

Paving the way into post school participation for students with autism spectrum disorders - what do we know, what do they want and what do we do?

Professor Torbjorn Falkmer
Curtin Autism Research Group
Curtin University
Autism CRC



Curtin University



SIGURNOST PUTOVANJA

O prometnoj sigurnosti za
djecu s funkcijskim preprekama

با اطمینان رانندگی کردن

امنیت در ترافیک بر ای کودکان با ناتوانی جسمی

Åka säkert

- om trafiksäkerhet för
med funktionshinder



ett samarbetsprojekt
Riksförbundet för Rörelsehindrade
Barn och ungdomar, RBU
Vägverket

السفر بأمان

عن سلامة حركة المرور للأطفال المعوقين



مشروع عمل مشترك بين
جمعية المعوقين للأطفال والشباب
مصلحة المرور
جوت الطرق والمواصلات
د وسائل المساعدات
تأليف
كاترين باولسون
ترجمة
مبخليل مسو

SAFE RIDE

Traffic safety for children with disabilities



Swedish Road and Transport
Research Institute, VTI
Swedish Institute of Assistive
Technology



This is the way we do
our job, and it works...





















Research in Autism



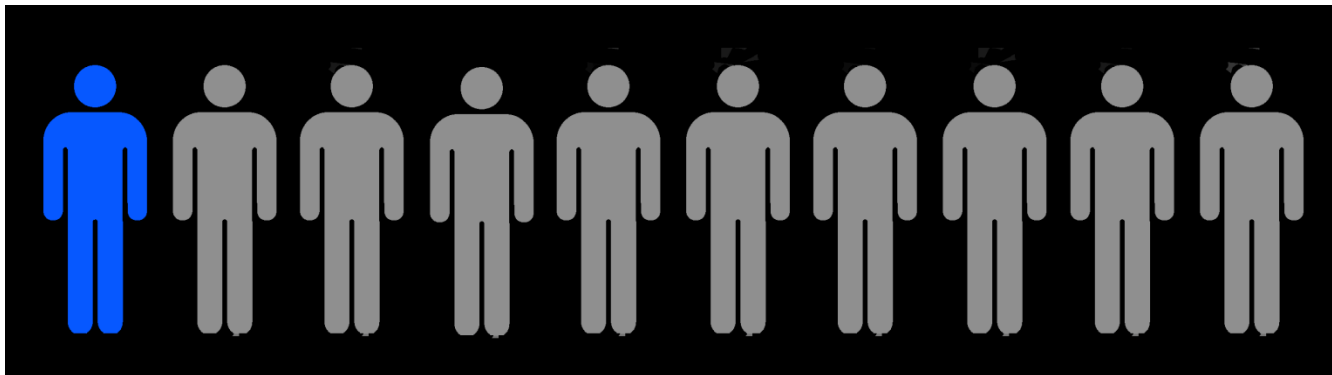
Autism CRC

The world's first national, cooperative research effort focused on autism across the life span.

