

The X and Y of It: Unpacking Social Emotional Challenges for Teens with XY Variations

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None of the authors have any disclosures

*Some of the images throughout the presentation were AI generated



What makes things difficult for teens

Cognitive differences (Visual>Verbal)

Attention challenges (Inattentive> Active)

Anxiety (Quiet/avoidance>Verbalized worry)

Social Immaturity (younger coping skills/interests, loaners> leaders)

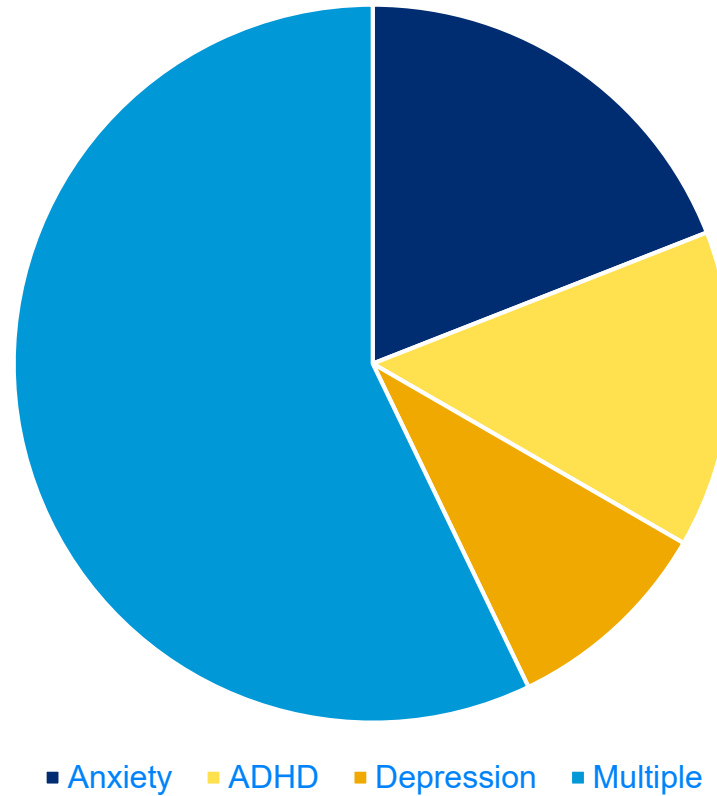
Adaptive skills (reduced independence/interest in independence)

