

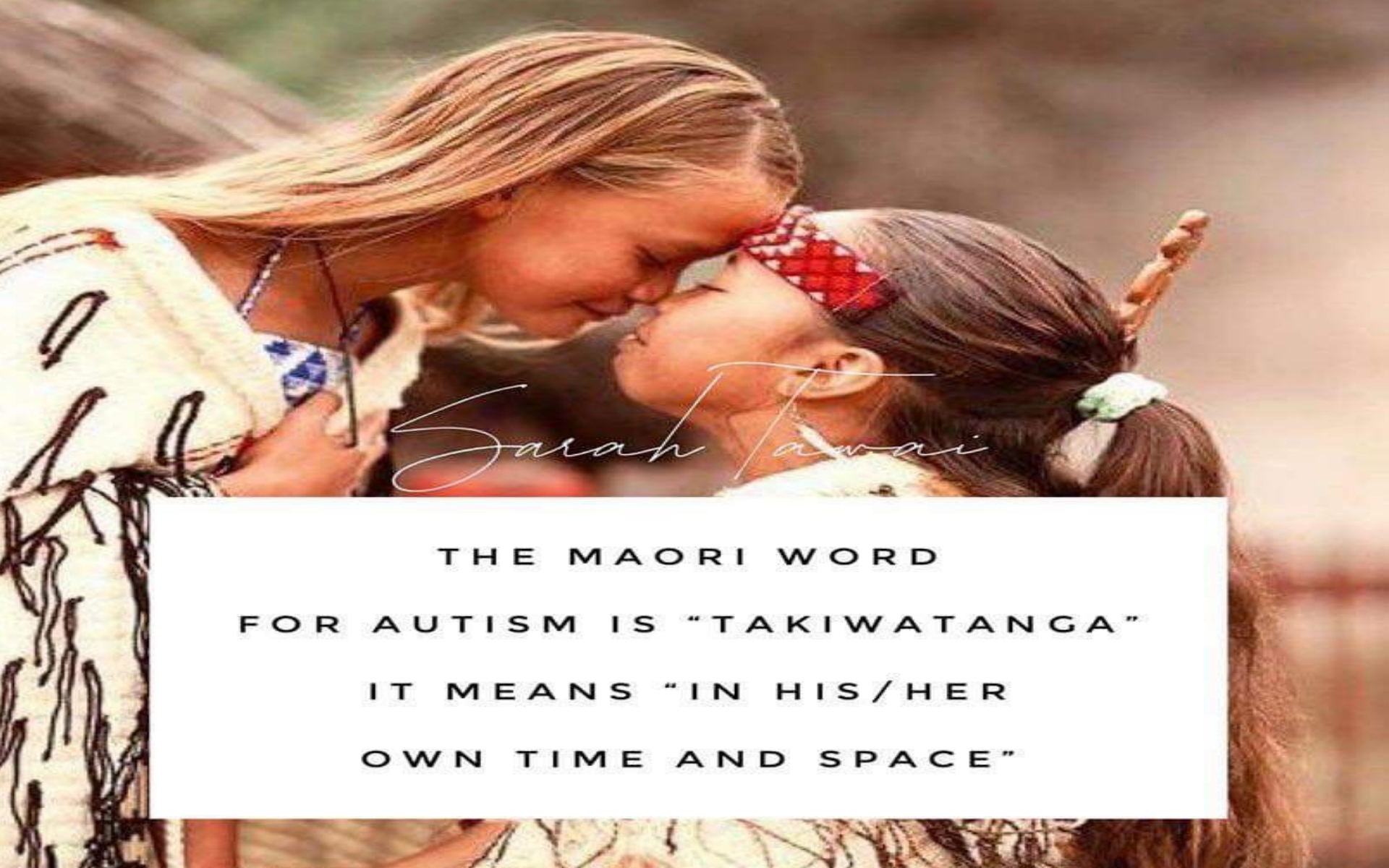
Welcome to:



ASCENDIGO

ELEVATING THE SPECTRUM
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

^ What do you know about autism?



