**STEPPS: Supporting a Growth Mindset for Learners on the Autism Spectrum**

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**Growth Mindset**

“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishments.”

• (Dweck, 2015)

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**Characteristics of Mindset**

**Fixed**
- I am what I am...and can’t change.
- Believe talent is inherent and unchangeable.
- Don’t recognize the value of effort.
- Fear failure or looking dumb.
- Avoid situations that result in a threat to self image.
- Are reluctant to do things outside their comfort zone/interest areas.
- Give up easily when not immediately successful or when something requires hard work.

**Growth**
- Believe that intelligence and talent grows and develops.
- Believe that effort has an effect on success.
- Recognize challenge as opportunity.
- Look forward to new challenges and experiences.
- Seek out help and look for ways to improve.
- Can and do persevere when things require hard work.

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**Characteristics of Autism that Can Interfere with Growth Mindset**

- Difficulty with Central Coherence
- Difficulty with Theory of Mind
- Restricted Interests, Activities and Patterns of Behavior
- Challenges with Executive Function

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Applying Evidence Based Practices for Autism to Support Growth Mindset

- Schedules of Reinforcement
- Task Analysis
- Emotional Self-Management Support
- Positive Behavioral Momentum
- Peer Mediated Interventions
- Scripting

Schedules of Reinforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Interval</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Fixed Reinforcement after a fixed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>number of responses.</td>
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<td>Variable</td>
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<td>Fixed Reinforcement after a fixed</td>
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Task Analysis

- The process of breaking down a complex skill into smaller, more manageable components.
- Analyzing the sub-components of a task for those which the student has mastered, and those which must be taught and reinforced.
- Considering the difference between skill deficits and performance deficits on each of the sub-components of the task.

Emotional Self-management

- How a person recognizes and controls their emotional reactions, impulses, resources, and abilities.
  - Recognition and Reflection
  - Trustworthiness and Conscientiousness
  - Adaptability and Resilience
  - Innovation and Perspective-Taking
  - (Daniel Goleman, “Emotional Intelligence”)

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Positive Behavioral Momentum

- Presenting easier and/or more highly preferred tasks before more difficult and/or less preferred tasks to increase motivation and history of success.

Peer Mediated Intervention

- Peers of the student are trained in advance and supervised by educators as they provide support for educational, behavioral or social goals in natural settings through:
  - Modeling
  - Prompting
  - Reinforcing

Scripting

- Present learners with a written sentence or series of sentences to use across settings and interactions for specific purposes.
- The script helps learners anticipate what may occur during a given activity and improve their ability to appropriately participate.
- Practice repeatedly before the skill is used in the actual situation.
- When learners are able to use the scripts successfully in actual situations, the script is systematically faded.
- Use in conjunction with modeling, prompting, and reinforcement.