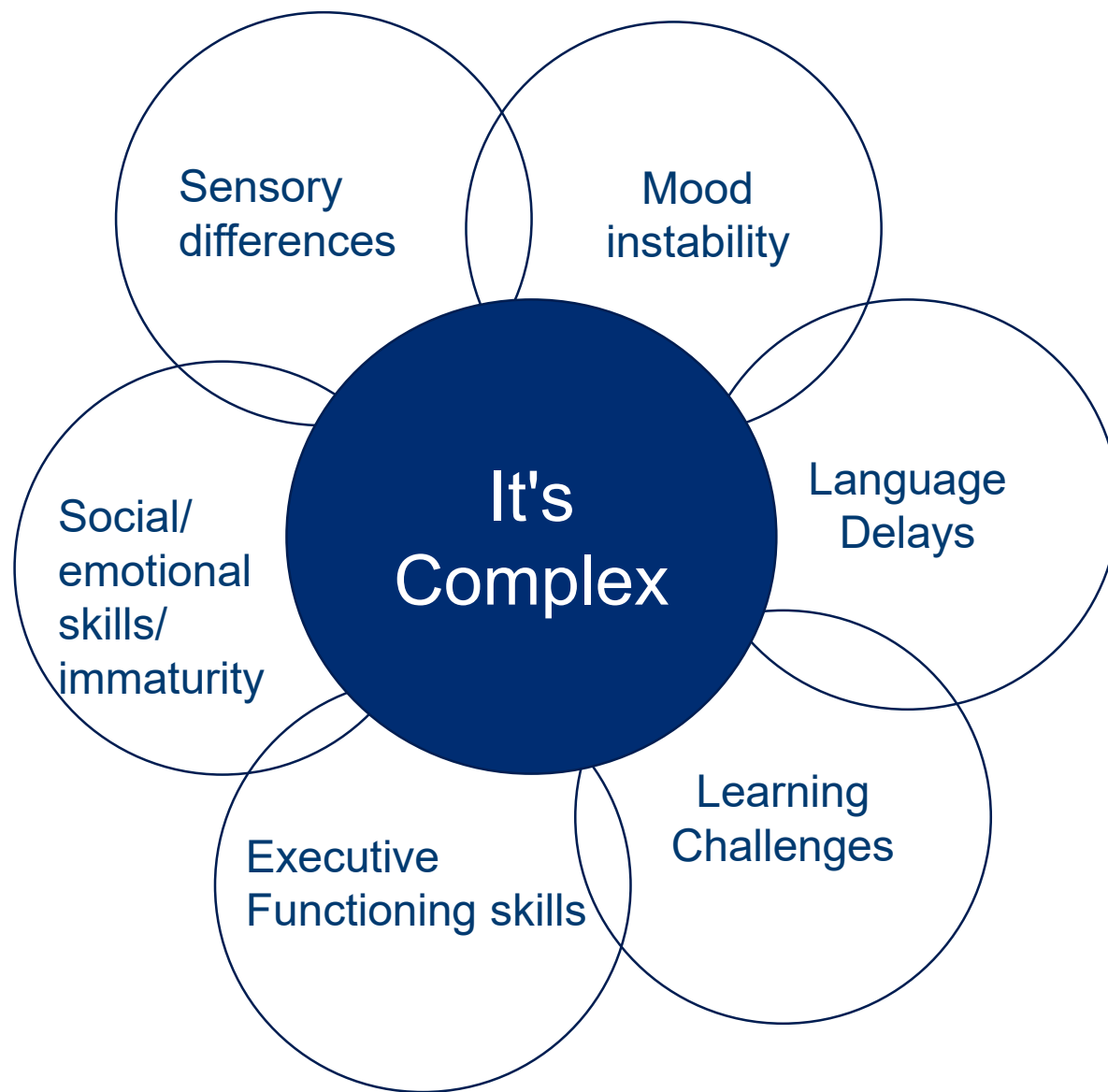
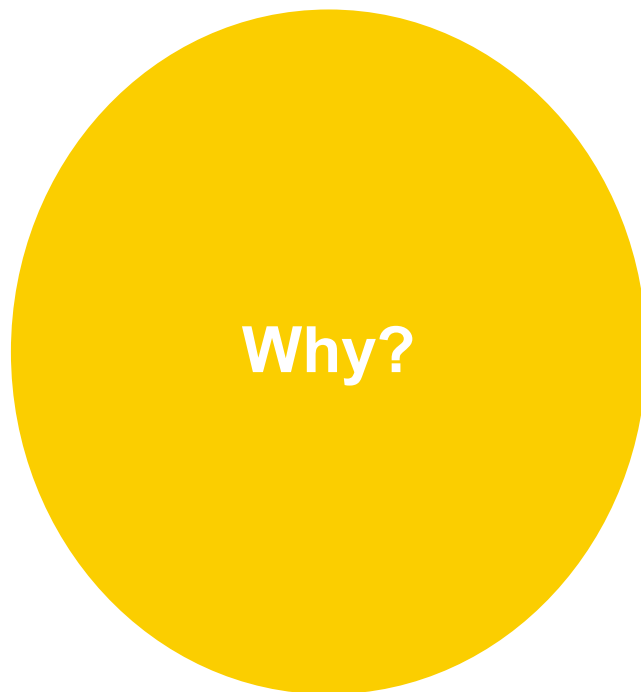
Learning disabilities

Screentime>social time

Are social-emotional challenges more likely?

Rates of Mental Health Diagnoses





Knowledge is Power

- Knowing what to look for
- Having a toolbox of strategies, supports, and resources
- Knowing when to seek additional support/help



From Statistics to Real Teens

What we see in the real world

Language Processing

- Overwhelmed with lots of talking
- Hard time following instructions with multi-steps
- Can't keep up in conversation
- Long pauses
- Mixing emotions with language can be especially difficult
- Hear part of what you say
- Making up stories



Strategies

- Use concise statements
- Adjust your language level
- Pay attention to rate of speech
- Pause
- Create opportunities for clarification
- Wrap-up to be sure you're on the same page
- Use visuals
- Stay focused

