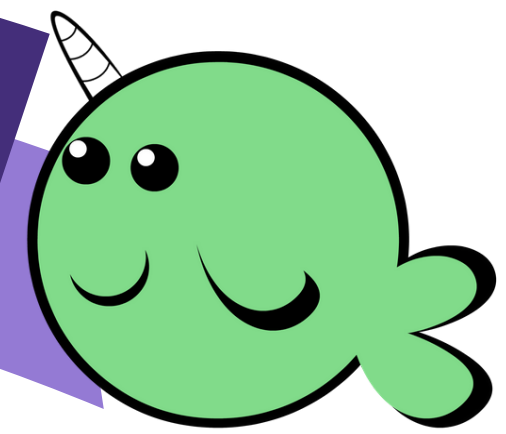
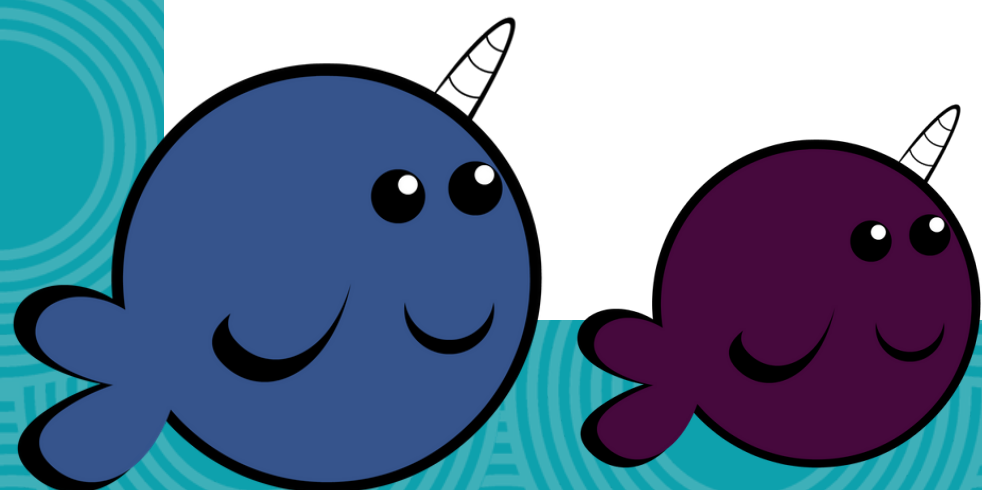


NEURODIVERGENT NARWHALS PRESENT:



BEHAVIOR PLAN FOR AUTISM PROFESSIONALS:

- *I will look at each child as an individual as we celebrate their strengths and support them in the areas that challenge them. I will support them by teaching self advocacy skills and in helping them find accommodations that work for them and that respect their autonomy.
- *I will throw out the myth of a "developmental window" and acknowledge that every child will grow and learn in their own time, in their own way with my patience, guidance and nurturing.
- *All of my interactions with the children I work with will be based on mutual respect, not on enforcing my authority.
- *I will look at every therapeutic approach with a critical eye. I will ask myself what is the desired outcome? Am I advocating respectful supports or am I prioritizing compliance and indistinguishability? It is not my job to "fix" because children are not broken. I will research the long term effects on the autistic person's self esteem, trauma responses and mental health when they are subjected to therapeutic approaches such as ABA that value compliance and indistinguishability. I will gather this information by listening to actually autistic people.
- *I will embrace the neurodiversity paradigm and celebrate each child as a valuable part of the wide and diverse spectrum of humanity.
- *I will learn about the social model of disability and confront ableism when I see it. I will learn about the disability and autistic rights movements and use my privilege to further the cause.
- *I will learn about Autistic culture and find Autistic friends, not just for the children I work with but for me as well. I will promote acceptance and lead by my example.
- *I will recognize that autism is an integral part of who the children I work with are and it shapes how they view, process and experience this world. I will value every part of the children I work with. I will never teach them shame or internalized ableism.
- *I will always presume competence in every child that I work with.
- *I understand that communication is more than speech and I will value all communication in its many forms. I will not prioritize speaking as the only valid type of communication.
- *I will not attempt to interpret, prevent or stop certain behaviors such as stimming based on my non-autistic experiences, but will instead attempt to understand the function and purpose it serves for the autistic person. Sometimes, I may not understand, and that is never a good reason to attempt to stop or prevent it.
- *I will recognize that autistic children can learn skills just like their typically developing peers and friends. They do not need a separate, segregated classroom to be taught in ways that dehumanize and stigmatize them. If the autistic child needs more time to learn something than typically developing children, that does not mean that they will never learn these skills. It just means they learn differently and I will accommodate and support that.
- *I will not remove supports once the autistic child is successful with them. I will recognize that this is cruel and makes very little sense as autism is a lifelong disability for which the person will always need supports and accommodations....even as the support needs change and they master new skills. I cannot remove all supports and expect a disabled person to thrive without them.
- *I will likely make mistakes along the way because I am not perfect, but when I know better, I will be able to do better. I will remember that working with autistic or other neurodivergent children means supporting them, accepting them, and valuing them for the unique and wonderful people they are.



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