

00:00.00

theautismhelper

Hi Megan thank you so much for joining me.

00:02.53

Meghan Edwards

Hi Thanks for having me.

00:05.22

theautismhelper

So I'm excited today to talk about staff training because obviously I love talking about that. But we're going to really focus on staff training with the behavior plan and I think this is a piece of the puzzle that we don't focus on and. Teach enough about because it's not just having the right behavior plan. It's getting everyone on board to follow that plan as well.

00:31.50

Meghan Edwards

Um I would agree I think that's such a huge piece especially in the school setting. Um, there's so many adults that the kids come in contact with throughout the day so that can make it a challenge.

00:41.10

theautismhelper

Yeah, that's a good point. It's not even just the classroom staff. There's all of those other adults outside of the classroom.

00:48.41

Meghan Edwards

Okay.

00:50.91

theautismhelper

So when getting started on having that behavior plan and really pre-planning how you're going to teach this to those contributing adults whether it's paraprofessionals or a bus Aid. What are. Some key steps that you kind of plan for get started with when teaching someone how to implement a behavior plan.

01:12.36

Meghan Edwards

Um, yeah, That's a really good question. Um, typically when I am initially working with a classroom or a teacher. Um or group of staff members The the first thing I have to do is really get their buy In. Um, a lot of times. Um, you know they've been burned in the past or they have tried so many strategies that um, sometimes also just similar ones and so they just are already in a mindset of this isn't going to work. Um, this student shouldn't be in my classroom that type of thing and so really I. I Kind of go in um to a classroom with a

plan. Not really like here's my plan. This is what you're going to do um and this is how it's going to be done. Um I really have to have the the classroom collaboration and collaboration from administration Administration. Teachers the paraprofessionals because they all kind of have to be on the same page and agree with it and want to do it? Um, so I generally will present different options um of like we could do something that looks like this and we could do some a reinforcement plan that looks like this and. Um I would suggest doing this and here's 2 different ways. We could do that and kind of like offering them choices that are similar and that could have similar outcomes but that gives them a little bit more autonomy over how it's been being implemented in their classroom.

02:41.83

theautismhelper

Um, isn't that funny that like strategies we use with for students work with adults too right? We talk about like giving choices and control all the time with that. That's works for adults like we like to make choices and have control too.

02:53.71

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, and I really find um I mean so many of the strategies that I for me like the the teachers and the staff members. Those are my clients as opposed to um, like a clinic setting where I'd be working with individuals that I'd be like treating their behavior like I'm I'm generally shaping and um. And changing the adult behavior in the classrooms and the school buildings that I'm in.

03:14.12

theautismhelper

I think that's really the mindset you have to have when you are a consultant or a school-based bcba or whatever administrative role. You have. Because it's easy just to think yes my students the clients whoever I'm working with but there's a piece in between when you're not the 1 implementing those strategies.

03:32.30

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, um, and I really have to make sure because I I do serve various schools and districts and so I am not like in 1 school all day long. Um, so I can't be everywhere and so I really have to like train the adults and. Um, make sure that they have a good understanding too because um, ive even found like something that sounds really simple to me like oh the student needs a schedule. Um isn't interpreted the same by everyone? Um, so really like. Showing them how to do it showing them how to use it. Um because sometimes it'll just be like stuck on the student's desk and then gets lost in the shuffle and they don't ever use it. They just like give it to them and expect them. Um to know how to use it and expect that to fix the behavior. Um, so really

making sure that they also have a good understanding of what I mean when I say. Use a schedule.

04:23.68

theautismhelper

Yeah, that's a good example because we hear that a lot like oh do they have a schedule and people always like yeah but like that could be misinterpreted as like oh well I have a schedule on my desk that I use for my day and that's how the suit does a schedule. It's like well that's not quite what I meant let's you know rewind a minute.

04:41.60

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, yeah I found that things in it makes sense in my world because that's what I do on ah on a daily basis but it doesn't necessarily make sense to some of the teachers.

04:49.70

theautismhelper

Especially probably if you're working with Gen Ed teachers too on strategies that maybe just aren't as commonly used or maybe yeah, all of most of the students in the class. Don't need an individual schedule but this student does and these are.

04:59.60

Meghan Edwards

In here.

05:02.84

theautismhelper

Some ways it could look and that kind of circles back to that idea of like choices and control that you talked about before.

05:09.50

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, yeah, definitely I and I um would say I have a ah pretty big mix of like John Ed teachers that I work with special ed teachers. So it's um, it gives me good opportunities to bounce back and forth between strategies. But um, yeah, definitely. Um, has brought perspective into making sure like that people have the understanding.

