

# ► Premier HealthCare

## Different. Better.

### Fear Me Not

A Transdisciplinary Approach to Successful Medical and Dental Services for Patients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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**YAI** Seeing beyond disability.



PHC is a member of the YAI network.



# Session Summary

This session will explore a transdisciplinary person-centered approach to supporting patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Attendees will learn strategies to manage fear, anxiety, sensory, cognitive, and behavioral challenges that impact patients' abilities to successfully complete medical and dental appointments.

# Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, attendees will be able to:

1. Identify key challenges faced by patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in medical and dental settings and describe how a transdisciplinary approach improves patient outcomes.
2. Apply effective desensitization/learning techniques and communication strategies to reduce fear and anxiety in patients with I/DD.
3. Implement collaborative strategies between medical, dental, and behavioral health professionals to improve access to and success in healthcare services for patients with I/DD.



# **Seeing beyond disability.**

- YAI (Young Adult Institute) is non-profit organization that was founded in 1957. YAI and its network of affiliates provide support and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan

## **Premier HealthCare**

A member of the YAI Network.

## **National Institute for People with Disabilities of New Jersey**

A member of the YAI Network.

## **Manhattan Star Academy**

A member of the YAI Network.

## **iHOPE**

A member of the YAI Network.



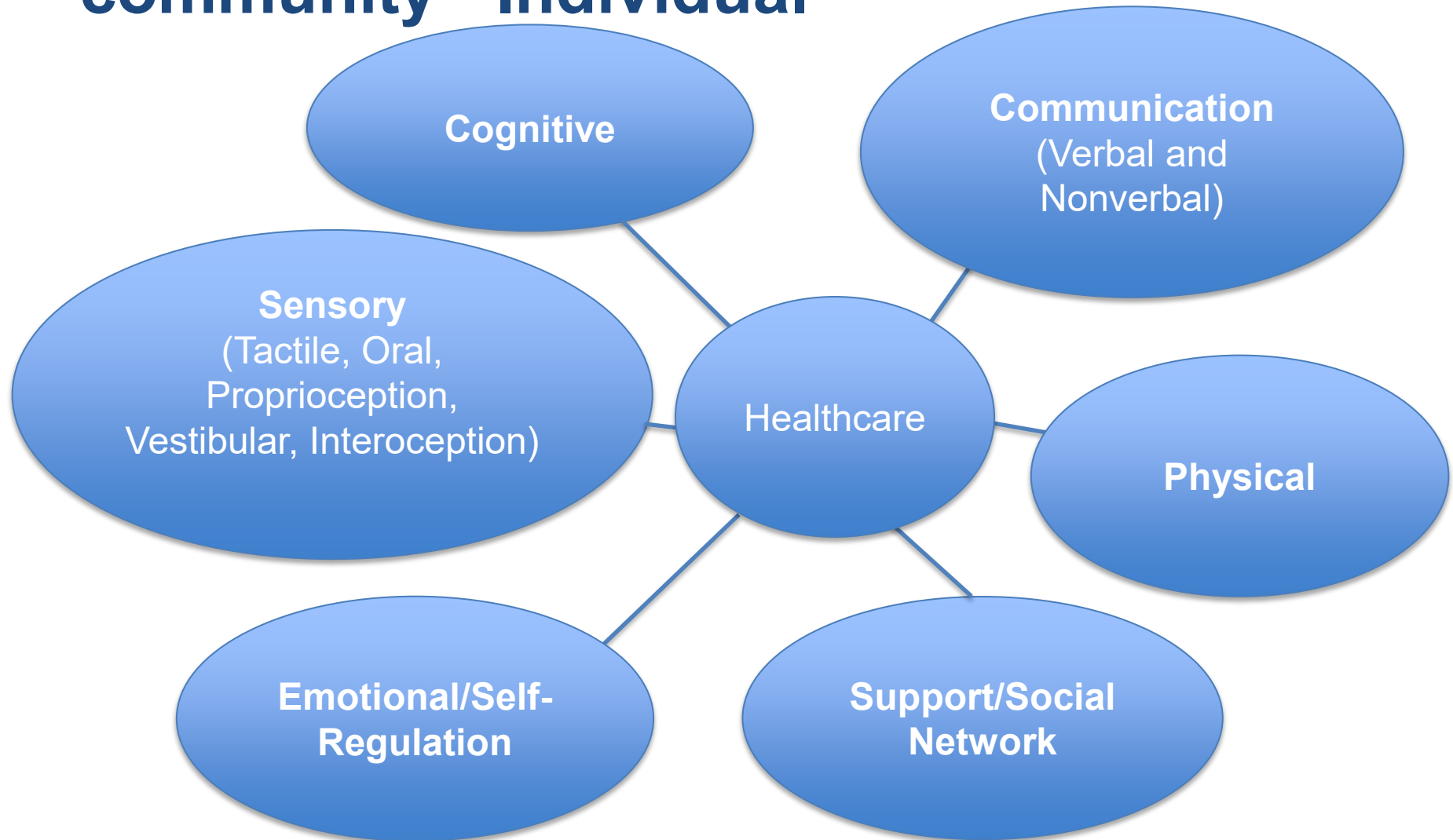
# Premier HealthCare

- Serves as a Patient-Centered Medical Home where all specialties collaborate to deliver care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)
- Opened in 1994, Premier now serves over 8,000 people with I/DD every year in outpatient clinics
- 4 accessible locations (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens) offering:
  - Primary Care
  - Dentistry
  - Psychiatry
  - Neurology
  - Dermatology
  - Endocrinology
  - Ophthalmology
  - Podiatry
  - Mental Health Services
  - Nutrition
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
  - Prosthetics and Orthotics
  - Audiology
  - Speech Language Pathology

