The Power Card Strategy: Using Special Interest to Teach Social and Behavior Expectations
Presenter: Elisa Gagnon, MS.Ed.

This training introduces the use of the Power Card Strategy to motivate students and teach social and behavioral expectations. The strategy builds rapport between adults and people of the autism spectrum while teaching expected behaviors in a variety of school, home and community environments. Following a description of the strategy, participants will have the opportunity to develop their own power card and receive feedback from the instructor.

Objectives:
1. Identify unique or special interest of a person with an autism spectrum disorder.
2. Write a scenario describing how the hero solves a problem.
3. Create a power card to generalize the expected skill.

Target Audience:
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

Biography:
Elisa Gagnon is a highly successful teacher, who specializes in working with children and youth with autism spectrum disorders including Asperger Syndrome and classic autism. An autism consultant in the Kansas City area and nationally recognized speaker and consultant, she is also the author of Power Cards: Using Special Interests to Motivate Children and Youth with Autism and Asperger Syndrome and co-author of This is Asperger Syndrome.

With more than 20 years of experience in education, she has as a special education teacher, a principal of an alternative school, and as a consultant for teachers who work with children with autism spectrum disorders. She also coordinated an autism teacher training grant at the University of Kansas. Elisa speaks nationally on classroom strategies for students on the autism spectrum and how to use special interests to motivate and teach students with ASD.

Living Well on the Spectrum: A Positive Psychology Approach
Presenter: Valerie L. Gaus, Ph.D.

Living on the spectrum can bring a lot of stress from day to day. The strengths that also come with an autism spectrum disorder can be used toward creative problem-solving that allows for a life of opportunity and independence. This workshop will focus on a positive approach to managing stress and setting life goals that will lead to more life satisfaction for people on the spectrum and their families.

Objectives:
1. Describe positive psychology and how it applies to individuals on the spectrum.
2. Discuss sources of stress for individuals on the spectrum and how a strength-based approach can help.
3. List the steps of problem-solving and how they can be applied in every-day life.

Target Audience:
Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Psychologists.

Biography:
Dr. Valerie Gaus is a psychologist, licensed by New York State, who has been a practicing psychotherapist for more than 15 years. She specializes in individual psychotherapy for adults and older teens, with extensive experience serving people with disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, depression, trauma and stress-related problems.
She approaches therapy using cognitive-behavioral framework. She has written numerous articles and chapters on these subjects, as well as two books. One is entitled *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adult Asperger Syndrome*, published in 2007. The newest one is called *Living Well on the Spectrum: How to Use Your Strengths to Meet the Challenges of Asperger Syndrome/High Functioning Autism*.

**Teaching Adolescents with Autism: Practical Strategies Across School Settings**

Presenter: Walter Kaweski, M.A.

Research strongly supports the inclusion of students with autism in general education settings where access to enriched content and natural peer interactions contribute to improved social, behavioral, and academic outcomes. This session will focus on critical training and support for general and special education teachers, related service providers, psychologists, paraprofessionals & parents interested in improving academic success, communication and social acceptance for students with autism.

**Objectives:**

Attendees will learn:

1. Strategies to replace misinformed attitudes and perception about autism with capacity-based respect and appreciation for the person behind the label.
2. Specific adaptations for every major subject area, as well as general adaptations that apply across all content areas.
3. How to support students with autism in general education classrooms without compromising the student’s dignity.

**Target Audience:**
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, School Psychologists, Paraprofessionals

**Biography:**

Walter Kaweski is a teacher, autism specialist, and inclusion coordinator in the San Juan Unified School District of suburban Sacramento, California. With thirty-four years of experience in public education, he has taught a wide variety of subjects and grade levels including high school English, intervention reading and math, history, and instrumental music. Kaweski was awarded the 2007 Teacher of the Year Award by his school district for his work developing a successful inclusion program for students with autism. In partnership with Sacramento State University, he trains teacher candidates pursuing the special education credential. He has presented at local, state and national conferences on topics concerning inclusion support and friendship development for students with autism.

Kaweski earned his Master of Arts in Special Education from Sacramento State University. He is a certified Moderate-Severe Special Education Specialist and Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development Specialist.

**A Little Help From My Friends: Why Typical Peer Relationships Matter and What We Can Do To Increase Them**

Presenter: Walter Kaweski, M.A.
For students with and without disabilities, friendship and belonging are critical to healthy personal development. Put simply, ongoing relationships are at the core of a vibrant and fulfilling life. Despite the value of peer-to-peer friendship, students with autism cannot enjoy fulfilling relationships without a supportive school community. This session will focus on practical and promising approaches to developing a welcoming school culture that values peer relationships between students with autism and their nondisabled peers. Strategies will be introduced that foster relationships in the classroom and throughout the broader life of the school community.

