

NOT ALL BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

DISINHIBITION PART 2: APRAXIC
NONSPEAKERS AND COMMUNICATION
RIGHTS

swipe
to learn

ADVOCACY THAT DOES NOT CONSIDER THOSE WHO ARE MOST MARGINALIZED IS TOXIC.

Those who are at most risk need to be considered first in everything we do.

People without access to reliable communication, minoritized racial and ethnic populations, and people with serious medical conditions are at high risk of being misinterpreted as dangerous and being badly injured or experiencing loss of life because of the widespread-but-inaccurate belief that all behavior is communication.

If someone does not have reliable communication, and they have any signs of disinhibition, the need to get them reliable communication is urgent.

There is not enough urgency because too many people believe that all behavior is communication that they can always accurately interpret and address with behavioral interventions.

This includes therapists and educators from ALL FIELDS. Do not make this an “ABA” thing because the problems are systemic and even exist in autistic self-advocacy. Let's focus on solutions that are actually NeuroInclusive.

NO, YOU CAN'T ALWAYS RELY ON YOUR INSTINCTS.

Yes, it's devastating that we have to wonder if our nonspeaking, minimally-speaking, and unreliably-speaking apraxic children and adult neurokin are communicating or if they're just saying or doing things they don't want to say or do because of disinhibition.

But we're not going to pretend nonspeaking apraxic people with motor disinhibition don't exist because it's convenient for pre-packaged narratives that don't work for them.



WHEN APRAXIC NONSPEAKERS GET COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS THAT WORK FOR THOSE WITH MOTOR PLANNING DEFICITS AND DISINHIBITION, THEY COMMUNICATE LOUDLY AND CLEARLY:

From Sabrina Guerra

I lack the ability to make my body respond to my will. I often pay for that through others believing I wish for things I don't, am ignorant of things I am not, and think or feel things far from the truth. Please ask me for the reason you seek.

DON'T READ TREVOR'S BEHAVIOR AS COMMUNICATION

Simply looking at me gives you exactly zero information about who I am. If you saw me at the store, you would see my stimmy hands and hear my scripts and think I am stupid. If you actually got to know me, you would realize I am a snarky, smart teenager operating a body of a fool. My brain and body don't talk well to each other. It is like they run different operating systems. The idea that people can be mentally competent but struggle to control their body is completely normal when we talk about someone who gets injured or has a stroke. This is not true when people think about autism. Apraxia does not discriminate, so neither should we when we assign the possibility of intelligence to humans.

-From Trevor Byrd

RESPECT WYATT'S SPELLED WORDS:

I keep speaking “all done” when I mean “love to get to work.” I would really like to be doing piano lessons. I would really like to be doing lessons for school and helping with chores. But instead, I shout ALL DONE and get stressed over not being able to control my body. “Make me get to work,” I shout. “Make me have a good life.” But nobody listens. It is all in my head. This makes me so frustrated. I so like to be learning and busy. I have big plans for my life. My life can be so full of amazing stuff.

–Wyatt T. Dutton

"HALLELUJAH" FOR COMMUNICATION CHOICE!

The first time I met the principal at my school, I chanted, "Hallelujah!" loudly in his face. Kind of putting a lot of meaning to it, he said, "I'm flattered." If I'd had my letterboard with me, I would likely have said, "Trust my finger, not my speech." Same as a Deaf person. I hate how my intelligence is judged by how I speak.

This perception is not helped by the nonsense that falls out of my mouth. Just now, while writing that sentence about Deaf people, I clearly said aloud, "The boy is riding a bicycle." Total ABA flashback. There are no boys or bikes anywhere near me. That doesn't mean that I'm stupid or that I'm thinking about boys or bikes. What it does mean is that I'm like a parrot on steroids with the world's best memory.

-Ashna

LISTEN
TO
ASHNA

WILLIAM ILLUSTRATES HOW EASY IT IS FOR OTHERS TO BELIEVE HIS DISINHIBITION IS COMMUNICATION:



TRUST
MY
LETTER-
BOARD
VOICE

Sometimes my speech says one thing and my letterboard voice says another. This afternoon, my speech said “Yes” to mom’s offer to give me a snack, but my letterboard voice said, “I don’t need one.” Though she knows to trust my letterboard voice, I still saw her hesitate to trust what I typed. To be fair, though, I’m not one to turn down a snack. But aren’t we all entitled to change our routines?

–William

NOT ALWAYS COMMUNICATION

How can you know if your apraxic nonspeaking children, clients, or students are actually communicating what they want?

You can't for sure until you get them reliable communication.

The teens and youth quoted in the aforementioned slides are not outliers. Most nonspeakers spell the same things over and over and over.

Why do all nonspeakers not have access to reliable communication?

Because the autism intervention industry is relying on their "gold standard" buzzword slogans like "ALL BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION" to keep control of the narrative.

You have been the free advertisement for that.

I used to be free advertisement, too. I didn't know better, either.

So we have to work together, as a community, to center communication rights for those with motor planning deficits and disinhibition.

WHAT DOES WORK?

That's for the next slideshow.

What's coming:

- What works for learners with motor disinhibition and why we are not already doing what works [spoiler alert: it's pesky academic cronyism]
- Motor loops, compulsive self-harm, hypersexuality, and intrusive thoughts
- How well-intentioned professionals ruin lives by mistaking disinhibition for communication
- How medical conditions like autoimmune inflammation, epilepsy, and meningitis often get mistaken for autism and are left untreated
- How trauma, shame, and behavior-based interventions impact people with disinhibition
- More based on your questions and comments... what do you want to know more about? Let us know in the comments!