05:28.88

theautismhelper

I liked what you said when we kind of first started talking about this that you don't come in with your plan you come in with a plan to collaborate and work together and you know on first like listen or you know interpretation. It's a more time consuming process than just coming in here's the plan here's the right answer here's what you have to do. But I think you're right on on not jumping to that right away because if you don't have the buy in the plan doesn't really matter

like it could be the most perfect plan ever. But if no one's going to follow it. It doesn't matter.

05:56.18

Meghan Edwards

Um, yeah, um, yeah, it's definitely more time consuming and something I'm I'm learning to balance as I go. Um, and also just like building rapport with the teachers. Um, you know, just getting to know them a little bit so that they are comfortable asking questions again. The things that we do with um the typical children that we work with um, applying that to the adults again. Um, but yeah, building that relationship and that rapport and just not forcing them to do something? Um, but letting them have control because teachers like to have control over the things in their classrooms which I totally get um and so making sure it fits for them. It's going to be easy and doable for them.

06:38.88

theautismhelper

Yeah, we need that like rapport reinforcement piece First I have you know unfortunately met too many bcba's that aren't super familiar with schools that have come in and just been like here is the 73 things you're not doing right that you should be doing differently and those teachers are you know, immediately turned off and.

06:57.97

Meghan Edwards

Um, will.

06:58.17

theautismhelper

I was talking to a clinic a few years ago actually of vcba's and I was like a teacher's classroom is kind of like their house like you spend more time in your classroom as a teacher sometimes than you do at home and sometimes you spend more money on your classroom than you do on the decor in your home and it would be like someone coming into your house and being like I hate your couch your couch is so ugly like you need a different couch and.

07:11.12

Meghan Edwards

Um, if.

07:15.17

Meghan Edwards

F.

07:18.00

theautismhelper

That's the offense I think that teachers take like they take a lot of

pride in in their classroom and what they're doing and and not that they don't want help but it comes across wrong.

07:20.57

Meghan Edwards  
Yeah.

07:28.50

Meghan Edwards  
Yeah, and even um, even just like yeah they take so much pride and um, it's just such a different dynamic in the classroom there. They're already doing so many things and taking care of so many needs, especially the gen ed teachers who have like sometimes 20 more kids in a class and um, we all know teachers the requirements that they have you know it's just a lot and then behavior is just 1 more thing and. Um, I just think back to like when I was a teacher and like why I even got started in behavior analysis was because there was no one to go to for help and um, so sometimes I I know that if teachers are reaching out for that help but some of them are desperate. You know they're just in survival mode and just trying to make it through the day and so um.

08:10.25

theautismhelper  
Are.

08:17.42

Meghan Edwards  
Yeah, just being able to support them in a way that is supportive and not just 1 more thing that they have to do on their to do list.

08:23.40

theautismhelper  
Yeah, and I think teachers could use all of these same strategies that you're talking about with their paraprofessionals in their classroom like developing rapport giving choices, especially for pairs that are one on ones or are spending more time with that child if you have a big case load. You know you need those paraprofessionals to have buy-in on those strategies as well. So using teachers could be using these same strategies.

08:48.49

Meghan Edwards  
Yes, definitely that could be like a whole nother training. But.

08:52.82

theautismhelper  
So The big you know I know right? The um, you know the big, the big challenges I hear all the time with staff training are are one the buy-in which we've kind of talked about and the other obstacle is

always time. How do we find the time whether it's the teacher training the paras or. You know a bcba your consultant working with teachers and staff. You know time is is never Abundant. No Very few districts have like beautiful common planning time on a Silver Platter. So How do you overcome that obstacle and what are some recommendations you have for finding this time within the day.

09:19.91

Meghan Edwards

Um, of of.

09:27.73

Meghan Edwards

Um, yeah I have a couple things because time management is a big piece of just my job in general just making sure I can get to everyone because I am in so many different buildings. Um I try my best again because I know teachers have like. The one forty five minutes of pe time that they might not have kids in their classroom. Um, so usually they're like well um, when it comes time to like meeting teachers will say well you let me know when you can calm and make no, you need to let me know when it's a good time for you.

09:48.14

theautismhelper

Um.

09:56.57

theautismhelper

Um, yeah.

09:58.97

Meghan Edwards

Um, because their time my time can be a lot more flexible as as far as like fitting the puzzle pieces together. Um I really just try to to work around their schedule again just making it as easy as possible for them. Um, if they're a teacher who wants to get stuff done during lunch great but most teachers want their lunches so I usually don't suggest that so really just going off of when they can meet um, but then as far as. Um, that that would be like just going over strategies. But then as far as like supporting them afterwards I I don't try I don't like to just like dump a plan on ah on a classroom and then like wipe my hands and walk away I like to spend time in the classroom observing and giving them feedback on the implementation and and more training. Um. Because usually the training with the para is they clock in when kids come and they clock out when kids leave so they really don't have like time to meet necessarily um during their contract hours. So usually my time with Paraz is like in the moment coaching and training. Um. And generally I think that most of them. Um, once they get to know me um, are open to that and and learn better that way than they would just sitting down and hearing me tell them

what to do.