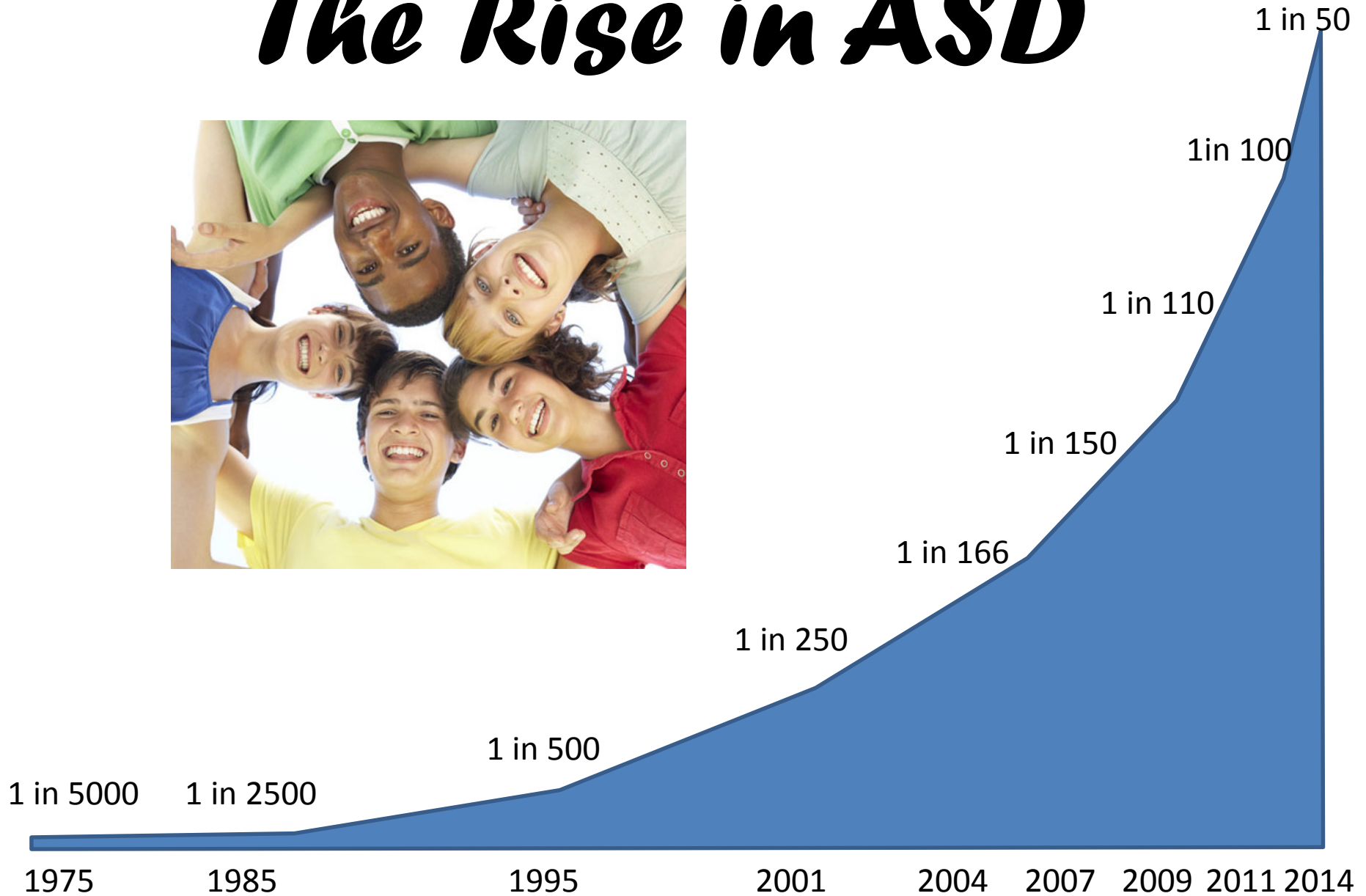


Prevalence of ASD

- varying from 20/10,000 to 110/10,000.
- school based population study in the U.K. suggested a prevalence of 157/10,000
- high-functioning ASD, may be the fastest growing sector of the autism population

