

Push to Open: A QuickGuide to UDL Strategies for Supporting Learners with ASD

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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series



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Tri-State Webinar Series

Review...

Characteristics of ASD to Consider

- Communication Differences
- Social Differences
- Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, Activities
- Weak Central Coherence
- Mind-Blindness
- Executive Function Deficits
- Sensory Differences

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Common Barriers for Students with ASD

- Auditory clutter
- Visual clutter
- Inconsistent or unclear expectations
- Chaos/lack of routine
- Lots of downtime/wait time
- Power struggles
- Lack of reinforcement
- Over-reliance on auditory instruction
- Over-reliance on paper-pencil tasks
- Confusing “verbalization” with “communication”

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Review: Defining UDL

The term "universal design for learning" means a **scientifically valid framework** for guiding educational practice that:

- (A) **provides flexibility** in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
- (B) **reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students**, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.

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Core Beliefs of UDL

- All students can learn
- UDL improves students' academic achievement
- UDL improves students' educational opportunities
- Classroom instruction designed from the outset to ensure multiple means of representation, expression and engagement
- End result is better outcomes for ALL students

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UDL Guidelines

I Representation	II Action & Expression	III. Engagement
1. Perception	4. Physical Action	7. Recruiting interest
2. Language & Symbols	5. Expressive Skills & Fluency	8. Sustaining Effort & Persistence
3. Comprehension	6. Executive Functions	9. Self-regulation

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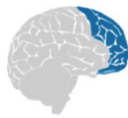
Three Brain Networks

- Recognition = What?

Recognition Networks
The "what" of learning



Strategic Networks
The "how" of learning



Affective Networks
The "why" of learning



- Strategic = How?

- Affective = Why?

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Review of Some Autism Characteristics on Instruction

- Verbal and non verbal communication
- Sensory differences
- Restricted, repetitive interests and behaviors
- Social difficulties
- Executive function challenges
- Emotional vulnerability
- Difficulty with central coherence
- Difficulty with perspective taking

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Setting the Scene: Visual Supports

Autism Characteristic

- Quick visual processing
- Difficulty with organizational skills
- Difficulty with transitions from location to location and activity to activity

UDL Strategies

- Reduce visual clutter
- Create clear visual and physical boundaries
- Provide visual representations of instructional content

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Examples of Visual Supports

Aspect of Instruction

- Behavior Management
- Communication
- Organization
- Transitions to locations
- Transitions between activities

Example of Visual Support

- Interactive sticker chart
- Visual word bank
- Color Coded folders, book covers, turn in baskets
- Interactive visual schedule
- 5-4-3-2-1 Countdown

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Setting the Scene: Auditory Input

Characteristic of Autism

- Can be overwhelmed by auditory input
- Can have inefficient “filtering” and processing of auditory information

UDL Strategies

- Reduce extraneous auditory clutter
- Teach classroom volume control
- Include sound absorbing items in décor (rugs, wall hangings, fabric on bulletin boards)
- “Whisper phones” of PVC pipe

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Setting the Scene: Movement

Characteristic of Autism

- Can have a atypical need for movement opportunities.
- Can have anxiety about unexpected touch

UDL Strategies

- Design and teach clear pathways for room travel.
- Desk flags for seeking assistance.
- Materials provided close to seating
- Movement breaks

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Setting the Scene: Climate

Characteristic of Autism

- Can have unusual responses to sensory input

UDL Strategies

- Plan for a “sensory neutral” environment
- Avoid scented candles, lotions, etc.
- Allow for layering of clothing
- Use natural light or incandescent or reduced lighting options

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Setting the Scene: Social-Emotional

Characteristic of Autism

- Can have difficulty with social interactions
- Can have difficulty developing friendships
- Can have emotional vulnerability

UDL Strategies

- Team building activities
- Esteem building activities
- Peer buddies
- Anti-Bullying programs
- Self Management Curriculum

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Setting the Scene: Engagement

Characteristic of Autism

- Restricted interests
- Special, intense interests and talents

UDL Strategies

- Choices of different learning products
- Use of technology (iPad, Chromebook, powerpoint, interactive books, YouTube)
- Project based learning
- Incorporation of student interests
- Authentic experiences

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UDL Considerations for Instructional Planning...

