

Intensive Multidisciplinary Treatment of Neurodevelopmental Impairments in a Private Educational Setting

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Anova Education & Behavior
Consultation

Anova Education & Behavior Consultation

A nonprofit, charitable corporation providing Behavioral and Educational consultation in the San Francisco Bay Area and throughout Northern California.

Anova Education & Behavior Consultation

- ❖ Behavior Analysis services
- ❖ Diagnostic & Therapy Services
 - ❖ Occupational Therapy
 - ❖ Speech & language services
 - ❖ Counseling
- ❖ **The Anova Center for Education**

Anova Center for Education



A comprehensive community resource for the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders and related conditions.

Anova Center for Education



Serving children and teens (ages 5 through 18) diagnosed with High Functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Emotional Problems, Learning Disabilities and other Neurocognitive Impairments.

A Specialized Learning Environment



- ❖ Sensory integration difficulties
- ❖ Specific learning disabilities
- ❖ Problem behaviors
- ❖ Impairments in social cognition

Anova Center for Education

- ❖ A unique academic, social and communication-based program
- ❖ A multidisciplinary team of professionals
- ❖ Customized classroom, study, therapy and leisure environments

Academic program



Academic program

- ❖ Highly individualized
- ❖ Meets State standards
- ❖ Uses State adopted text books & curricula
- ❖ Multi-sensory approaches to education



Academic program



State-of-the-art adaptive technology:

- ❖ Multiple laptops per classroom
- ❖ State-of-the-art educational software
- ❖ Video modeling techniques

Classroom Management



Classroom Management

Our student population is challenged by a combination of:

- ❖ Sensory modulation difficulties
- ❖ Limited or atypical academic abilities
- ❖ Socially awkward or socially avoidant interpersonal skills.

Classroom Management

Fundamentals for a proper learning environment:

- ❖ Our students do not engage in misbehavior because they are 'bad'. Any misbehavior is primarily a function of their disability.
- ❖ The ACE School is a place where students are not punished or treated poorly because they have a disability.

Classroom Management

Fundamentals for a proper learning environment:

- ❖ The job of the ACE School staff is not to judge students who display a problem behavior but instead to determine why it occurs and how we can help the student to meet that need in a pro-social way.
- ❖ The ACE School staff allow the power of praise, rewards and incentives to shape student behavior rather than relying on negative consequences.

Classroom Management

Fundamentals for a proper learning environment:

- ❖ Teach students pivotal replacement behaviors that can be used in a variety of situations and community settings (e.g. asking questions, seeking out help, recognizing their own sensory overload)
- ❖ Students at the ACE School are encouraged to succeed not only as individuals, but to assist their fellow students to succeed as well.

Classroom Management

Behavior Analysis services

- ❖ Classroom management consultation
- ❖ Individualized Functional Analysis Assessments & Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
- ❖ Clinical meetings / troubleshooting
- ❖ Data analysis & adjustments to plans
- ❖ In-service Training

Reinforcement systems



- ❖ School-wide reinforcement system targeting:
- ❖ Participation in class
- ❖ Completion of academic activities
- ❖ Expected behavior

Reinforcement systems

Points, stars, or Anova Dollars may be redeemed for specific activity reinforcers during “personal time”



Multiple Layers of Incentives

- Student store
- Extra attention from preferred staff
- Individual behavior contracts
- Highly prized duties (e.g. Line leader)
- Prize boxes
- Special activities or parties
- Social acknowledgement in front of the class

Multiple Layers of Incentives

- ❖ Reinforcement for demonstration of social cognition skills
- ❖ Staff reinforce acts of kindness and ‘thinking of others’ in the school and community
- ❖ Thinking of others tickets are earned toward a weekly raffle

Multiple Layers of Incentives

Staff provide frequent and positive feedback, encouragement, and praise, characterized by:

- ❖ Sincerity and credibility
- ❖ Providing specific reminders and frequent opportunities for good behavior
- ❖ Highlighting the importance and value of the student's social and academic achievement

Multiple Layers of Incentives

- ❖ Attributing success to effort and ability, which implies that similar successes can be expected in the future
- ❖ Encouraging students to recognize that they behave well because they are capable and desire to do so, not because of fear of negative consequences