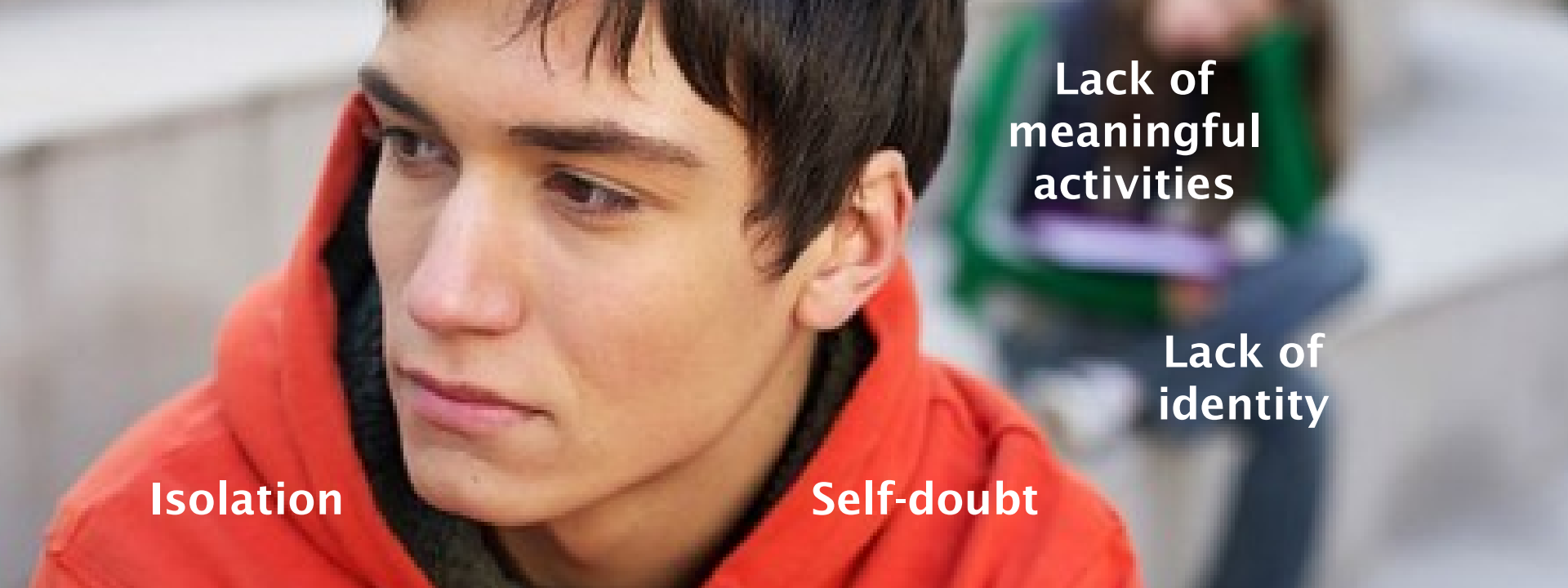


The Rise in ASD





*The
tidal wave*



**Lack of
meaningful
activities**

**Lack of
identity**

Isolation

Self-doubt



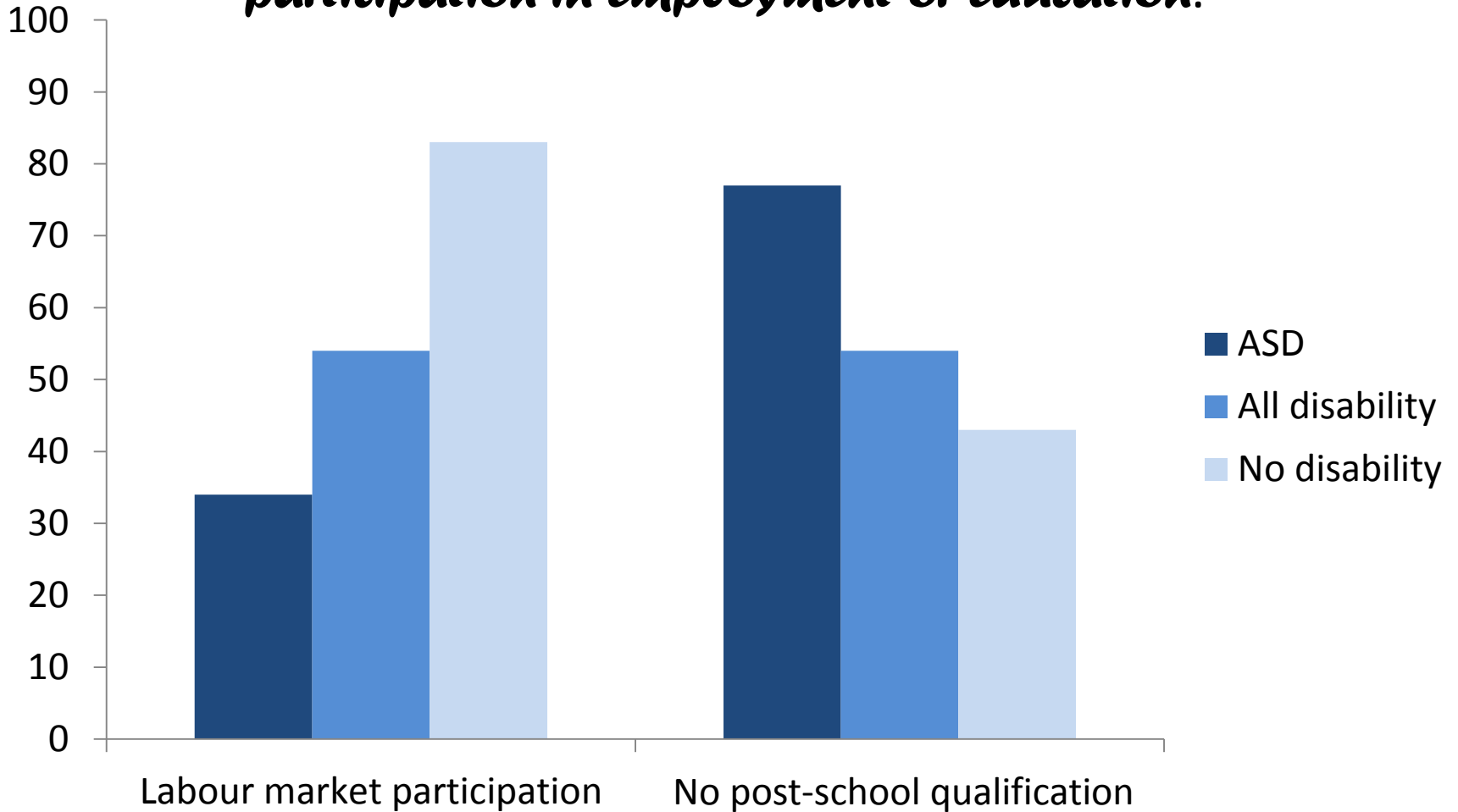
**Meaningful
activities**

Purpose

Confidence

Connection

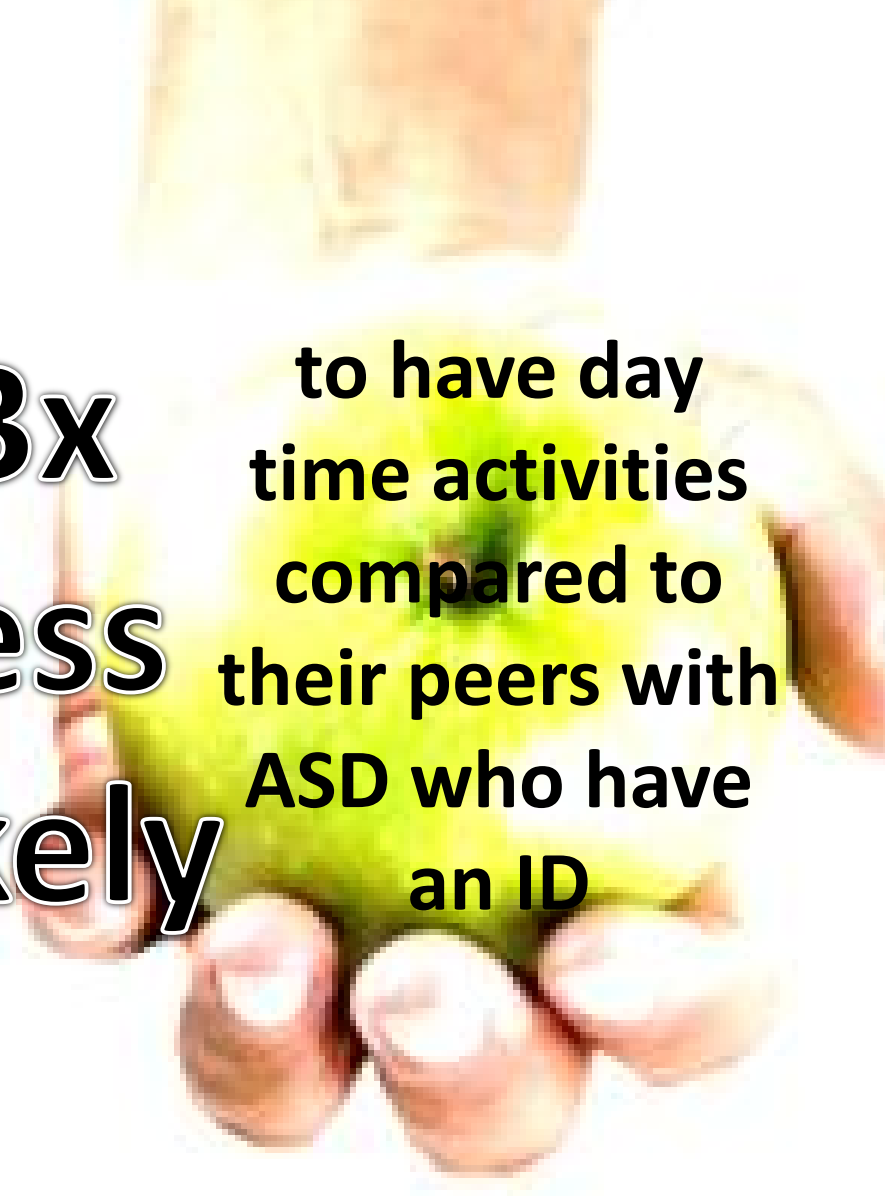
A Group Left Behind... More than 50% of youth who had left high school in the past 2 years had no participation in employment or education.





Young adults
with High
Functioning
Autism/Asperger's
Syndrome are

3x
less
likely



to have day
time activities
compared to
their peers with
ASD who have
an ID

Transitions

- The empirical and anecdotal consensus is that periods of transition are especially challenging and stressful for adolescents with ASD.



Understanding
emotional and
social cues

Considering
others'
perspectives

But

Reciprocal
conversations

why?

Adjustment
to change

Emotional
regulation

And also...

- dysregulation in sensory modalities



- difficulty processing or remembering verbal instructions
- fine-motor impairments

“The hardest is to understand people because first you have to handle the problem to look at them, then they all sound different and they demand different things of you that you don’t understand. As soon as one think that one have started to understand how one of them works, something happens that changes everything”

Therese Jolliffe
Freely translated

Experiences of social exclusion, including being bullied and left out by their peers could provide at least a partial explanation as to why socialising may be particularly emotionally charged for someone with ASD



Anxiety and depression

Rated 65% - 80%
(anxiety) among
adolescent and
adults with ASD.