Element of Instruction

- Content Standards
- Anticipatory Set/Hook
- Teaching Content
- Guided practice
- Learning Products
- Closure

Consideration

- Need to Know/Nice to Know
- Incorporate Special Interests
- Provide Visual Input
- Small chunks
- Offer choices
- Provide opportunities to transfer and generalize

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Multiple Means of Representation

Guidelines

- Provide options for perception
- Provide options for language, mathematical expressions and symbols
- Provide options for comprehension

Examples

- Provide visual supports and incorporate technology
- Pre-teach vocabulary, symbols and provide visual supports
- Provide Graphic Organizers

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Multiple Means of Expression

Guidelines

- Provide options for physical action
- Provide options for expression and communication
- Provide options for executive function

Examples

- Consider technology support for written tasks
- Modify assignments to allow for alternate means of showing knowledge
- Use color coding, interactive checklists and visual schedules.

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Multiple Means of Engagement

Guidelines

- Provide options for recruiting interest
- Provide options for sustaining persistence and effort
- Provide options for self regulation

Examples

- Provide choices of learning topics, activities and products
- Provide visual contracts and reinforcement
- Have students self monitor progress and success

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Push to Open

Automatic Door Opener Tip Sheets

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Automatic Door Opener: Reduce Auditory Clutter

- Teach students “inside voice” concept.
- Close classroom door to reduce hallway noise.
- Play low volume, calming music during independent work to mask unpredictable noise.
- Use quiet tone of voice when instructing.
- Use FM system to “pop” teacher voice over ambient classroom noise without having to change teacher volume, pitch or tone.
- Develop system for communicating volume expectation for different activities. Example:
- Post schedules and duties for adults in the room, to eliminate need for communicating duties verbally.
- Reduce off topic conversation between adults.
- Develop and systematically teach simple visual cues to replace frequently used phrases, reminders, directions and redirections.
- Choose an attention-getting visual cue to signal classwide silence and attention (lights off or light blinking, etc.), rather than yelling over din.

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Automatic Door Opener: Reduce Visual Clutter

- Store materials in closed cupboards, closets, or solid color bins when not in use.
- Cover open bookshelves, cupboards and cubbies with solid, dark color curtains or sheeting.
- Use single color paper as backgrounds on bulletin boards.
- Avoid bright and busy patterns for curtains, bulletin board backings or borders, rugs, etc.
- Make instructional visual supports on charts or posters that “come and go” as needed to prevent accumulation of too many visuals throughout the year.
- Preserve some blank wall space.
- Delineate one area or bulletin board, for student work.
- Avoid hanging artwork or seasonal décor from the ceiling.
- Use natural light when possible, as an alternative to florescent light.
- Avoid use of window clings to allow for calming visual access to the outdoors.
- Place necessary visual supports, such as ABC strips, on student desks rather than on far-point display.

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Automatic Door Opener: Create Calming Sensory Input

- Incorporate regular movement breaks within and between activities.
- Allow students to use water bottles throughout the day.
- Delineate a “quiet corner” with a bean bag, headphones, reduced lighting, and barriers to reduce visual input.
- Provide stress balls or other fidgets.
- Do 5-10 minutes of stretching, yoga, or Brain Gym activities.
- Provide a rocking chair.
- Give directions using slow, soft voice cadence.
- Provide a bean bag chair.
- Exercise with resistance bands.
- Modeling clay activities/playdough for pinching, squeezing, fidgeting.
- Chair push-ups between activities.
- Wall pushes while waiting in the hall.
- Push hands together while waiting to be called on.
- Have students stack/un-stack classroom chairs, move desks/heavy bins for different activities.
- If providing snacks, emphasize chewy snacks.
- Calming scents include: vanilla, banana, coconut.

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Automatic Door Opener: Clear Visual Boundaries

- Arrange furniture and room furnishings to delineate or “define” different areas of the room for different purposes.
- Use rugs, colored tape, carpet squares, moveable shelving units, dividers or curtains to create boundary lines between floor spaces.
- Create smaller learning areas rather than one large open area.
- Use colored tape, placemats, name tags, and color coded bins on desks and tables to help students recognize the boundaries of their own space.
- Provide clearly defined areas for independent work, one-on-one, small group and large group instruction.
- Post any specific behavioral expectations for each area within that area, in a place that is seen immediately upon entrance.
- Use tri-fold presentation boards to “close off” areas such as the computer when they are not available for student use.
- Use STOP signs or the universal “NO” (circle with a slash through it) to indicate an area is not available for student use.
- Use study carrels, or face desk to the wall in between shelving to give boundaries to individual work spaces.
- Designate an adult area in the room for teacher desk, computer, phone, filing cabinets etc. and make a clear boundary around it.

