

Technology as a Social Tool

MGH Aspire

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Helping children, teens and adults with high cognitive autism spectrum disorder or a related social profile achieve success.

- Program of MGH and MassGeneral Hospital for Children.
- Supporting individuals on the autism spectrum in the areas of self-awareness, social competency and stress management.
- Multi-disciplinary approach in small, well-matched peer groups.
- Locations in Lexington, Charlestown, Newton and Westwood; and over 50 employer sites throughout MA, NH and RI.

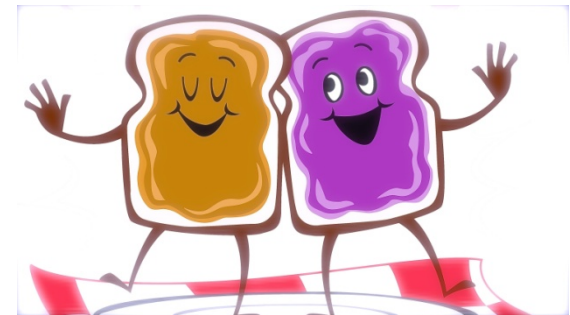
- Academic-Year Social Groups & Theme-Based Groups (all ages)
- Summer Programming
 - Adventure camp (children ages 5-14)
 - Teen & adult summer programs (ages 14+)
- Special Events Throughout the Year
- MGH Aspire Works
 - Internship program, employer consultation and training
- Parent Coaching
- Career Counseling
- Consultation Services
- Professional Development

- Learn and apply skills to interact with others in expected ways across contexts
- Build relationships using shared experiences and common interests
- Improve capacity to identify strengths and develop strategies for challenges
- Engage in self-advocacy



- Develop strategies to manage stress and frustration
- Habitual practice using these strategies in real-life situations

- Recognize that social competency is needed in life
- Understand social strengths/challenges
- Develop social thinking and social skills
- Apply this knowledge in various contexts/relationships
- Show empathy for others
- Form positive relationships, work in teams effectively, deal effectively with conflict



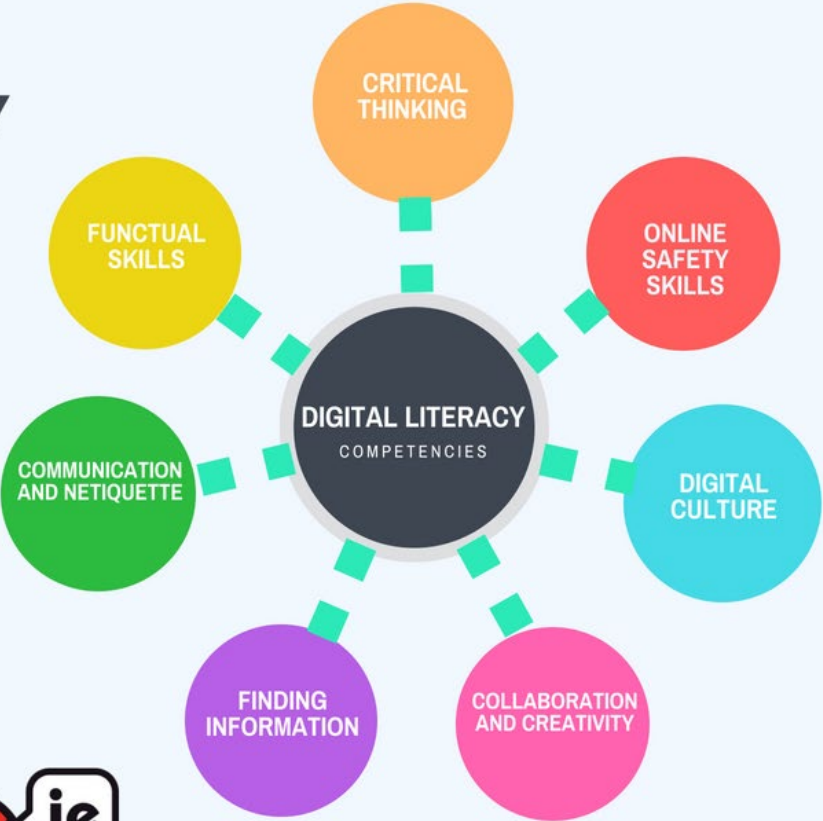
- Understand stress is a part of life, neither good nor bad
- Know, recognize and predict internal and external triggers
- Link thoughts, feelings and behavior
- Manage stress responses (reactively and proactively)
- Develop and utilize a coping tool box of self-regulation and stress management strategies

