Hi and welcome to week 2 wrap up of the Autism MOOC

This week we focussed on communication and the thinking skill ‘define’. We started the week with videos by Dean Sutherland who gave us an insight to communication strategies for children and adults with autism. Many of you intertwined the perspective given by Dean into your responses for the scenarios.

The first activity was split into three scenarios for you to choose from. The scenarios were familiar to many of you, with common themes of alternative modes of communication, literal interpretation and social skill development being mentioned across group discussion.

Following person first in the thinking skills we are developing, there is Step 2: ‘Define’ the solution. The process of defining requires you to look at the situation from the "person first" approach and then choose one of those solutions based on the new information you have received by putting yourself in their shoes.

Define is slightly more difficult than person first, but the best way to practice this thinking skill is to think diversely of 8-10 person first perspectives, then using what you know about autism and the person you are supporting, you decide which of the person first perspectives you are going to use.

The second activity where you had the chance to share about your experience in relation to this week’s topic was a privilege to read. Such as this post:

“I have a son (3 years old) he doesn't speak and he doesn't play with his toys (the usual ways) neither make friends (was diagnosed over a year ago) He is a pretty smart child. I’m with you. I think is good that we push them to play in an usual way or to have friends or to paint with crayons (in my case my son doesn't like it :))) ) but the best thing is to let them be who they are and encourage them to do what they love to, at the moment that they are happy we can help them the most and teach them new approaches in life"
We have decided since reading your incredibly inspirational posts and discussions over the past two weeks that we will be collating more and sharing these in additional resources in the weeks to come.

Many of you are integrating and connecting the thinking skills with the videos and weekly content in your discussions demonstrating the depth of your critical thinking, which is fantastic to see.

For those wanting to extend their learning, we have additional videos and resources each week. This week, Connie Buckingham explores communication through one approach to social skills. There are many approaches to social skill development and Connie demonstrates one way of integrating social skills for children with Autism. Connie’s video is in the Additional Resources folder.

As you go about your day to day this week, think about how you are putting the person with autism first and put yourself in their shoes by thinking of all the perspectives, then, define the challenge you are going to work on so you can be as supportive as possible.

What a week of wonderful participation. Congratulations to all of you. We have really enjoyed seeing all of your contributions. Keep it up and continue to be positive and supportive of each other. We look forward to seeing you in week 3, which is the half way mark for the Autism MOOC. Take care and have a great week everyone.

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