

# FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION (FCT)

SUNRISE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

## A PARENT'S GUIDE

### WHAT IS FCT ?

FCT IS AN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

- THE FCT PROCESS INVOLVES:
  - IDENTIFYING AN INTERFERING BEHAVIOR (THAT IS, A CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR THAT INTERFERES WITH THE LEARNER'S ABILITY TO INTERACT AND LEARN),
  - DETERMINING WHAT THE LEARNER IS TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH THAT BEHAVIOR (SUCH AS NEEDING HELP, WANTING A BREAK, WANTING ATTENTION, ETC.), AND
  - TEACHING THE LEARNER A MORE ACCEPTABLE WAY TO COMMUNICATE THAT NEED.

### WHY USE FCT WITH MY CHILD?

- FCT IS HELPFUL FOR LEARNERS WITH SOCIAL COMMUNICATION DEFICITS AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS BECAUSE IT PROVIDES A MORE ACCEPTABLE FORM OF COMMUNICATION THAT ENABLES THE LEARNER TO ACHIEVE THE SAME DESIRED OUTCOME.
- SOME OF THE PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED BY FCT INCLUDE: AGGRESSION AND SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIORS, TANTRUMS, RUNNING AWAY, AND/OR DISRUPTION.

### WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO AT HOME?

- THINK ABOUT CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS YOUR CHILD EXHIBITS AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION, AND TRY TO IDENTIFY OTHER WAYS YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE ABLE COMMUNICATE THAT NEED.
- WHEN TRYING TO DEVELOP AN ALTERNATIVE WAY FOR YOUR CHILD TO COMMUNICATE A NEED (SUCH AS ASKING FOR A BREAK OR REQUESTING A FAVORITE TOY), THINK OF THE SIMPLEST AND EASIEST WAY FOR YOUR CHILD TO COMMUNICATE THAT NEED AT THE BEGINNING.
- REMEMBER TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD OR PROVIDE REINFORCEMENT WHEN YOUR CHILD USES A MORE APPROPRIATE FORM OF COMMUNICATION TO GET HIS OR HER NEEDS MET (SUCH AS ASKING FOR A PREFERRED ACTIVITY INSTEAD OF SCREAMING).