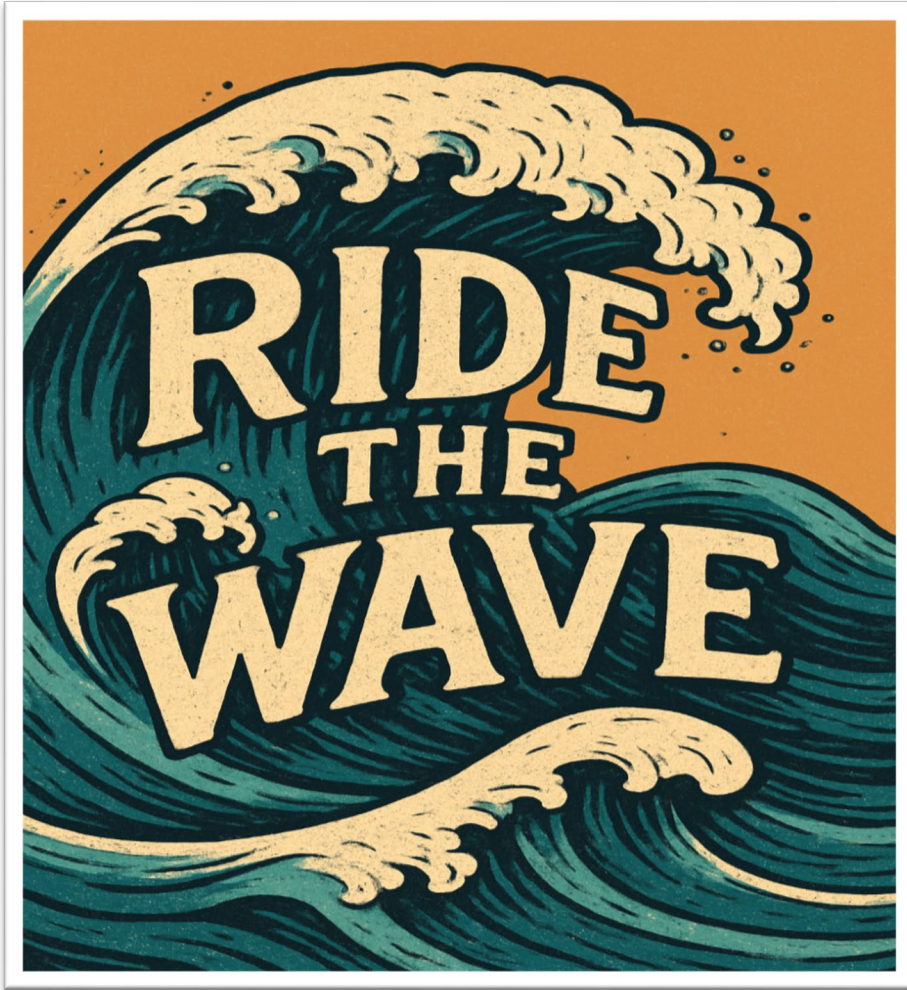


Irritability



- Grumpy
- Short fuse
- Whiney
- Resistance or refusal
- Lots of "I don't know"
- Shut down

Strategies



- Give space to ride the wave
- Reflect & validate
- Be mindful of questions & demands
- "I have some ideas about how to help..."
- Be proactive!


Withdrawal

- Lots of time in their room
- Not being involved with the family
- More screen time
- Sleeping a lot
- Disinterested in doing things with others
- Not participating at school
- Not going to organized activities
- Hoodie over the head



Strategies

- Find the "in"
- Plan a daily event or activity
- Reinforce participation
- Check-in with teachers, coaches, etc.
- Work on sleep & screen hygiene
- Temporarily adjust expectations
- Try to minimize questions



***The hardest part
about getting
started, is getting
started***

Big Reactions to Small Problems

- Easily frustrated by little things (small mistakes, something out of order, a small change or pivot)
- Using never/always language
- Reactions appear younger than expected for their age
- Big reactions happen in response to parents setting a limit