Honesty

*Focus
on
tasks*

Reliability

*Meticulous
attention to
detail*

Trustworthiness



Targeted interventions for specific student groups

Students with different impairments may report same difficulties

but

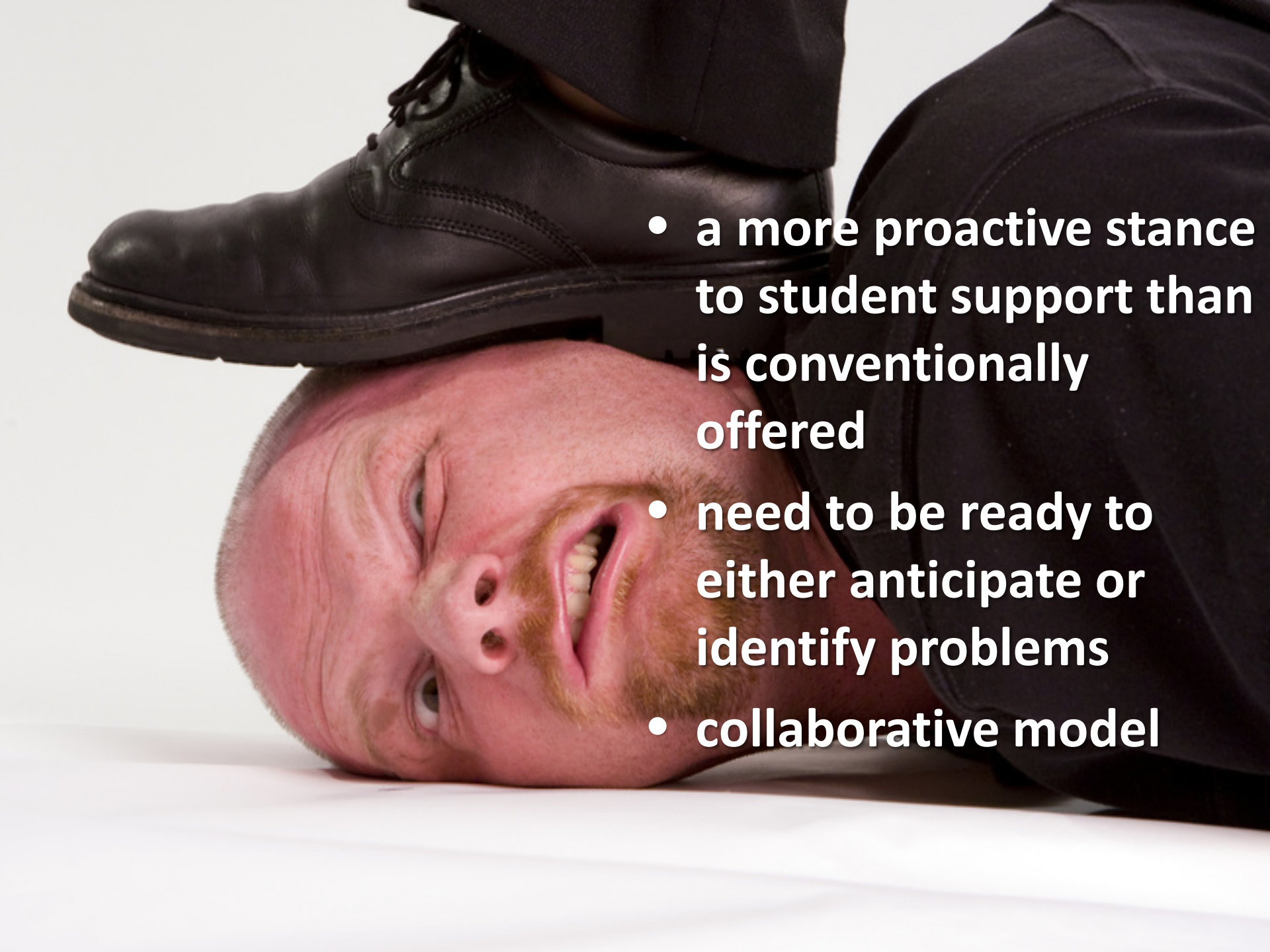
If cause differ, support should differ

Or Perceived problems in managing Studies and everyday life may be the same for students with different disabilities, although the **reasons** for support needs may vary





- students with ‘unseen’ disabilities may perceive that they stand the **best chance** of success by **not declaring** a disability, and instead trying to cope without extra help
- **Preventative support** may have achieved **better** outcomes. By the time a student is struggling, damage has often already been done in terms of academic development, mental health and general well-being.

