regulation. By recognizing and respecting the

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	person's feelings, it teaches them to identify and manage their emotions more effectively.
	Flexibility: It emphasizes adapting to the one's needs, which indirectly teaches the child to adapt to new situations, enhancing their flexibility.
	Resilience: By providing a positive and supportive environment, they learn to cope with challenges and setbacks, and to not give up when these occur, building their resilience.
	Stress Management: The program's focus on a calm and supportive environment helps reduce anxiety and stress in children with ASD, teaching them coping mechanisms for stress management.
Learning outcomes expected for students	By using this tool the ASD students will be able to: - Develop stronger communication skills by focusing on interaction and joint attention. By constant contact and interaction with parents, educators, and others. - Improve social interaction and understanding by practicing reciprocal play and engagement. - Increase flexibility and adaptability by being allowed to lead and explore their interests, by adapting to their and their environment's everchanging needs and circumstances. - Enhance emotional regulation through the development of a supportive and empathetic relationship, and throw the development of emotional intelligence and understanding of their own feelings.
Justification	The Son-Rise Program was chosen to address Scenario 3 "Roundtable at class – resistance to change" for several reasons: **It's Person-centered approach** - it's individualized focus makes it ideal to deal with students across the autism spectrum. **It's Respect the student's preferences** – it allows for individualized adjustments, acknowledging the student's feelings and respecting their comfort levels and preferences, making the transition to new scenarios like the roundtable more manageable and less stressful. Its focus on relationship-building aligns well with the need to reduce resistance to change. **Implementation:**

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	Expedients, such as training for teachers and collaboration with support staff and family members, are necessary to implement the program effectively and to guarantee a cohesive approach. While the program is straightforward to implement, it requires a deep knowledge of its practices. This method's application to the scenario would involve a gradual, empathetic, and student-centered approach to facilitate the transition while addressing the student's specific needs and concerns.
Pros and cons	**Pros:** Person-centred, adaptable, fosters empathy, supports social goals. **Cons:** Requires training, collaboration, and customization, may not fit all classroom settings, requires a big time commitment and a very close and personal relationship with every individual student.
Level of support required	**Commitment:** Moderate to High Commitment: Teachers and support staff need to be dedicated to building a strong relationship and adapting the program to each student's individual needs. It's an ongoing process that depends on the student. Some may require more time than others to form attachments and create personal relationships. Adequate Resources: Training and materials may be required. Collaboration: Effective communication and cooperation among all involved are essential. For the student's development to be ideal, all parties must be in tune to what they are trying to achieve at each time. Continuous Monitoring: Regular assessment and adjustment of the program may be needed. As each person is different, the same approach does not always work. **When to Implement:** During the training: The Son-Rise Program can be used to address resistance to change in the classroom setting. It should be implemented with the goal of creating a supportive environment that fosters communication and social skills.

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	Throughout the training: Continuous use of the program can lead to ongoing improvements in communication, social interaction, and flexibility.
	After the training: The skills developed can continue to benefit the student in various life situations.
	Expectations: Improved communication, reduced resistance to change, enhanced social skills, and increased adaptability. The goal is to create a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment.
Scenario that can be addressed with the tool	Roundtable at class – resistance to change -https://docs.google.com/document/d/16-cZBEFJZ 4yzvHlhDQFoH6i_W0WIAHUx/edit?usp=sharing& ouid=106450376159524112903&rtpof=true&sd=t rue
Why? How?	**Why?** As was already mentioned in the justification column, the Son-Rise Program was chosen to address Scenario 3 "Roundtable at class – resistance to change" for two main reasons: **It's Person-centered approach and it's Respect the student's preferences** – it is a method taght allows for individualized adjustments, acknowledging the student's feelings and respecting their comfort levels and preferences, making the transition to new scenarios like the roundtable more manageable and less stressful. **How?** In this scenario, the teacher can take advantage of the Son-Rise Program by: **Building a Trusting Relationship** with the student: Establishing a rapport, showing understanding and respect for their feelings about the change. This foundation of trust is critical for further interventions. **Creating a Comfortable Environment**: Gradually introducing the student to the new roundtable setup in a way that feels safe and non-threatening. This might involve allowing the student to explore the new setup at their own pace. Celebrating small successes to build confidence.