11:13.60

theautismhelper

Um, then they get to see it all in action too which is so powerful.

11:18.72

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, um, a couple other things that I've done just to um, get the most bang for my box is because I support so many different places and I can't be in every classroom and I can't like live there and hang out forever. Um I'm really finding. To maximize that time offering up District pds or um, even just like groups of teachers within their buildings doing little trainings on different topics so that I can just share like general behavior like 1 ah 1 information with. With staff and with paras and with teachers. Um, just to start like building those skills up um in their classrooms on just like a day to day basis. Um to kind of like proactively prevent some of these fires from needing to be put out. Um, that's definitely I found a. A big increase in like the um, the takeaways that staff are getting like they'll be asking me like oh remember when you talked about this and they'll be like asking me questions so they are like taking stuff back to their classrooms which is really good to see.

12:27.30

theautismhelper

Oh that's great and do you see? um, interest in buy-in from Juna Teachers wanting to like seek out some of these strategies and interventions.

12:36.43

Meghan Edwards

I Actually surprisingly get pretty good feedback from the Gen Ed teachers I almost feel like they're more open in accepting. Um, and I don't know if that's just because of a recent increase in behaviors just across the board in Classrooms. Um, but they seem to be like almost more open than some of the even the special Ed teachers. Yes, maybe yes yes.

12:59.59

theautismhelper

Um, they're like so hungry they're like we need all the ideas for our classroom. But so when kind of thinking you were the verse. We have these staff members that are coming to you for suggestions that are seeking out advice. But what about on the flip side. What about really reluctant staff that. Or maybe superset in their ways or you know have that kind of mindset like you talked about earlier like Ben they're done that we've tried that it didn't work. What are some strategies that you find successful for those reluctance staff members.

13:28.90

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, those ones are tough um and it it really just it depends I would say sometimes I'll go through like every teacher is like this and they all have this attitude and um and so sometimes that can be like defeating. Um, I Really try to play into my background as a teacher and really just try to you know sometimes I'll even like say like oh I Totally know how you feel like when I was teaching just so that they know that I was a teacher in the Past. Um and really with with those staff I try to just like move at a slower pace.

13:57.24

theautismhelper

Um, ah.

14:02.36

Meghan Edwards

Um, take my timebuding rapport a little bit more doing some more observations and I typically would um, really just like getting to know them. Um sometimes ah actually most of the time I'll just squat out. Ask what can I do to make your day just like. 2% better if I could do 1 thing for your classroom or for you. What would it be and then I really just focus on that on and then there there are times you know where I really have to um, problem solve and think why are they so resistant are they resistant because.

14:19.30

theautismhelper

Are.

14:38.70

Meghan Edwards

They don't understand are they resistant because they disagree with this um strategy or this method. Um and then going back to the drawing board of how can I get them to be a little bit more um, supportive or or what is it that they're looking for. Um. And then a lot of times too. It's just kind of showing them that I'm willing to do it too. So some of those classrooms I'll say hey can I work with this student for three days um and so I'll be there 1 to 1 or I'll just like live in the classroom for three full days and i'll. Their hands on doing the work with them and sometimes I find that that gets them to be like oh she's willing to do it and so maybe she isn't so crazy. It is kind of working and it kind of gets over that hump a little bit.

15:26.54

theautismhelper

Yeah I like that idea of like hey let let me jump in and not only do they get to kind of see an action and you model it but also like okay if she's willing to do it then I could be too and and that also sometimes I think helps. Work out some of the kinks like you might



notice something when you're implementing it like oh yeah, this is actually really hard because of X Y and z.

15:47.98

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, that that is part of the reason why I like to be um, coaching in the moment. Regardless, just because there are so many there are so many like circumstances that occur in a school building that were like oh we didn't think about that. So how are we going to problem solve this and.

15:59.95

theautismhelper

Um, yeah.

16:04.60

Meghan Edwards

How are we going to work through that scenario So there are so many different things that um can be helpful when you are there with them. Um.

16:11.46

theautismhelper

Things like plan out on paper so nicely. But then in reality it's like oh shoot I totally forgot about this or this you know child reacted differently to this or there was a whole other schedule issue. So I think seeing things in action is always helpful and and kind of same same thing I had said earlier.

16:24.30

Meghan Edwards

I mean.

16:30.24

theautismhelper

Teachers could really use this same strategy with especially they're 1 on ones like I always liked to have days where I was the one on 1 if you could I know that's hard pulling yourself away from the rest of the class but to really see what's going on and have that firsthand experience.