- 
- A photograph of a man lying on his back on a white surface. He has a red beard and mustache and is looking up with a slightly pained or uncomfortable expression. A black leather shoe is placed on top of his head. The background is plain white.
- a more proactive stance to student support than is conventionally offered
 - need to be ready to either anticipate or identify problems
 - collaborative model

What do you need?

“...freedom of choice can become a burden for students with AS and support given by the universities is sometimes perceived more as a barrier than as a facilitator.”



Why was support not perceived as successful?

- Not the right kind
- Do not understand how it could work
- Takes too much time
- Results in more work



A more proactive stance

Ongoing assessment and monitoring

...one size won't fit all

To be understood

To understand

To excel



What to be proactive about?

...social and independent living skills impairments, along with a general lack of understanding about ASD among Uni faculty and staff, are most likely the causes for failure



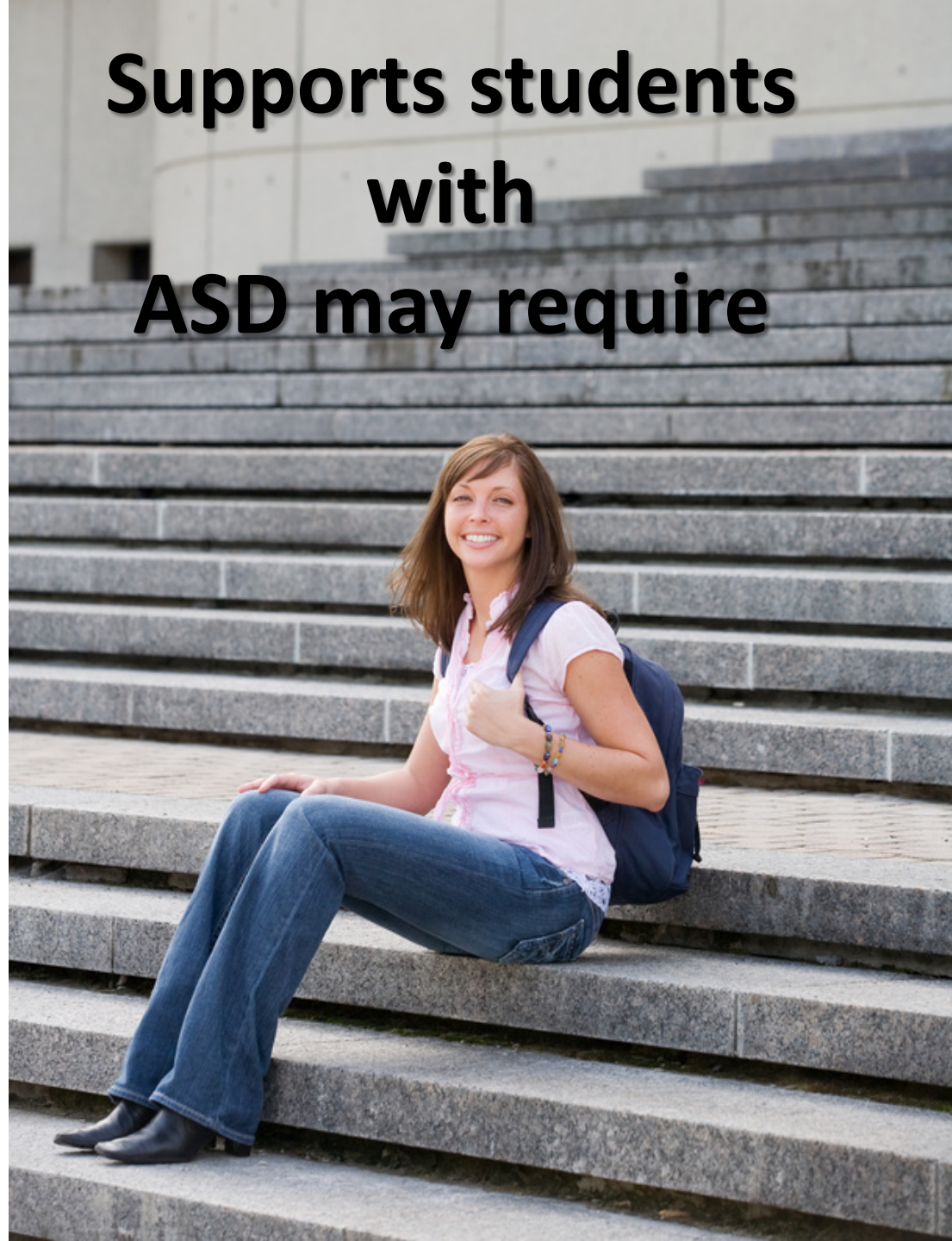
I'm so glad we all agree

- ✓ a tour of the campus
- ✓ the sequence of the specific daily schedule
- ✓ visiting the cafeteria and outlining which section to sit in procedures to buy coffee
- ✓ going to the bookstore during off-peak hours in order to investigate what is available
- ✓ meeting the teachers and discussing how the specific class operates
- ✓ showing the student which bulletin boards announce upcoming social activities
- ✓ meeting the residence hall staff so that the student knows who to go to with questions, make them wear name tags
- ✓ communicating with room mates prior to arrival on campus
- ✓ reviewing the schedule of activities for the first week and discussing which activities would be of interest to the student
- ✓ identification of safe places
- ✓ an overview of what to expect during the first several days of orientation
- ✓ set a meeting time with support staff during the