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	Encouraging Communication: Facilitating open discussions where the student can express their concerns and preferences. **Involving the Student in Decision-Making:** Empowering the student by involving them in choices related to the roundtable setup. This could include decisions about seating arrangements or participation in activities. **Monitoring and Adjusting:** Regularly assessing the student's response to the changes and being prepared to make further adjustments as needed.

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Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT)

Short description of the tool	Sensory integration therapy, which was developed in the 1970s by an Occupational Therapist, A. Jean Ayres, is designed to help children with sensory-processing problems (including possibly those with ASDs) cope with the difficulties they have processing sensory input. Therapy sessions are play-oriented and may include using equipment such as swings, trampolines, and slides. Sensory integration also uses therapies such as deep pressure, brushing, weighted vests, and swinging. These therapies appear to sometimes be able to calm an anxious child. In addition, sensory integration therapy is believed to increase a child's threshold for tolerating sensory-rich environments, make transitions less disturbing, and reinforce positive behaviors. Sensory integration focuses primarily on three basic senses–tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive. Their interconnections start forming before birth and continue to develop as the person matures and interacts with his/her environment. They allow us to experience, interpret, and respond to different stimuli in our environment.
Level/Degree of Autism	x Autistic – Grade 1 x Regressive – Grade 2 x High - functioning Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) is generally considered appropriate for individuals across all levels of the autism spectrum, but its specific effectiveness and application can vary depending on the individual's needs and the severity of their symptoms.
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area x Self – management Area □ Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	**Communication Area:**

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	Social interaction - SIT activities often require interaction with therapists or other children, which naturally encourages social engagement.
	Personal communication - through sensory-rich experiences, children may become more aware of their own sensory preferences and discomforts. This can lead them to develop better ways to communicate their needs and preferences.
	Socio – emotional Area: Emotional control - SIT helps regulating sensory processing, which in turn can lead to better emotional control. Problem solving and resolution capability - Sensory activities can include challenges that require thinking and strategizing, enhancing problem-solving skills.
	Self – management Area: Resilience - Participating in sensory activities that are initially challenging and learning to navigate them successfully can boost a child's resilience. Concentration - Many SIT activities require focused attention to complete tasks, improving concentration skills. Stress management - Sensory integration can have a calming effect on the nervous system. Engaging in preferred sensory activities can reduce stress and anxiety levels, enhancing overall stress management abilities.
Learning outcomes expected for students	**Improved Sensory Processing:** Students often become better at processing and responding to sensory information. **Enhanced Focus and Attention:** As students become less distracted by sensory issues, their ability to concentrate and focus on tasks can improve. **Better Motor Skills:** SIT can help in the development of both gross motor skills (like balancing, running, jumping) and fine motor skills (such as writing, cutting with scissors), which are important for academic tasks.

	Increased Social Engagement: By participating in group activities and interactive play, students can improve their social skills. **Improved Behavioral Regulation:** Students may exhibit fewer behavioral issues as they learn to regulate their responses to sensory experiences. **Greater Independence:** As children learn to understand and manage their sensory needs, they often become more self-sufficient. **Improved Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Success in overcoming sensory challenges and improved social interactions can boost a child's self-esteem.
Justification	Choosing Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) for students with ASD is justified due to its focus on addressing sensory processing issues, which are commonly observed in individuals with ASD. The method is suitable for various levels of ASD severity, as it can be highly customized to meet the unique sensory needs of each individual. Key considerations for implementation include: **Individualized Sensory Profiles:** Understanding each student's specific sensory challenges is crucial. This allows the therapy to target the individual's unique sensory processing patterns. **Skilled Occupational Therapists:** SIT should be administered by occupational therapists trained in sensory integration techniques, ensuring that the therapy is delivered effectively and safely. **Integrated Approach:** SIT works best when integrated with other therapeutic methods, such as behavioral therapy or speech therapy, offering a holistic approach to the student's development. **Environment Consideration:** The therapy setting should be conducive to sensory exploration, often requiring specific equipment and a safe, controlled environment. **Parent and Educator Involvement:** Engaging parents ensures continuity and reinforcement of learning outside the therapy sessions and provide a consistent approach across different environments.