16:32.92

Meghan Edwards

Wow.

16:45.20

Meghan Edwards

And then even in some some cases where we were allowed to just based on the support from the administration. Um, even doing like reinforcement for the adults like okay if we every time you do X Y and

z. You'll get a ticket you can turn in your tickets and we'll draw somebody to get a free lunch like staff is I found them to be very motivated by food. Um, and so really, you know playing into the reinforcement there for staff for implementing things or trying things and um then slowly fading that away so that we're not always having to buy. Yeah food.

17:20.76

theautismhelper

But that's always the way to get people to trainings too like they'll be pizza or they'll be coffee come to this meeting so kind of same idea along with with reluctant staff. But what about staff members that just blatantly aren't following the behavior plan.

17:27.18

Meghan Edwards

Um, for right.

17:37.84

theautismhelper

What's kind of your first step then when you see like it's just not being followed.

17:39.33

Meghan Edwards

Um.

17:44.62

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, um, so when that occurs um again, it kind of depends on like my role was my role there. Um, specifically for that behavior plan because sometimes I'll be in a classroom and I'll see like another behavior plan not being followed or. So I kind of just have to play that by um, depending on like which building I'm in and and what their process is there? Um, but I do try to like document things in my observations just on my end to. Um, keep note of it and keep record and then just really kind of um think about you know why are they not implementing this plan is it because it's too difficult. Is it something that they don't Understand. Um, or is it that they disagree and then why do they disagree so kind of just going back to that. Why behind their own behavior. Um, and then um from their problem solving. So if it's because the plan is too complicated which is pretty sometimes that happens sometimes you know again, it's a great plan on paper. But then. Um, if you're maybe just a classroommate and not a 1 to 1 and you have other responsibilities. It might be too complicated to implement um or is it that they think they're doing it correctly, but they're not again that understanding that interpretation where um, it's.

19:07.55

Meghan Edwards

Um, maybe wasn't modeled appropriately or something like that to them So really just going back to that Why and then making adjustments from there.

19:16.52

theautismhelper

Um, and that'll kind of point you in the direction of what to do next.

19:20.32

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, and even um and then sometimes like I've I've found really creative ways to to prompt staff. Um, because I try to be as like as least intrusive as I can. So. If I have and if they're working with a student who is not a reader I'll carry a carry on a whiteboard and I'll like write instructions on a whiteboard and hold it up to them. Um, the previous school I was in. We had two way went mirrors so I was able to sit in there and coach people through rocky talkies which was wonderful. Um. But I'll use post-its to give people prompts and I even had a teacher the other day who said like sometimes I'm just so overstimulated myself that if you could give me a visual of the steps of the plan that would be super helpful so that when I am. Doing 5 other things and then this behavior happens I can just look at it and know exactly what I have to do? Um, so I love when like teachers advocate for themselves and are like yes I need a visual um too because it wasn't that she didn't understand it. It wasn't that she didn't disagree. It was just that she herself. Get so fostered that she like blanks out and can't remember what she's supposed to do.

20:29.80

theautismhelper

Um I love that and that's so understandable like we've all been there where yes you are just like so overwhelmed too much going on and yeah visuals help everyone so having that quick reference I'm sure is so helpful. So basically part of mine. You just got to get creative.

20:38.41

Meghan Edwards

Um, yeah.

20:46.89

Meghan Edwards

Yeah, yeah, I always try to um I never know really what my days I mean I generally have like a schedule and a plan but I just try to always have like necessary things I carry around a binder with like. Um, common visuals that I may need because you just never know when I'm in a classroom and when I'll be back to that classroom. Um I carry around the whiteboard post it things that I can prompt the adults with um, even use visuals that say like praise them or give them a space and I have like a. Ah, student lanyard and an adult lanyard and I use the

student ones like the visuals of like stop you know calm hands quiet mouth those ones for kids. But then I have ones for adults too that have like give them praise give them space. Ask them what they need and things like that. So I can prompt from being away I don't have to. Um, ask 8 kids more or be super intrusive.

21:44.80

theautismhelper

Um I love that idea and then yeah, you're not like getting it. You're not getting involved like all up in their business but like still giving those reminders. That's great. Well awesome Megan. Thank you so much I feel like you give a lot of really actionable strategies that.

21:52.10

Meghan Edwards

Um, will.

21:58.73

theautismhelper

Teachers could use with their staff or really any kind of consultant role which any clinician whether you're Slp bcba behavior consultant and when you're in that role of really training and leading adults. It's it's a little bit of a finesse so you gave a lot of great strategies that people could use in their classroom in schools. So thank you so much.

22:16.15

Meghan Edwards

Thanks! I'm so excited to be here and so grateful that you had me.

22:23.13

theautismhelper

Um, awesome. Well thanks Megan.