Strategies



Big deal, little deal



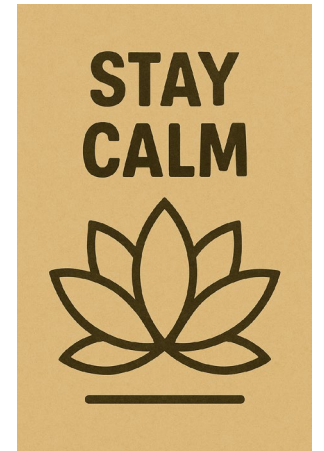
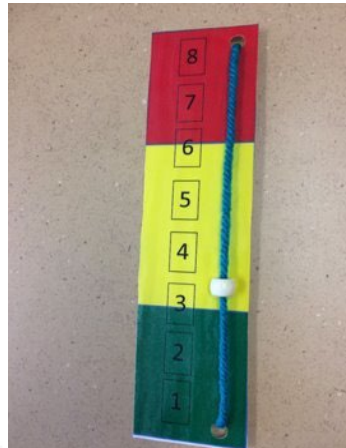
Measuring feelings and practicing regulation



Reduce language



Slow the pace



Slower Processing Speed



Long pauses



Not letting you know they're thinking through an answer



Taking forever to get a daily skill done (brushing teeth, finding backpack, getting dressed)



Offering a comment to something that was talked about several minutes ago

Slow Processing Strategies

Pre-teaching

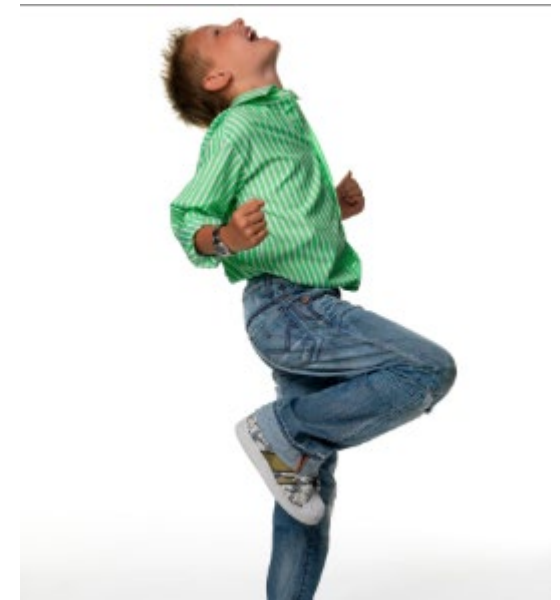
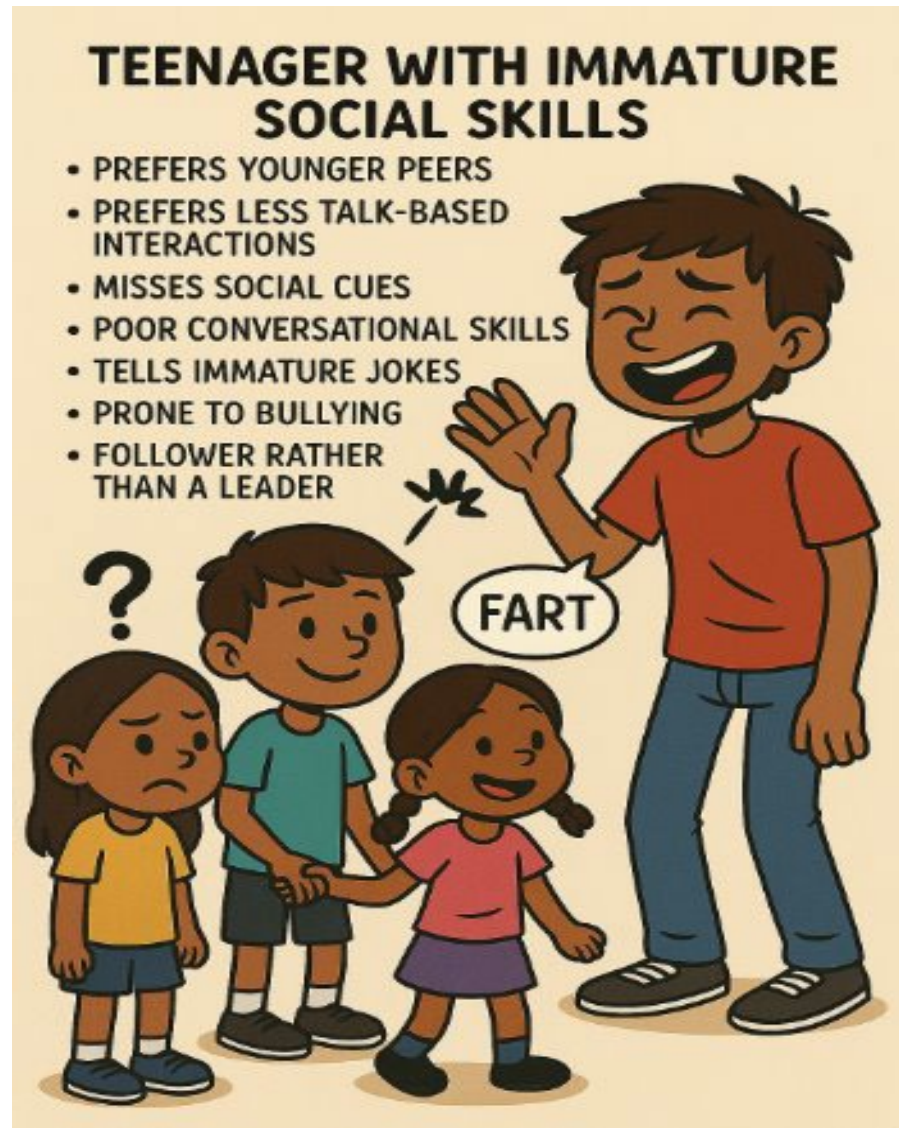
1:1 time