# Try to Relax...

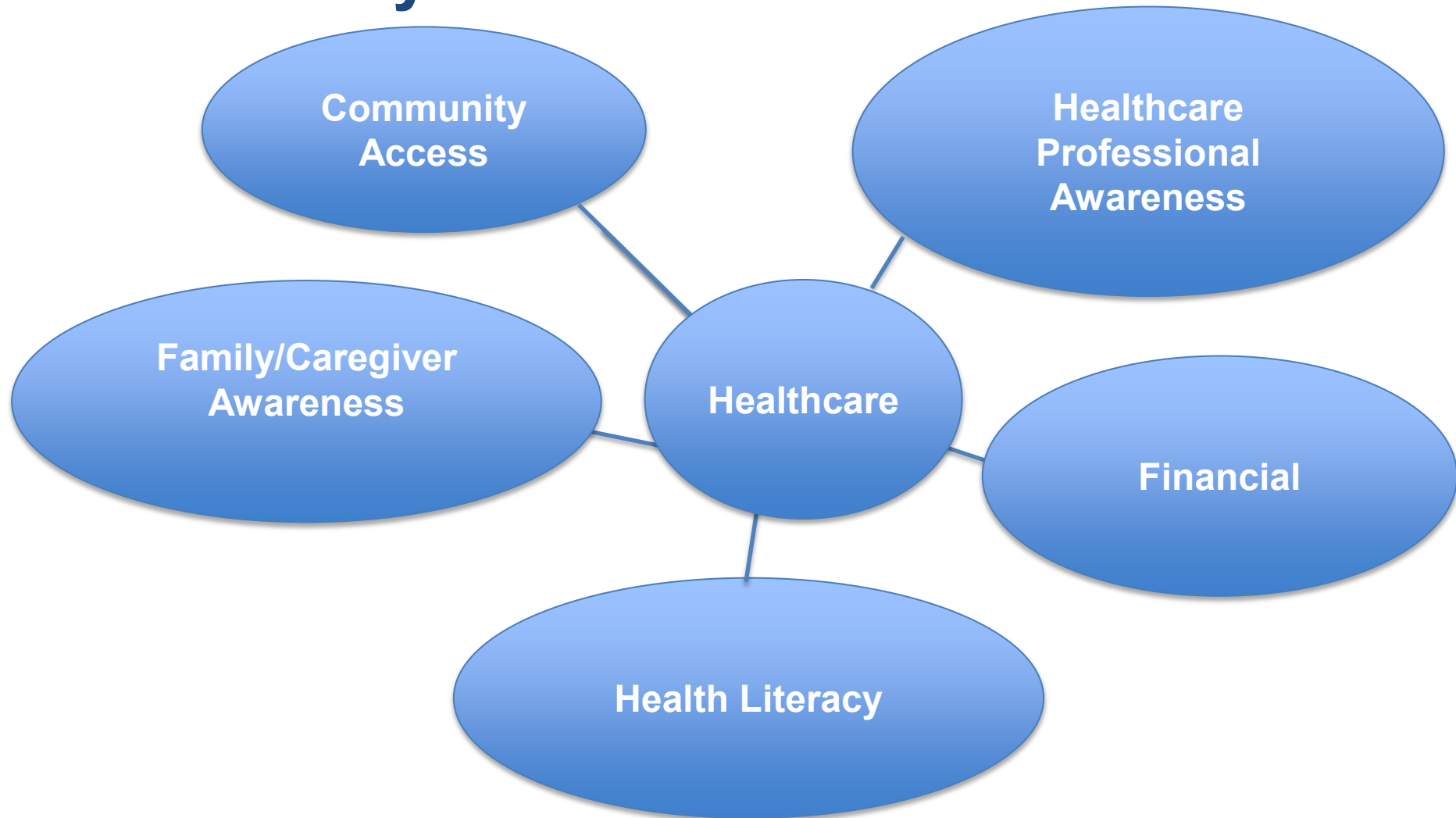


# Barriers to Healthcare access for I/DD community - Individual





# Barriers to Healthcare access for I/DD community - Environmental





*Coming Together is a Beginning,  
Keeping Together is Progress,  
Working Together is Success*