Sarah Tawai

THE MAORI WORD
FOR AUTISM IS "TAKIWATANGA"
IT MEANS "IN HIS/HER
OWN TIME AND SPACE"



THE ASCENDIGO WAY

8 Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

- #1) **Connectivity** – Trust is The Most Powerful Motivator
- #2) **Made for Me™** - People Centered Philosophy
- #3) **A Seamless Experience™** - Proactively Manage the Environment
- #4) **Words Have Weight™** – Communication is Key
- #5) **Actions Speak Louder than Words** – Behavior Serves a Purpose
- #6) **Ascendigo Teaching Method™** - Get to the Fun & Utilize your Toolkit
- #7) **Time in the AscendiZone™** - The Art of the “Gentle Nudge”
- #8) **Celebrate Each Moment-** and Create Memories that will Last a Lifetime

#1 Connectivity



What do we mean by connection?

A deep connection to a person's soul

We want to know - who you are, what you think,
what your passions are and how you view the world.

We want to know - are you a safe person
for me to be myself around?

Intune pathways.

We want to connect in an autistic way

We want to connect through our passions.

We want to connect through deep conversation,
small talk is painful for us.

We want to connect through our shared life experience.

We want to connect through not following social norms.

We want to connect through stimming together.

We may prefer one to one connection.

Intune pathways.

^ Have you ever felt so in-tune with a playing partner that you felt so connected almost as if you were sharing mind?

#1 Connectivity



Build Trust, Connection, & Rapport by:

- ⤴ Allowing your student interests to guide the experience
- ⤴ Joining their world by genuinely enjoying their preferred activities with them
- ⤴ Sharing control, provide choices (unless the choices are adding to your student's anxiety)
- ⤴ Providing enough structure so that your participant can experience FREEDOM! (then you won't have to say "NO")
- ⤴ Setting appropriate expectations and achievable outcomes (presume competency). Lack of follow through will jeopardize trust.
- ⤴ Apologize if you make a mistake
- ⤴ There is a "Physiological Linkage" happening all the time between you and your camper.
 - You cannot help your camper calm down if your sympathetic nervous system has been activated. (Take a deep breathe first, calm down, give some space, and then offer assistance)
- ⤴ Intrinsic Qualities that will help you: Emotional intelligence (EQ), Compassion, Empathy, Respect, Humility, Integrity, and Honesty – as a way of being.
- ⤴ Role of mirror neurons – empathy - "Physiological Linkage"