**Objectives:**

1. How to utilize typical peer “experts” to help students with autism connect.
2. Learn effective interventions that enhance the quality and quantity of interactions between students with autism and their typical peers.
3. Learn how adult support can enhance friendship and meaningful participations without stigmatizing the student in the eyes of his or her peers.

**Target Audience:**

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, School Psychologists, Paraprofessionals

**Biography:**

Walter Kaweski is a teacher, autism specialist, and inclusion coordinator in the San Juan Unified School District of suburban Sacramento, California. With thirty-four years of experience in public education, he has taught a wide variety of subjects and grade levels including high school English, intervention reading and math, history, and instrumental music. Kaweski was awarded the 2007 Teacher of the Year Award by his school district for his work developing a successful inclusion program for students with autism. In partnership with Sacramento State University, he trains teacher candidates pursuing the special education credential. He has presented at local, state and national conferences on topics concerning inclusion support and friendship development for students with autism.

Kaweski earned his Master of Arts in Special Education from Sacramento State University. He is a certified Moderate-Severe Special Education Specialist and Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development Specialist.

**Building Skills vs. Doing Skills: Considerations for Fostering Independence in Individuals with ASD**

**Presenter:** David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

This conference session is designed for all individuals/professionals who support a child with ASD. Emphasis will be placed on the provision of assistance (or “aiding”), to emphasize the important role of **building skills** rather than **doing skills**. Participants will leave with a framework for fostering independence that includes attending to and tracking prompts, developing and implementing individualized independence plans, and establishing means to monitor progress.

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of the risk of promoting dependence, and to recognize the critical considerations
necessary to foster independence.

2. To become familiar with instructional, environmental, and behavioral techniques that should be used to facilitate skill acquisition for children with ASDs.

3. To gain knowledge as to how to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of used strategies.

**Target Audience:**
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, School Administrators, School Psychologists, School Administrators, Related Service Providers, Paraprofessionals

**Biography:**
Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist. He serves as the Director of Community Consulting and Clinical Services at Summit Educational Resources and is faculty with the Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum conducts diagnostic evaluations, provides outpatient psychological services, and offers consultative support and training to school districts across Western New York, focusing on the facilitation of academic, social, emotional, adaptive, and behavioral development of students with autism spectrum and disruptive behavior disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum graduated with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and he completed his clinical internship at Duke University Medical Center.

**Effective School-Based Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviors Demonstrated by Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**Presenter:** David Meichenbaum, Ph.D.

This conference session, designed for school professionals, will go beyond determining what is causing and maintaining challenging behaviors demonstrated by students with ASD, and will additionally emphasize practical evidence-based strategies to decrease maladaptive behaviors, increase adaptive alternative behaviors, and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention plans. Attendees will consider whether their current means of responding to challenging behavior include the necessary elements to build skills and curtail future problematic behaviors.

**Objectives:**

1. To understand why challenging behaviors occur and reoccur, by considering the fundamental principles and methods of Functional Behavior Assessments.

2. To become familiar with evidence-based strategies to reduce problematic behaviors and build adaptive alternative behaviors.

3. To recognize all that is needed in developing a comprehensive behavior intervention plan, including means for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of behavior plans.

**Target Audience:**
General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists,

**Biography:**
Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist. He serves as the Director of Community Consulting and Clinical Services at Summit Educational Resources and is faculty with the Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum conducts diagnostic evaluations, provides outpatient psychological services, and offers consultative support and training to school districts across Western New York, focusing on the facilitation of academic, social, emotional, adaptive, and behavioral development of students with autism spectrum and disruptive behavior disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum graduated with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and he completed his clinical internship at Duke University Medical Center.
Replacing Challenging Behavior and Improving Quality of Life through Functional Communication Training

Presenter: Melissa Rinaldi, Ph.D.

A core deficit of individuals on the autism spectrum is difficulty in communicating with others. Communication deficits often result in challenging behaviors both in the classroom and at home. The purpose of this presentation is to instruct attendees how to systematically teach communication skills to replace challenging behaviors using Functional Communication Training.

Objectives:
1. Define functional communication, challenging behavior, and functionally equivalent alternative behavior.
2. Describe the process of identifying the function of a behavior.
3. Identify the steps to teach communication skills through Functional Communication Training.