- Henry Ford



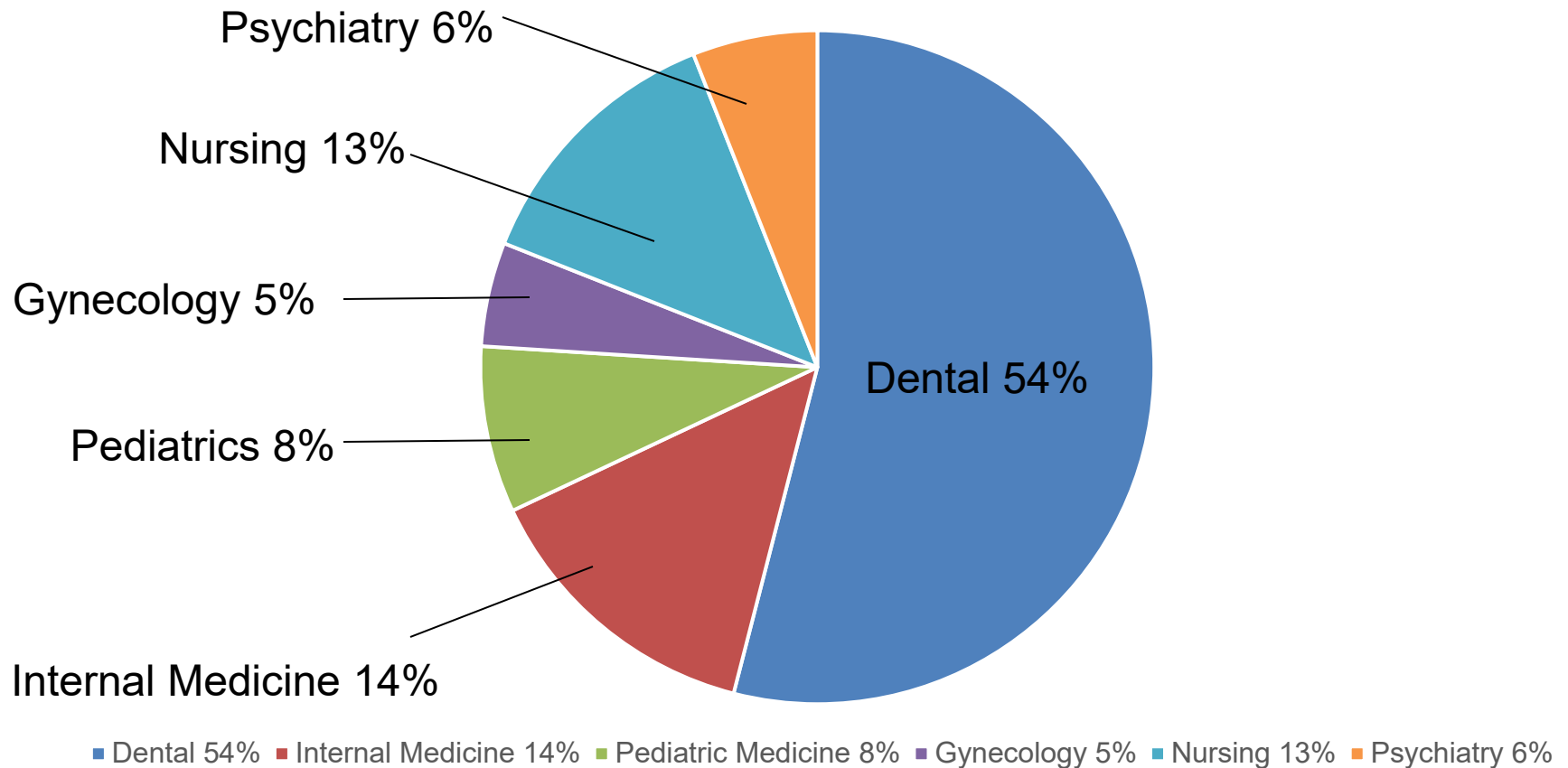
# How it started...1997-2011

- A team of patients and parents, along with practitioners from Nursing, Dentistry, Medical, Behavioral Health, and Occupational Therapy at Premier worked together to learn to help patients overcome fears and anxiety related to dental/medical procedures
- Aim was to increase patients' comfort level and cooperation during clinic visits and decrease the use of restraints



# PHC Needs Survey

Total # of Patients Selected Per Discipline/Service for Desensitization



# Shift in Approach

- Resistance, Refusal, and Crisis situations led to transdisciplinary approach
- Reactive ➡ Proactive & Reactive
- Have a plan for both



# Transdisciplinary Approach in Healthcare

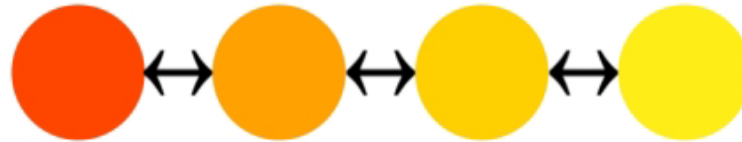
*"Fully **dissolving traditional boundaries** by crossing disciplinary paradigms and integration knowledge and perspectives from scientific and non-scientific sources alike to develop **more holistic approaches** that bridge ecosystem and human health boundaries"*

Choi, B. C., & Pak, A. W. (2006). Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 1. Definitions, objectives, and evidence of effectiveness. *Clinical and investigative medicine. Medecine clinique et experimentale*, 29(6), 351–364.

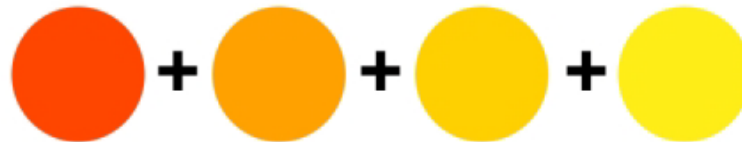
# Transdisciplinary vs Interdisciplinary vs Multidisciplinary



**Trans-Disciplinary - Higher Level Synthesis**



**Inter-Disciplinary - Interactive**



**Multi-Disciplinary - Additive**



**Disciplinary - Silos**

Source: <https://rivandipputra.wordpress.com/2017/04/22/transdisciplinary-approach-as-the-best-tool-to-deal-with-complex-environmental-problems-case-study-from-worlds-global-warming/>