1. SWITCH ON YOUR EMPATHIC BRAIN

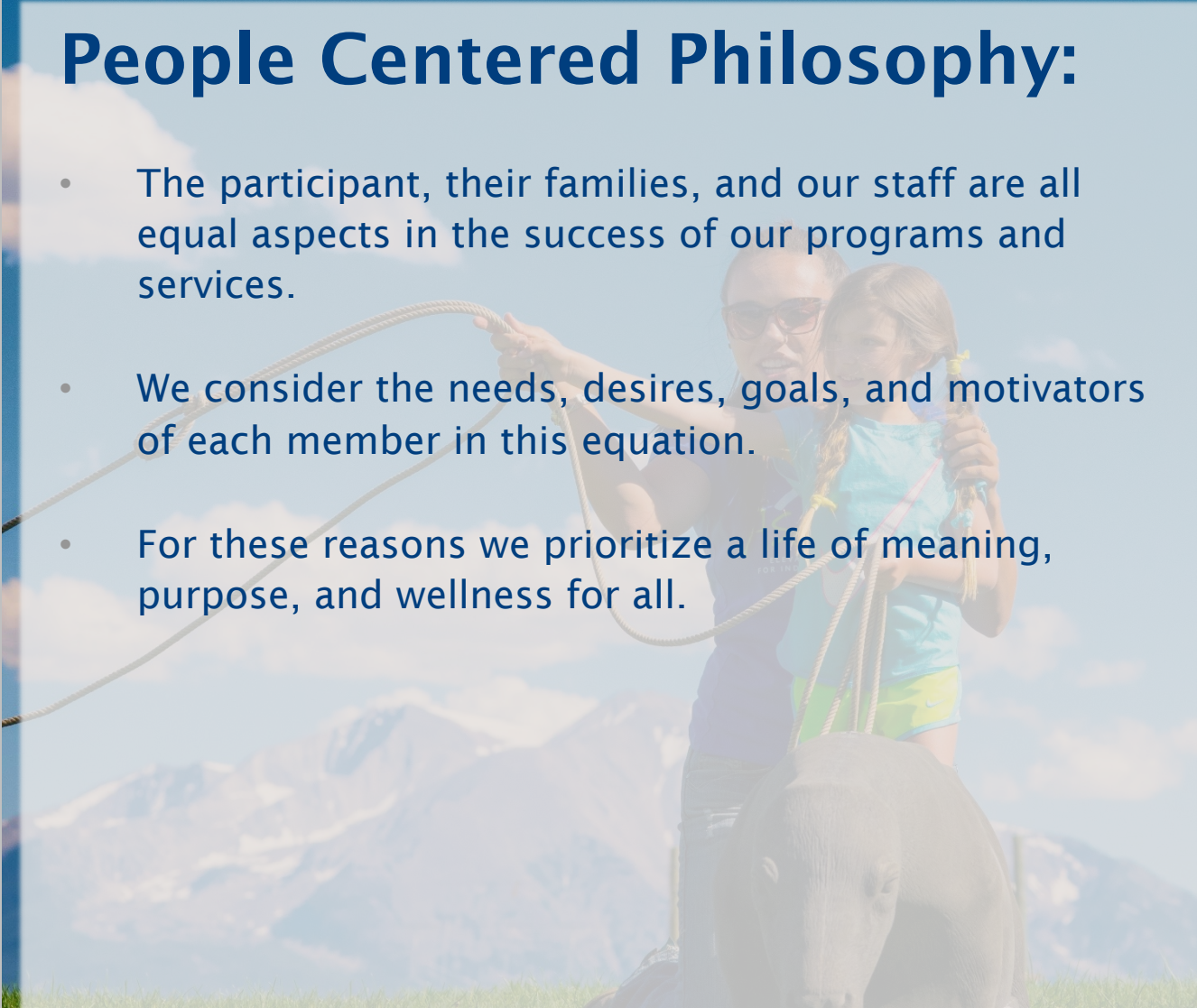
- 'Mirror neurons' are neurons that fire up both when we experience something (such as pain) and also when we see somebody else going through the same experience. People with lots of mirror cells tend to be more empathic, especially in terms of sharing emotions.
- 'Mirror neurons' allow us to grasp the minds of others not through conceptual reasoning but through direct simulation. Our brains mirror the state of other people.
- Neuroscience has discovered empathy in 'mirror neurons'
- Most people are able to expand their capacity for empathy throughout their lives - especially their cognitive or perspective-taking empathy - by practising mindful attention towards other people's feelings and experiences.

The logo consists of the words "MADE" and "FOR" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. Below them, the word "me" is written in a white, lowercase, cursive script font. The entire logo is set against a dark blue circular background.

MADE
FOR me™

#2 People- Centered Philosophy

People Centered Philosophy:

- The participant, their families, and our staff are all equal aspects in the success of our programs and services.
 - We consider the needs, desires, goals, and motivators of each member in this equation.
 - For these reasons we prioritize a life of meaning, purpose, and wellness for all.
- 
- A photograph of a woman and a young girl standing next to a horse in a mountainous landscape. The woman is wearing glasses and a dark shirt, and the girl is wearing a light blue shirt and green shorts. They are both holding ropes attached to the horse. The background shows snow-capped mountains under a blue sky with light clouds. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid.



#3

A Seamless Experience™



^ What can you do to assist your camper, support their executive functioning, and reduce the stress placed on their Sympathetic Nervous system?

Don't worry – you have tools!

- Create fun and positive routines (structure) during your time with your camper so they know what to expect.
- Proactively Plan – and Stay 5 Steps ahead.
- Proactively narrate the experience – what are you about to do, what is going to happen next, and why.
- Adapt the environment, and fade support to work towards generalization and success in natural environments
- Prompting – PP, V, G, E-M
- Priming
- Visual Tools, Schedules & Supports (cone courses, etc.)
- Timers, Count Downs, etc.
- Fight Fear with Facts

#4 Words have Weight – Communication is Key



The ability to use not just our words, but the energy behind our words as tools for teaching, transformation, and growth. While working with your client, every word you say, or don't say, matters. Be Present. Speak from your heart with intention.
Your words have weight and power that can move mountains.

Communication Strategies

- Use declarative language (90/10)
- Premack principle (First- Then Statements) – reinforce non-preferred activity with preferred activity
- Tone of voice, body language,
- Clear and direct statements
- Calm assertive voice & energy
- High Emotional Intelligence & Affect create Influence
- Give the person enough time to process the information – and anticipate delayed response
- Avoid words with double meanings, sarcasm, or humor which may be misunderstood (unless they are ready to process or develop more abstract humor)
- If communication breaks down – use pictures and/or whiteboards.