- ✓ first several days to touch base and determine if any areas have not been planned for adequately



Supports students with ASD may require

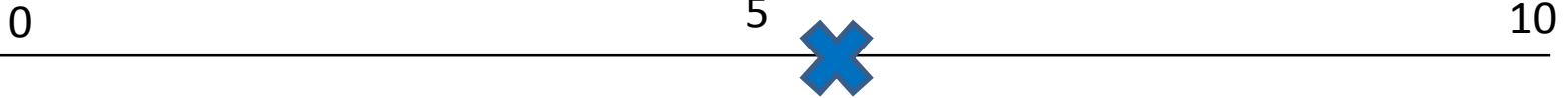
- ✓ assistance with **executive functioning** elements necessary for the typical college lifestyle
- ✓ **scheduling** support, help with preparation and assistance with organization of assignments & exams
- ✓ **assistance with social interaction** and participation
- ✓ **assistance with identifying campus resources** (such as school based clubs, organizations, and tutoring services)
- ✓ access to **effective counselling services** (to help reduce anxiety and develop stress management strategies)



ASSESSING SUPPORT NEEDS:

I may have need for support in:

- Finding important information in a text/textbook



- Remembering to bring everything I need back and forth to Uni
- Taking notes
- Finding the lecture halls
- Starting a conversation with somebody inside the lecture hall
- Participating in group assignment
- Having lunch
- -----
- How difficult do you find it to ask others to help you
- Managing perception vision/sound/smell/....
-

Assess preferred ways to receive help

How would you like to get your support?

- A person
- Reminders via phone
- text –reminders
- E-mail reminders
- Technical aids (recorder/computer...)
- Written structure
- Combination
- Other



Non-academic pressures can be by far the hardest

“...everyday student-life consists in large part of a struggle with spare time and day-to-day activities.”





Help with the social minefield

Understanding self, others (the neuro-typical) and the context

- academic instructions,
 - group work
 - confusing lecturers
 - *Social relationships and activities*
-
- And help to *manage academic stressors, sorting information, get 'an overview', reflect, exams, assignments, fluctuation in workload*



Lack of support for adolescents
with ASD transitioning into the post-
school world

*The
projects
so far...*



Project 1

To

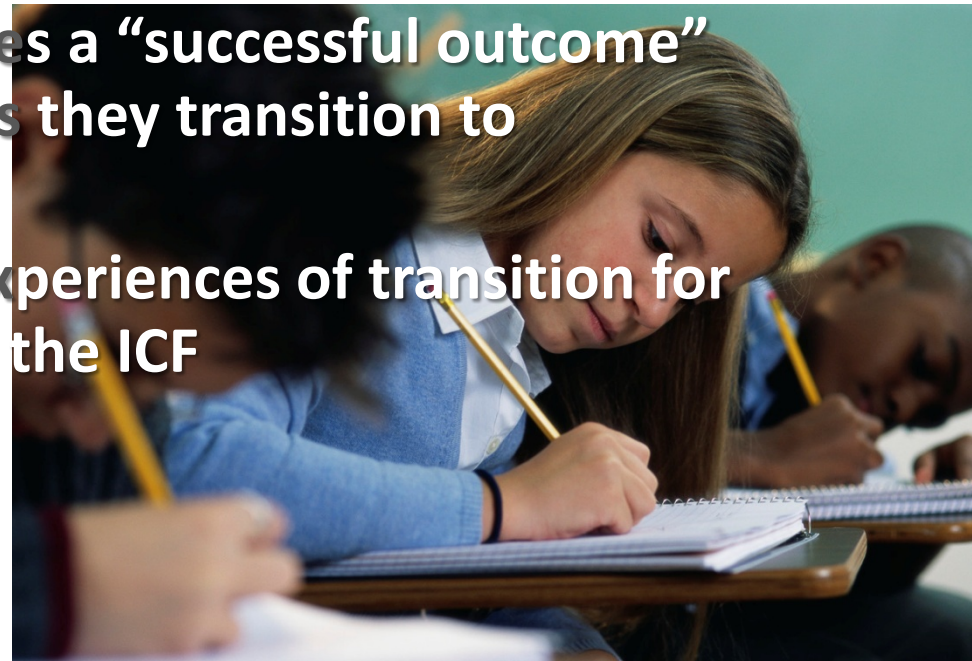
Look at transition...