Fit expectations to processing style & limit number of steps

Checklists

Teach filler statements, filler gestures, then respect them

Slower Maturity



Ross et al., 2009

Tartaglia et al.,
2010

**This directly impacts social
safety!**

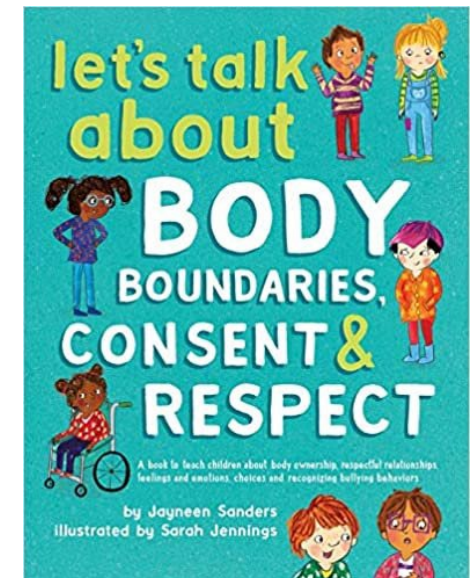
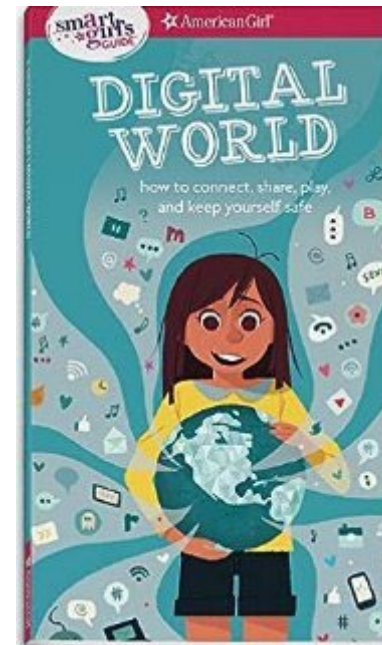
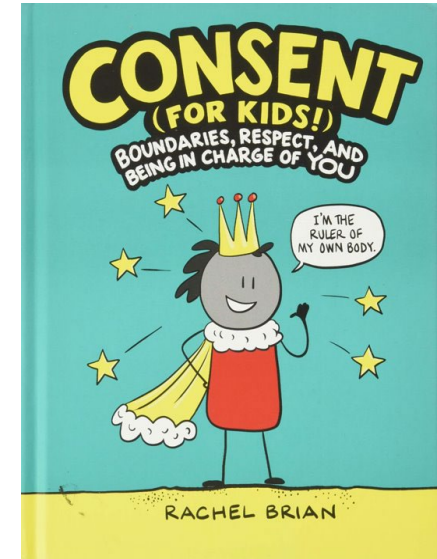
Social Safety