Sensory Issues –

Tactile/Auditory &
Communication
Experience

TWO VOLUNTEERS PLEASE!
(Two Vowel, 4 consonants)



#5 Actions Speak Louder than Words

All behavior serves a purpose

- Functions of Behavior
 - Communication
 - To get closer to something we want
 - To avoid or escape something we don't want
 - Autonomic Biological Regulation (Stimming)
 - ABC's



#6 Ascendigo Teaching Method™

⚓ We recognize that learning and acquiring new skills can be challenging, and also scary. For this reason, we strive to always get to the fun first – and then work backward for independence. This looks different in various environments, but the principle is the same – feel the wind on your face, put both feet in the water, get the participant to feel the intrinsic motivators of the activity and use those sensations as positive reinforcement.

⚓ So how exactly do we do this....?

#6 Ascendigo Teaching Method™

Hierarchy of Prompts



Ascendigo Method



🚣 Safety X Fun X Learning

🚣 A successful lesson is the sum of all parts. If any area has a zero – the lesson has failed

🚣 Zone of Proximal Development—

Things we
have
mastered

ZPD

Things we
cannot do
(yet)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

- things we can do with help
- skills we are learning!

Ascendigo Method

Utilize your
Toolkit!



Ascendigo Teaching™ Toolkit



- ⚡ Positive Behavior Support (PBS)
 - Shaping
 - Visual Supports (Social Stories, Videos, Cones, timers, etc)
 - Sensory toys and tools
 - Timers
 - Redirections
 - Non-reactivity
 - Affinity Based Learning Strategies
 - Being Proactive
- ⚡ Priming & Pacing – Behavioral Momentum (your student will tell you when its time to GO!)
- ⚡ Prompt Pairing & Fading
 - Work to Generalize newly acquired skills as early as possible and prevent prompt-dependence.
 - When prompting and assisting – Fade Early and Fade Often!

#7
The
AscendiZone

The Art of
Gentle
Nudge!



Comfort, Stretch,
Panic Model

high

CHALLENGE

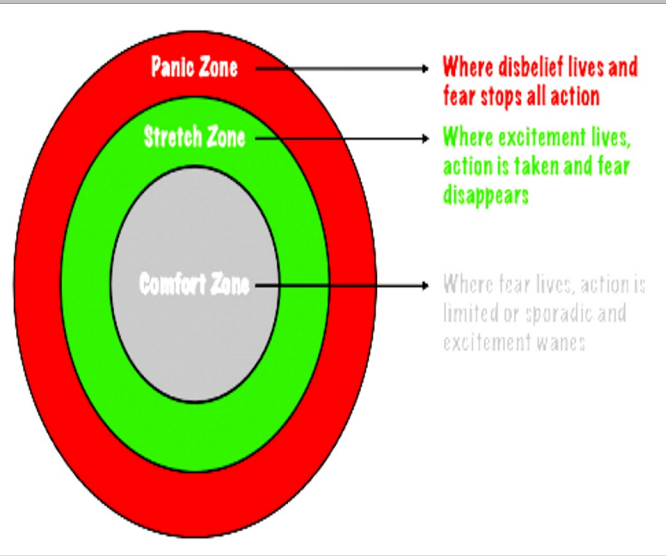


low

SKILL

high

Finding the AscendiZone



- Viewing the “Gentle Nudge” as an artform that we can continue to gain mastery over and keep at improving every day
- Using every aspect of our toolkit to keep our students in the stretch zone/ flow state as long as possible.
- Knowing that sometimes the most compassionate thing we can do is push just a little bit harder, but we must have the skill and judgement to know when its the right time
- Stepping up vs stepping down.
- Do not fret or get frustrated, get creative and keep working, **the breakthrough is coming!**

#8 Celebrate each Moment

- ^ Be fully present in the moment, and make memories that will last a lifetime!
- ^ Learning happens effortlessly when we are having fun.
- ^ *The Chase Bowlby Rule:* Make every day the best day ever!
- ^ Provide enough structure so that your student can experience Freedom!



Guiding Principles

(Summary)

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