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Automatic Door Opener: Teach Social Skills

- Choose a weekly social skill to work on as a class
- Begin each day with a conversation starter and partner or group discussion.
- During indoor recess, structure and supervise activities/games that support specific social skills
- Draw names of 2-3 students to eat lunch with the teacher occasionally.

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Automatic Door Opener: Teach Self Management Skills

- Teach “The Incredible 5 Point Scale” or “Zones of Regulation”
- Have an anchor activity of either journal writing or partner discussion first thing in the morning for each student to note where they are on the “Incredible 5 Point Scale” and then what they are going to need to do that day to help them self manage.
- Have bins of stress balls and fidgets available for use. Teach behavioral expectations (no throwing, no placing in mouth, etc.) from the beginning of the year.
- Provide a “home base” or “vacation” area for students to go when needing a short break. Teach and reinforce behavioral expectations for accessing the home base.
- Practice deep breathing with whole class
- Post “What I Can Do During Down Time” poster. Example: Jigsaw Puzzles, Read Silently, Journal Writing, Draw, Magazines, Pla-Doh. Use visuals to show options.

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Automatic Door Opener: Provide Purposeful Movement Breaks

- Have students do a short series of movements at natural transition points
- Lead a short series of Yoga poses before lunch. Choose positions that don't require a great deal of space or difficult motor planning. Good positions include: Warrior, Downward Dog, Mountain, Forward Fold.
- Post laminated handprints in the hallway for students to do wall push-ups while they wait in restroom or water fountain line.
- With younger children, have the students animal walk from location to location (bear walk, elephant walk, bunny hop, etc.)
- Incorporate kinesthetic activities into lessons (skits, role play, field trips, nature walks, etc.)

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Automatic Door Opener: Provide Visual Supports

- Post no more than 5 classroom rules
- Post the daily classroom schedule in a prominent and consistent location.
- Check off, erase, or otherwise indicate items on the classroom schedule
- Provide individual schedules for
- Provide mini-schedules for learning centers, individual work, or large group instructional periods.
- Use visual cue rings
- Use consistent color coding to indicate subjects, locations, materials, etc.
- Provide written or pictorial directions to accompany verbal directions.
- Use consistent gestures (such as “thumbs up”, “thumbs down”, “finger to lips, etc.) to accompany or replace verbal feedback.

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Automatic Door Opener: Crisis Management

- Reduce or eliminate verbal interaction.
- Give the student physical space.
- If necessary, approach student visibly from the front or side, never from behind.
- Avoid light or unexpected touch, such as a tap on the shoulder.
- Use visual cues or gestures.
- When speaking, use calm, quiet voice.
- Do not attempt to nag, oververbalize or “process” the situation with the student in the moment.

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Automatic Door Opener: Comfortable Physical Climate

- Use natural light or incandescent light
- Keep temperature moderate, allow students to use appropriate layers of clothing to adjust for personal comfort.
- Avoid scented candles, air fresheners, strong scented perfumes, lotions, hairsprays.
- Reduce auditory and visual clutter
-
- Allow personal space of at least hula hoop size for all students, if possible, but especially for students with tactile sensitivity.
- Have occupational therapist assess seat and desk sizes to ensure appropriate height and depth for age and size of students.
- Provide a “quiet corner” for students to take a break from activity or sensory input.