- Self-advocacy
- Consent
- Understanding healthy vs. unhealthy relationships
- Bullying (online and in person)
- Internet safety
- Interpersonal safety
- Abuse prevention

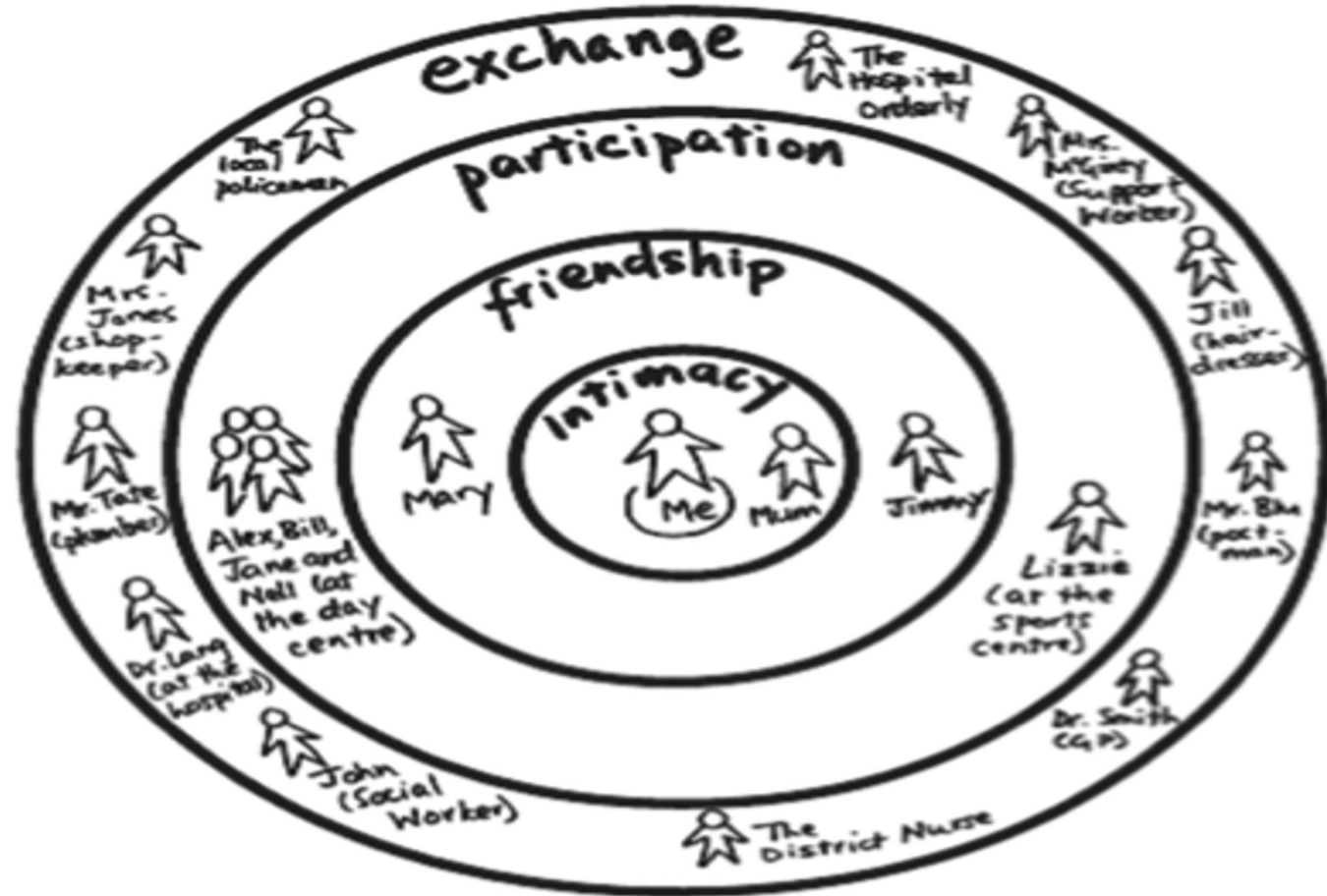


Strategies for Social Safety

- ❖ Teach – Restrict -- Monitor
- ❖ Identify trusted people to discuss concerns with
- ❖ Teaching how to ask for help and talk about needs
- ❖ Role play difficult situations
- ❖ Discuss how characters in books or movies advocate for themselves
- ❖ Practice in the real world!