- Know personal strengths and challenges
- Recognize and express likes, dislikes, passions
- Acknowledge and control habits
- Set goals
- Understand and manage emotions and behavior to achieve goals
- Recognize when effort/perseverance is required and be able to apply it

1. Build Digital Literacy

- Like learning/teaching any other skill
- Create or share a social media account
- Explicit instruction: Role play, T-charts, flow-charts

DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS



Technology as a Social Tool

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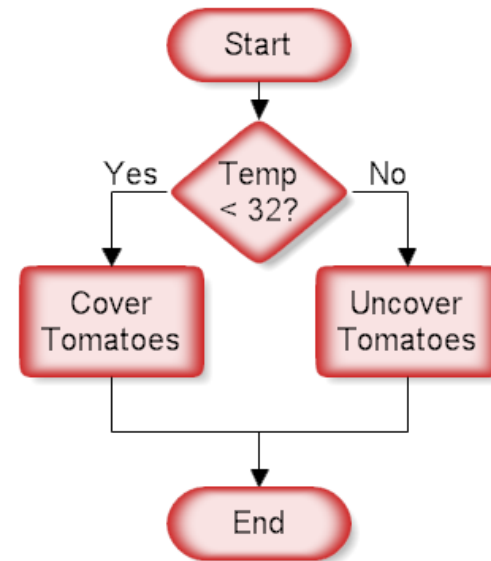
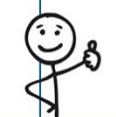
1
START
HERE →

Social Behavior Mapping

Situation: _____
People: _____

Expected Continue to #2 (Unexpected map)

3 Behavior(s) that are expected given the situation and people	4 How others might feel about the behavior(s)	5 How others act or react based on how they feel about the behavior(s)	6 How one might think or feel based on how they are treated by others



2. Pre-vocational skillset

- Vocational model shifting to be **strengths-based**
- Communication through more structured channels (without facial expressions, tone, expectations for eye contact, etc.)

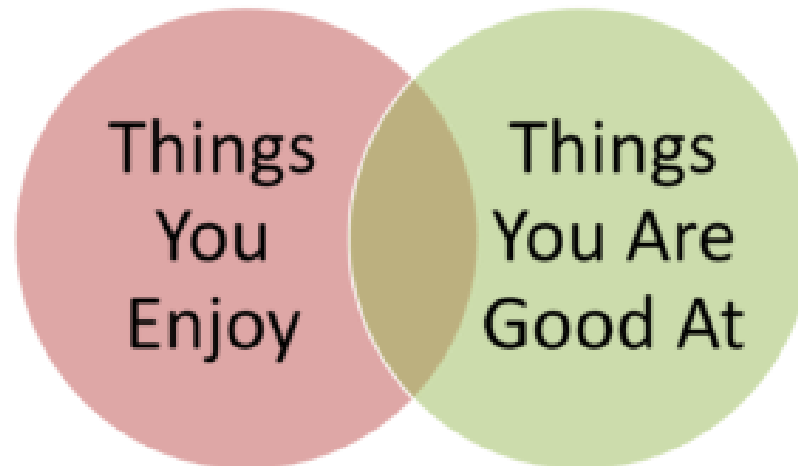


Image: SandBox Advisors

3. Preferred Interests (identity currency)

- Relationships over common ground
- Opportunities for interest-chaining
- Pre-vocational skills and Networking (building marketable skill set)
- YouTube, Instagram accounts (not Facebook or Snapchat)



4. Social development apps

- Some examples:
 - <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/social-skills-apps-for-kids-with-special-needs>
 - Social Detective App (Social Thinking); Social Quest; Social Navigator

The Four Most Important Beliefs Adults Can Foster in Children:



A feeling that they are appreciated/liked/valued for their neurodiversity (comprehensively).

What they do is different than **Who** they are.

A sense that they have some control over their lives. Mastery leads to pride.

A sense that they are increasingly autonomous.

Q+A