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	Regular Monitoring and Adaptation: Continuous assessment of the student's progress is essential to tailor the therapy as the student's needs evolve.
Pros and cons	Pros: - Targeted Approach - Enhances Daily Functioning - Improves Social Skills - Non-invasive and Play-based - Customizable - Supports Educational Goals - Positive Emotional Impact Cons: - Variability in Effectiveness - Lack of Standardization - Limited Access and Cost - Need for Skilled Therapists - Time-Consuming - Mixed Research Findings - Requires Long-Term Commitment
Level of support required	**Level of Commitment:** Moderate to high. SIT typically requires a significant commitment from both the individual and their support system. This includes regular attendance at therapy sessions and possibly at-home activities. **Number of Resources:** Substantial. Access to a qualified therapist and appropriate therapeutic equipment or materials is necessary. This might include sensory-rich tools like swings, trampolines, or tactile materials. **Number of Sessions:** The frequency and duration of SIT sessions can vary. It often requires a long-term approach, with regular sessions over months or even years, depending on the individual's response to therapy. Aspects to Consider: **Individual's ASD Degree:** The therapy must be tailored to the severity of the ASD and the individual's specific sensory processing challenges. More severe cases might require more intensive or frequent therapy. **Family and Caregiver Involvement:** Active involvement of family members or caregivers in the therapy process is crucial for consistency and reinforcement of skills learned during sessions.

	Integration with Other Therapies: SIT should ideally be part of a comprehensive treatment plan that may include speech therapy, behavioral therapy, and educational interventions. **Monitoring Progress:** Regular assessment of the individual's progress is essential to adjust the therapy as needed. **Outcome Assessment:** Evaluating whether the goals have been achieved is crucial. This can involve measuring changes in behavior, sensory processing, motor skills, and the individual's ability to participate in daily activities.
Why? How?	To use SIT effectively for improving skills and competences of students with ASD, the following step should be taken: **Initial Assessment:** A thorough assessment by an occupational therapist is crucial. The assessment helps in identifying specific areas of need. **Creating an Individualized Plan:** Based on the assessment, a tailored intervention plan is developed. **Implementation of Sensory Activities:** The activities are designed to challenge the student's sensory processing in a controlled and safe manner. The intensity, duration, and type of activities are adjusted based on the student's response. **Integration with Educational and Behavioral Goals:** SIT is often integrated with educational and behavioral interventions. Activities can be incorporated into the student's daily routine at school and at home. **Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan:** Regular monitoring of progress and adapting the approach as necessary, considering the individual's development and challenges.

Picture Exchange Communication System (Pecs)

Short description of the tool	PECS is an Augmentative and Alternative Communication type that uses visual symbols to teach the learner to communicate with parents, carers, teachers and peers. The aim is to teach intentional, functional communication and to allow users to communicate their wants and needs. To obtain satisfactory results using this method, some phases must be respected during the training process for its use: 1) How to communicate: make requests by exchanging figures for the desired items; 2) Distance and Persistence: go to the communication board, pick up a figure, go to an adult and deliver it in his/her hand; 3) Picture Discrimination: discriminate between the figures; 4) Sentence Structure: ask for items using several words in simple sentences, fixed on the communication board; 5) Responsive Requesting: answer the question: what do you want? 6) Commenting: make spontaneous comments
Level/Degree of Autism	x Autistic – Grade 1 x Regressive – Grade 2 □ High – functioning The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is suitable for students with ASD grades 1 and 2, as it is effective for individuals who have little or no verbal communication. There's no age limit for its application, however most research has focused on children. Some children might use PECS temporarily while their speech is developing, whereas others might rely on it for a longer period. PECS helps develop intentional communication, reduces negative behaviors caused by frustration, and improves communication and social skills.
Competences Area	x Communication Area x Socio – emotional Area