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Automatic Door Opener: Provide Social Emotional Support

- Teach, practice, model and reinforce kindness, respect and tolerance of others every single minute of every single day.
- Begin the year with one or two student orientation days
- Dedicate a wall space or bulletin board for recognition of “Random Acts of Kindness.”
- Create a class “Yellow Pages” that lists the students by what special talents they have to help others (“Proof-Readers,” “Artists,” etc.)
- NEVER USE SARCASM.
- Take teachable moments to model mediation and negotiation skills for students when a problem arises between peers.
- Model for students that it is ok to make mistakes or say they don’t know something by doing it yourself, regularly.
- Offer opportunities to correct work, and give academic credit for

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Automatic Door Opener: Positive Behavior Supports

- Teach behavioral expectations using the same teaching model that you would for any academic skill: Objectives, Standards, Set, Teaching, Guided Practice, Closure, Independent Practice.
- Provide meaningful incentives, recognizing that some students will have unique interests and may not be at all motivated by traditional incentives like “extra recess” or “popcorn party” and will require individualized supports.
- Provide meaningful consequences, recognizing that some students may not be concerned or may even be rewarded by traditional consequences like “missing recess” or “going to the principal” and will require individualized supports.

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Automatic Door Opener: Assess and Address Readiness

- “YES/NO” Cards: questions before moving on.
- Think/Pair/Share: Students formulate their own opinions and then discuss in pairs.
- Four Corners: The four corners of the room are labeled “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” “Strongly Disagree.”
- Card Sort: Students match cards with questions to cards with answers (examples: word cards matched with their definition cards, or math problems matched with their corresponding answer cards). The card sets may be sorted by an individual or used in a variety of games (e.g., *Concentration*) with groups of students.
- Carrousel: Chart paper labeled with key vocabulary words are placed around the room. Students move from poster to poster, adding either words or illustrations to depict each word or concept.

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Automatic Door Opener: Incorporate Student Choice and Interests

- Provide many cross-curricular opportunities for students to choose topics for writing, reading, or investigating.
- Link behavior incentives to special interests (time on the computer to study an interest, engaging in a preferred activity or hobby, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in conversation on topics of special interest.
- Incorporate special interest subjects into academic tasks (topics for reports, story problems in math, choice of manipulative, scientific inquiry, etc.).

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Automatic Door Opener: Conduct Student Orientation

- Use the first few days of school to conduct student orientation, including introduction to the classroom rules, learning locations in the room and school, and practicing daily routines.
- Set up learning stations where students to take self-assessments such as learning style assessments, multiple intelligence surveys, interest inventories, etc.
- Teach, model, and practice classroom procedures, rules, and routines.
- Teach, model, and practice acceptable voice volume, movement among locations, and handling of materials.
- Compile class “Yellow Pages” directory according to student talents and interests so that students can look up peers when needing assistance.
- Let students make personalized name tags or desk placards to help each other get to know one another’s name and interests.
- Conduct a variety of ice-breakers

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Automatic Door Opener: Support Central Coherence

- Use advance organizers
- Provide skeleton
- Provide PowerPoint handouts
- Use a variety of cooperative grouping options for activities
- Teach students a process for self-monitoring and self-checking the quality of their work.
- Use “peer buddies” to help students check each other’s work, assist one another, and provide modeling.

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Automatic Door Opener: Support Transfer and Generalization

- Use strategy sheets, cue cards, and scripts to help students remember what to do in various situations (e.g. “What to say if you don’t agree with someone?”).
- Ensure that all teachers working with the same group of students have consistent behavioral expectations and reinforcement systems.
- Teach, model, and practice the “look fors” in situations (e.g., “If all the other students are seated, I should sit down, too.”).
- Teach students to ask teachers for feedback and reinforcement if they are not certain whether they are doing the right thing.
- Provide role-playing opportunities to practice skills in a variety of contexts.
- Videotape examples and non-examples to let the class problem solve as a group.
- Prime students for expectations in new locations, experiences and activities.
- Provide opportunities to practice skills in a variety of settings, across subjects, and in different locations.

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Automatic Door Opener: Options for Perception

- Use technology to customize font style and size, contrast of print to background to make materials easily modifiable for different students.
- Provide software that enables students to hear text being read aloud to them through text-to-speech options (e.g., Write Out Loud, www.donjohnston.com; Kurzweil 3000, www.kurzweiledu.com).
- Provide word processing option for written expression to allow for word prediction, text to speech “read back,” and grammar and spell check.
- Provide personal or classwide amplification systems to “pop” the teacher’s voice above the ambient noise in the classroom.
- Use a Smartboard (www.smarttech.com) to allow for large, easily seen, interactive visual support during instruction.
- Use document cameras
- Provide the option of the student dictating lengthy written assignments rather than writing/typing them