# Transdisciplinary Approach

Behavioral Health      Family      Medical      Physical Therapy

Support staff      Patient      Dental

Occupational Therapy      Nursing

Speech Language Pathology



# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques

- Relaxation
- Modeling
- Reinforcement
- Counting
- Simple Requests
- Self-Control
- Distraction
- Gradual Exposure
- Re-cap and Closure







# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques



## RELAXATION

- Deep breathing
- Soothing music
- Touch/massage therapy
- Atmosphere
  - Physical environment (reception, treatment room)
  - Tone of voice

## MODELING

- Tell-Show-Do
  1. Tell patient what will happen
  2. Show through modeling on yourself, patient, or someone else (i.e. family, doll)
  3. Perform procedure
- Video recording
  - Watch person/peer/self similar to patient undergo procedure

# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques



## REINFORCEMENT

- Reinforcers
  - Activities, items, etc. identified as preferable & effective
- Rewards for positive or desirable behavior
  - Stickers, trip to favorite restaurant, toy, praise, etc.
  - Work with patient, parent, sibling, service providers to select and offer agreed upon rewards

## COUNTING

- Establishes trust between provider and patient (do as you say and do)
- Gives patient concrete time frame of how long procedure will last
- "I am going to ask you to open your mouth wide for 5 seconds. Let's count: 1, 2..."



# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques



## SIMPLE REQUESTS

- Begin with requests that are easily accomplished & have a high probability of success
- Take small steps to build confidence then move towards more difficult requests
- Ex: "Let's count your fingers first" and then "Let's count your teeth"

## SHARED CONTROL

- Giving patient tools to give input
- Establish partnership with person/develop rapport
  - Communicate
  - Active Listening
  - Offer simple choices
- Respect patient's cues or withdrawal
- "Do you want the blue or yellow gloves?"
- "You are saying\_\_\_\_, and I hear your concerns"
- "Tell me when you want to take a break"



# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques



## DISTRACTION

- Music
- Video/TV
- Humor
- Looking in mirror
- Games
- Therapeutic Use of Self

## GRADUAL EXPOSURE

- Start in less threatening environment or with less threatening equipment
  - Therapy room, colorful plastic tools
- Gradually increase exposure to anxiety-provoking stimulus until actual medical/dental procedures are successfully completed

# Tool Kit of Learning Techniques



## Recap

- Review (verbal, non-verbal, visual) achievements
- End on a good note
  - Take a smiling photo with provider
- Goal is to have patient come back
- Adjust approach for next visit to accommodate patient needs and build success
  - Change sequence of steps, add additional visual of new tool, etc.

# Goals of Transdisciplinary HealthCare approach

- **Maintain optimal health by attending medical/dental visits**
- **Improve tolerance to sensations and healthcare procedures**
- **Increase comfort/acceptance/cooperative responses**
- **Strengthen communication and coping skills**
- **Reduce anxiety and fear responses**
- **Decrease avoidance of health care visits**
- **Decrease the use of sedation and restraint**
- **Provide education about resistive behaviors (avoiding, escaping, crying, aggression, destroying property) and alternative effective interventions**

# Intervention Process

- Keep momentum going!
- Treatment frequency
  - Medical – as needed
  - Dental – every 3 months
  - OT and Behavioral Health 1-2x/week
    - Build skills and improve tolerance to procedures to work towards medical and dental visits



# Sensory & Modeling Tools





# Dental Set-up



# Dental Room and Panoramic Machine



# Real Results from a transdisciplinary team approach – Case Study



- Meet Adam\*!
- Loving with a great sense of humor
- Very supportive family
- Dental at PHC > 10 years
- Also receives weekly OT and psychotherapy

\*Name changed


















# Real Results from a Team-Based Approach – Case study



# Adam's Tool kit

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Today I see **Allison**  to practice at the dentist

- ☐ 1. Sit in chair 
- ☐ 2. Bib  & Light 
- ☐ 3. Brush and floss teeth   
- ☐ 4. Count teeth 
- ☐ 5. Water and air 
- ☐ 6. Polisher  
- ☐ 7. Sponge brush and foam  
- ☐ 8. X-ray  

ALL DONE – I DID GREAT! 😊



# Evolution of appts



- Initially, wouldn't sit in dental chair
- Exploration of dental room
- Avoidance
- Oral aversion: chocolate milk sips
- Flow/building momentum: time spent on "breaks" vs procedures
- Progress: partial vs full mouth cleaning, x-rays
- Patient's perspective: more comfortable with procedures and provider
- Ultimate goal is to complete medical and dental appts with servicing provider and patient's toolkit

# Small wins lead to big breakthroughs





# Adam's Success

- Slow is fast
- Trust grows through predictability and positive experiences





# Future Direction for Transdisciplinary Healthcare

- Further develop processes to increase collaborative team effort
- Integrate technology with interventions
  - iPads, apps, VR, etc.
- Develop parent & practitioner education and training modules

# Resources

- Sensory Overload (documentary):  
<https://www.vox.com/ad/396458/sensory-overload-new-documentary-trailer>
- Youtube (videos of medical/dental visits, specific procedures)
- Social stories/pictures
  - <https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/healthcare/social-stories-for-going-to-the-dentist/>
  - <https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/healthcare/visual-supports-for-hospital-visits/>
  - Make your own! (personalized, specific to patient)

# Conclusion

- One size does not fit all
- Personalized patient-centered care
- Slow and steady wins the race
- TEAMWORK!



# References

- Babalola,T., Sanguedolce,G., Dipper,L., & Botting,N. (2024). Barriers and Facilitators of Healthcare Access for Autistic Children in the UK: a Systemic Review. *Review Journal ofAutism and Developmental Disorders*, Springer, University of London,UK. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40489-023-00420-3>
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- Choi BC, Pak AW. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 1. Definitions, objectives, and evidence of effectiveness. *Clin Invest Med*. 2006 Dec;29(6):351-64. PMID: 17330451.

# Contact information

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**THANK YOU!!**