	x Self – management Area x Technical Area
Skills acquired or improved and in which way	**Communication area:** Social interaction – The foundation of PECS is teaching non-verbal individuals to initiate communication. The whole process is based on social interaction. Interpersonal communication - By using pictures to express needs and thoughts, users learn basic communicative functions, improving their ability to convey messages and engage in back-and-forth exchanges. **Socio – emotional area:** Problem solving and resolution capability - encourages users to communicate rather than act out when they face challenges, aiding in problem-solving and conflict resolution. **Self – management area:** Concentration - The structured nature of PECS, requiring focus on selecting and presenting pictures, can help improve concentration and attention to tasks **Technical area:** Digital skills - In advanced stages, PECS can be integrated with digital devices, aiding in the development of digital literacy and the use of technology for communication.
Learning outcomes expected for students	**Development of speech/communication skills:** Students learn to express their needs and thoughts, enhancing their communication abilities. **Enhance student initiative:** PECS encourages students to initiate communication, promoting independence. **Development of competences like resilience:** The process of learning and using PECS fosters resilience as students navigate communication challenges. **Construct and exchange sentences**: Students progress to forming sentences using pictures, enhancing their language construction skills. **Development of memorisation skills and spontaneity:** Memorizing symbols and using them

	spontaneously in communication improves memory and spontaneous expression.
Justification	Choosing PECS for students with ASD is justified due to its effectiveness in enhancing communication skills, particularly for those with limited verbal abilities. It's appropriate for different ASD severity levels as it starts with basic symbol recognition and progresses to sentence formation, catering to individual learning paces. For implementation, certain expedients are necessary: **Structured Environment:** A consistent and predictable setting aids in the learning process. **Customized Picture Sets:** Tailoring pictures to each student's interests and needs enhances engagement and understanding. **Trained Educators:** Educators need specific training in PECS to effectively guide students through the stages. **Parental Involvement:** Engaging parents ensures continuity and reinforcement of learning outside the classroom. **Regular Assessment and Adaptation:** Continuous assessment of student progress allows for timely adjustments to the approach.
Pros and cons	Pros: - Enables Communication - Fosters Independence - Reduces frustration - Enhances Social Skills - Ease of use Cons: - Limited to Concrete Concepts - Dependency on Tools - Time-Intensive - Requires Training - Limited Verbal Development: Over-reliance on PECS can potentially limit the development of verbal skills in some individuals.
Level of support required	**Level of Commitment:** High. Consistent and ongoing effort is needed from educators, caregivers, and therapists.

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	Number of Resources: Substantial. This includes picture cards, binders, digital devices (if used), and training materials. **Amount of Working Sessions:** Frequent and regular. The frequency and length of sessions depend on the individual's needs and progress. What to Consider: **ASD Degree Adaptation:** Adjusting the complexity and pace of PECS based on the student's ASD severity. **Communication Goals:** Setting realistic, individualized goals for communication development. **Engagement Strategies:** Keeping the student engaged and motivated, especially in early stages.
Why? How?	To use PECS effectively for improving skills and competences of students with ASD, the following step should be taken: **Assessment:** Evaluate the student's current communication skills and needs. **Training:** Educators should have specific training in PECS. **Setup:** Create a personalized PECS book with pictures or symbols representing objects, activities, or concepts relevant to the student. **Phased Approach:** Implement PECS in phases, starting from simple picture exchanges and progressing to sentence formation and more responsive communication. **Integration:** Incorporate PECS into daily routines and activities. **Encouragement:** Encourage spontaneous communication and offer positive reinforcement. **Monitoring:** Regularly monitor progress and adapt the approach as necessary, considering the individual's development and challenges.