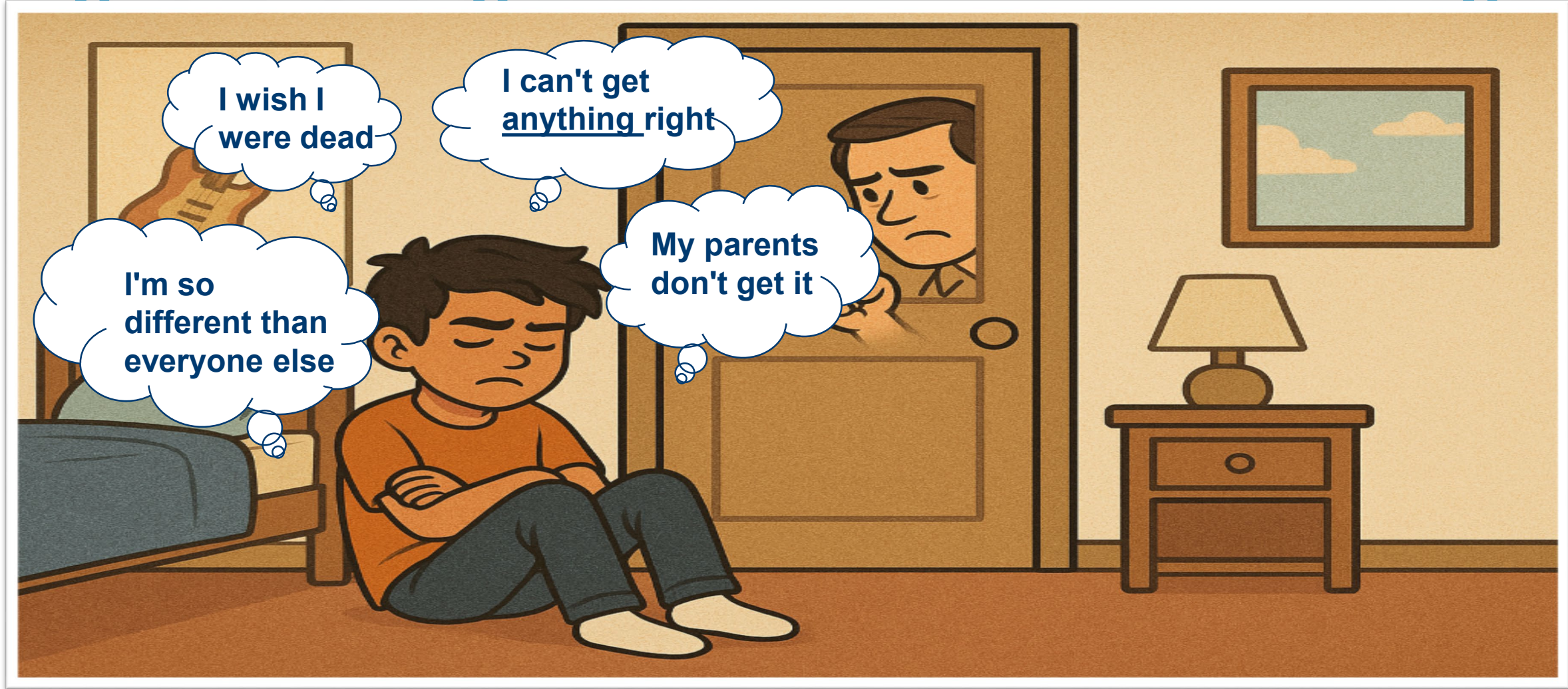
Circle of Friends



Adolescent male with XXY, anxiety, and ADHD



Negative Thoughts/Black and White Thinking



The Role of Evidence-Based Therapies

Cognitive Behavior
Therapy

Occupational
therapy for
sensory, motor
integration, daily
skills

Speech/language
therapy

Our Top Take Aways

- Create daily routines that support well-being
- Find & build on strengths
- Find non-therapy activities with therapeutic benefit (e.g., volunteer)
- Have some in the moment and daily strategies
- When in doubt, more visual, less verbal
- Start with where you know your child is rather than age expectations
- You know your child best! Progress will come, but may take longer for your teens
- Trust your parenting and your child!



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