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Automatic Door Opener: Clarification of Symbols and Language

- Pre-assess and pre-teach new vocabulary prior to each unit.
- Explicitly teach any new symbols that will be used in a lesson.
- Teach, model, and practice the use of context clues.
- Teach, model, and practice structural analysis.
- Explain double meanings, figurative expressions, clichés, sarcasm, idioms, hyperbole, etc., as they are encountered in books, articles, films, etc.
- Use advance/graphic organizers to teach concepts like sentence structure, paragraph formation, summaries, etc.
- Use color coding or highlighting to indicate types of words, key words, and concepts, etc.
- Provide keys to frequently symbols and teach key words to remember in connection with symbols and their functions

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Automatic Door Opener: Options for Comprehension

- Use multimedia materials
- Provide background experience prior to instruction
- Use graphic organizers to help students make connections between concepts.
- Ask guiding questions to lead students
- Provide manipulatives and hands-on experimentation with concepts.
- Use examples and non-examples to illustrate concepts.

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Automatic Door Opener: Options for Physical Action

- Wide aisles to allow for ease of movement, including students who use adaptive equipment, such as standing frames, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.
- Provide a variety of positional options for work tasks.
- Provide options for interacting with materials (hands, mouse, joystick, switch, keyboard, etc.).
- Provide options for responding (bell instead of raising hand, voice output device rather than speaking)
- Provide dictation apps for students with fine-motor limitations for lengthy written assignments.
- Provide collaborative group activities where students with physical limitations can still participate fully in development of the product.
- Keep necessary materials within easy reach for all who may need to access them.

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Automatic Door Opener:

Options for Expression/Communication

- Provide multi-media options for students to create projects that demonstrate knowledge
- Teach, model, and practice the use of advance/graphic organizers as a prewriting tool to brainstorm, organize, and prioritize ideas.
- Allow the use of technology to support written expression with word prediction, speech-to-text apps, spelling and grammar check, etc.
- Provide various learning style options for student products (skits, timelines, charts, graphs, musical numbers, posters, collages, PowerPoint, diorama, collections, etc.).
- Encourage and respond enthusiastically to the student's mode of communication (verbal communication, sign language, voice output devices, pictures).

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Automatic Door Opener:

Options for Executive Function

- Provide student agendas.
- Teach students about personal goal setting.
- Provide students with charts and checklists to assist them in monitoring their progress.
- Teach, model, and practice strategies for prioritizing tasks.
- Post suggested activities that students can engage in between tasks
- Provide students with graphic organizers (skeleton outlines, PowerPoint handouts and/or other teacher-created note-taking templates).
- Provide students detailed rubrics to be used for evaluation of assigned work.

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Automatic Door Opener: Recruit Interest

- Start lessons with a highly interesting and engaging activity, question, video, or brainteaser to intrigue, engage, and motivate learners.
- Allow students to choose topics that interest them whenever possible.
- When content is non-negotiable, allow students options for showing their knowledge
- Use instructional examples that are relevant to the students' age, gender, culture, and interests.
- Provide a wide variety of groupings
- Provide consistency in structure, routine, classroom organization, and behavioral expectations.
- Prime students for changes to lessen anxiety.

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Automatic Door Opener: Support Sustained Effort and Persistence

- Practice individual and class-wide goal setting.
- Use “I Can statements
- Encourage the use of “peer buddies” to support and monitor work completion and quality.
- Incorporate student interests and learning styles in tasks.
- Provide many different options for independent and collaborative work.
- Provide incentives for task completion
- Consider using learning contracts.
- Provide regular, informative feedback in many forms (verbal, written, visual example, etc.).
- Give positive feedback and incentives for persistence, improvement, corrections, and attitude.

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Automatic Door Opener: Support Self Regulation

- Model problem-solving
- Model analysis of social situations.
- Consider using a teaching method/curriculum for identifying emotions, expressing them, and responding to them in appropriate ways
- Use peers to model and reinforce appropriate interactions, responses, and reactions.
- Proactively schedule breaks.
- Teach appropriate and acceptable options for handling emotional escalation
- Teach and reinforce students' methods for monitoring their self-management
- Provide incentives for making good choices in

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References and Resources

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