Occupational Therapy



Occupational Therapy

Specialized treatment to address complex sensory modulation difficulties:

- ❖ Sensory defensiveness
- ❖ Impaired perception
- ❖ Impaired visual-motor control
- ❖ Impaired ability to plan and produce a sequence of actions

Occupational Therapy & Behavior

Defensiveness

- ❖ Outbursts
- ❖ Self-injury
- ❖ Avoidance responses
- ❖ Hypervigilance

Modulation problems

- ❖ Distractibility
- ❖ Self-stimulation
- ❖ Difficulty with transitions
- ❖ Shutting down

Occupational Therapy & Behavior

Registration problems

- ❖ Delayed responses
- ❖ Heightened auditory & visual sensitivity
- ❖ Sluggish proprioceptive system

Impaired integration

- ❖ Poor motor planning
- ❖ Impaired balance
- ❖ Poor protective responses
- ❖ Inadequate sense of own body

Occupational Therapy Interventions

The OT perspective:

Sensory processing is integral to all behavior

Interpreting behavior from a sensory perspective helps to identify sensory needs that drive behavior and maladaptive responses

Occupational Therapy Interventions

The OT perspective:

Improved sensory processing results in improved behavior, interaction, and learning

Strong sensation can be used to influence the efficiency of sensory processing

Integrating OT in the classroom



- ❖ Theraballs
- ❖ Fidgets
- ❖ Flexible schedules and seating
- ❖ Sensory diet activities
- ❖ Swings and equipment

Occupational Therapy Clinic



Specially designed
Clinic space:

- ❖ Mature motor planning
- ❖ Coordinated use of both sides of the body

Occupational Therapy Clinic

- ❖ Balance
- ❖ Eye-hand coordination
- ❖ Body awareness
- ❖ Visual perception



Social Cognition Training

Our students experience profound deficits in social cognition that limit their ability to take the perspective of others in social situations. The combination of a bright and verbally expressive child with social cognition impairments often leads to serious emotional and behavioral problems, particularly around school environments.

Social Cognition Training

Often viewed as eccentric or odd

Frequently become the victims of teasing and bullying

Display deficits in pragmatics and prosody

Can be extremely literal and have difficulties utilizing language in a social context

Social Cognition Training

Intra-personal abilities include:

- ❖ an individual's affective range and intensity
- ❖ the ability to discriminate among emotions
- ❖ the ability to label their emotions appropriately
- ❖ the ability to use them to guide their actions

Interpersonal abilities include:

- ❖ the ability to decode the underlying feelings, intentions, and motivations of others
- ❖ to recognize specific characteristics of others (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity)
- ❖ to influence others to behave in desired ways.

Social Cognition Training

The ACE School utilizes a cognitive behavioral approach in assisting students to understand and cope with their needs regarding interpersonal skills. Complex and nuanced social issues are broken down and made more concrete to increase student comprehension for use in their daily lives.

Thinking of Others curriculum

- ❖ Based on the work of Michelle Garcia-Winner
- ❖ Vocabulary: Think, Know & Guess
- ❖ Thinking about other people and how they think of you
- ❖ Whole Body Listening
- ❖ Flexible Brain
- ❖ Social Inferencing: Learning to read situations
- ❖ Understanding that your behaviors affect other people and how they react to you
- ❖ Use of humor
- ❖ Social Behavior Mapping

Social Cognition in the Classroom

- ❖ The Ace School program emphasizes fairness and allows for flexibility in application of consequences for rule violations.
- ❖ Staff help students to recognize that each student has their own unique set of behavioral and educational needs and though not all students are treated identically, all are treated fairly. Staff maintain an equal balance of attention, praise and opportunity for rewards for all students.

Social Cognition in the Classroom

- ❖ Staff reinforce acts of kindness and ‘thinking of others’ in the school and community.
- ❖ Staff facilitate recognition of expected vs. unexpected behaviors and the consequences of each



Social Cognition in the Clinic



Perspective taking groups

- ❖ Groups are generally between 3-4 participants
- ❖ Grouped by comparable social cognition skills
- ❖ Sessions once weekly for one hour
- ❖ Flexibility within planned activities

Future Directions

Enhance services to our community

Social Cognition research & publication

Psychometric assessment of social performance

Individual and group therapy integrating social cognition, self-acceptance and behavior change

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