Transition to Adulthood for Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorders

- *Aim:* Examine the process and experience of transition to adulthood for young people with ASD and their families.

To address this overall aim the project will employ four studies with the following objectives:

- Explore the lived experience of the families of individuals with ASD as the young person transitions to adulthood.
- To identify the barriers and facilitators of the transition to adulthood for the young person with ASD.
- To describe what characterises a “successful outcome” for young people with ASD as they transition to adulthood.
- To holistically describe the experiences of transition for young adults with ASD using the ICF



What will
this mean
related to
transition



Project 2

Educational Vocational Assessment Protocol (EVAP)

To assist adolescents with High Functioning
Autism/ Asperger's Syndrome with post-school
pathway planning

GAP:

Lack of effective career planning tools for individuals with ASD



Protocol to assist
adolescents with
**High Functioning
Autism**
with **transition
planning**



Stage 1: ***Survey, Interviews*** ***& Literature Review***



- yes
- no
- maybe

Overall aims:

*Natural
support
network*

*Self-
determination*



*High
expectations &
self-esteem*

Stage 2: Protocol

Assessment

- Interests & Strengths
- Work Conditions
- Training Goals
- Learning Styles
- Life Skills

Goal Setting

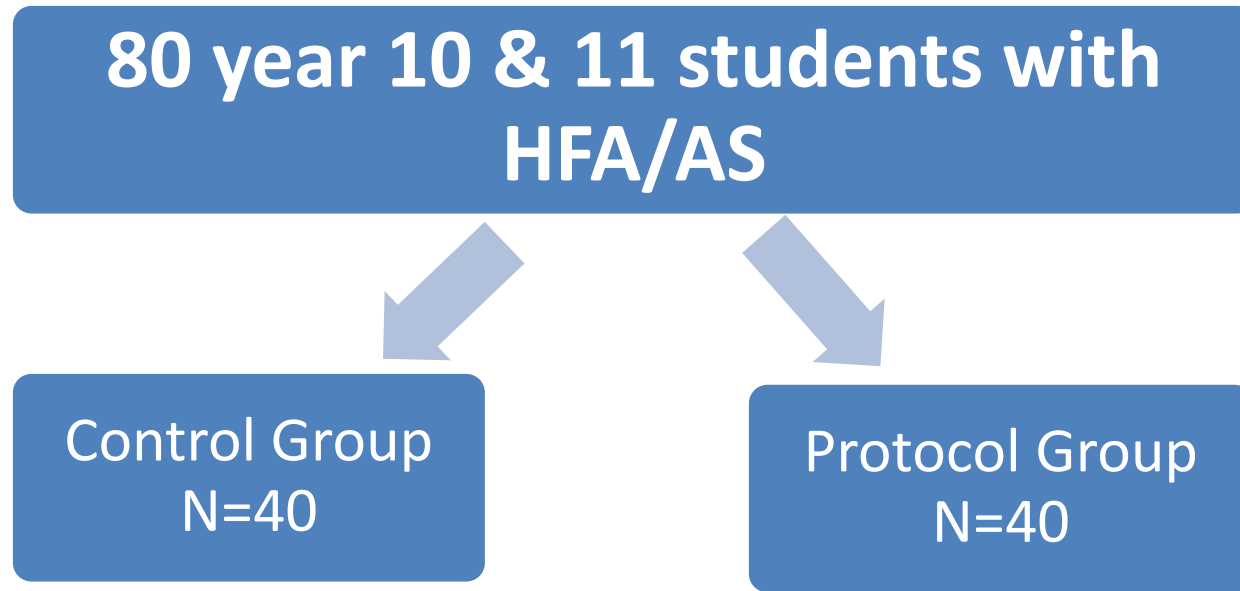
- Career experiences
- Career exploration
- Linking in with supports
- Life skills

Review

- Career Pathway
- Goals

Stage 3: Randomised Controlled Trial

June 2015 - July 2016



Project 3

Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST)

To adapt the workplace so that it supports successful employment for people with ASD

Integrated Employment Success Tool

How will I fit
into the
workplace?



EVAP

&

IEST:

(Integrated Employment
Success Tool)

*Spot the
difference!*



EVAP

EVAP

&

IEST:

(Integrated Employment
Success Tool)

*Spot the
difference!*



IEST



WORK

Identity

Social opportunities

Financial independence

Meaning

Purpose