Target Audience:
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, School Psychologists, School Administrators, Related Service Providers

Biography:
Melissa L. Rinaldi received her B.A. degree in psychology from New York University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in clinical psychology from the University at Albany, State University of New York. She is a licensed clinical psychologist in the states of New York and Rhode Island. Dr. Rinaldi has worked with individuals with disabilities, their families, and members of their support team in both clinical and research capacities for over a decade. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University where she provided individual and group therapy to children and adolescents with combined developmental disabilities and psychiatric conditions. Dr. Rinaldi has extensive experience conducting diagnostic, cognitive, and adaptive assessments of individuals with developmental disabilities and providing behavioral and educational consultation services to homes, schools, and residential facilities. Her research focus is on the development, administration, and evaluation of training models and treatment approaches for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Encouraging and Shaping Prosocial Behavior in Students with ASD

Presenter: Melissa Rinaldi, Ph.D.

Systematic teaching of prosocial behaviors can not only reduce challenging behavior in students with ASD, but also lead to increases in independence and improvements in overall quality of life. The purpose of this session is to discuss how to select appropriate prosocial goals, develop effective and motivating teaching plans, and expand upon success.

Objectives:
4. Distinguish between functional replacement behaviors and prosocial behaviors.
5. Describe the process of selecting prosocial goals and developing a teaching plan.
6. Identify the steps to effectively shape behavior.

Target Audience:
Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, School Psychologists, School Administrators, Related Service Providers
Biography:

Melissa L. Rinaldi received her B.A. degree in psychology from New York University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in clinical psychology from the University at Albany, State University of New York. She is a licensed clinical psychologist in the states of New York and Rhode Island. Dr. Rinaldi has worked with individuals with disabilities, their families, and members of their support team in both clinical and research capacities for over a decade. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University where she provided individual and group therapy to children and adolescents with combined developmental disabilities and psychiatric conditions. Dr. Rinaldi has extensive experience conducting diagnostic, cognitive, and adaptive assessments of individuals with developmental disabilities and providing behavioral and educational consultation services to homes, schools, and residential facilities. Her research focus is on the development, administration, and evaluation of training models and treatment approaches for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Embedding Evidence-Based Practices throughout the Day for Learners with Autism

Presenter: Brenda Smith Myles

This session will focus on how to embed evidence-based practices throughout the school day. At the end of the training, educational professionals and parents will understand how to implement an instructional program for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) that answers the following questions: (a) What supports does my student/child need in each class to be successful? (b) What goals is my student/child working on? (c) Is there a thoughtful sequence to the student’s/child’s day that matches his learning style? This timely resource addresses adequate yearly progress (AYP), response to intervention (RTI), and positive behavior support (PBS) in a common-sense format. This process was designed to be used by the child’s educational team, consisting of parents, general educators, special educators, paraprofessionals, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, administrators, psychologists, consultants, siblings, and others who are stakeholders in the student’s education. The structure of this innovative tool ensures consistent use of supports to ensure student success as well as data collection to measure that success. In addition, this comprehensive system fosters targeted professional development. Because it identifies supports for each of the students daily activities, it is possible for all educational professionals working with the student to readily identify the methods, supports, and structure in which they themselves need training.

Objectives:

At the end of the session, attendees will be able to:

1. Identify social, behavior, academic, and sensory interventions for students with ASD.
2. Develop a plan that embeds interventions throughout the student’s day across settings.
3. Have a method to ensure that important knowledge about the learner’s strengths and needs moves with him from grade to grade.

Target Audience:

Parents, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Service Providers, School Administrators, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists

Biography:

Brenda Smith Myles Ph.D., a consultant with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and the Ziggurat Group, is the recipient of the Autism Society of America’s Outstanding Professional Award, The Princeton Fellowship Award, and the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Developmental Disabilities Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award. Brenda has made over 500 presentations all over the world and has written more than 150 articles and books on ASD. In addition, she served at the co-chair of the National ASD Teacher Standards Committee;
was on the National Institute of Mental Health’s Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee’s Strategic Planning Consortium; and collaborated with the National Professional Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, National Autism Center, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services who identified evidence based practices for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and served as Project Director for the Texas Autism Resource Guide for Teachers (TARGET). Myles is also on the executive boards for several organizations, including the Scientific Council of the Organization for Autism Research (SCORE) and ASTEP—Asperger Syndrome Training and Education Program. Further, in the latest survey conducted by the University of Texas, she was acknowledged as the second most productive applied researcher in ASD in the world.