



**WASHINGTON**  
— AUTISM ALLIANCE —

## **Crisis Stabilization Takes a Village**

At Washington Autism Alliance we are Expanding Access to Healthcare, Education and Services for People with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorders. We provide legal services, individual case management and multi system navigation for individuals and families.



# Access to Care - Addressing Severe Behaviors at Any Age

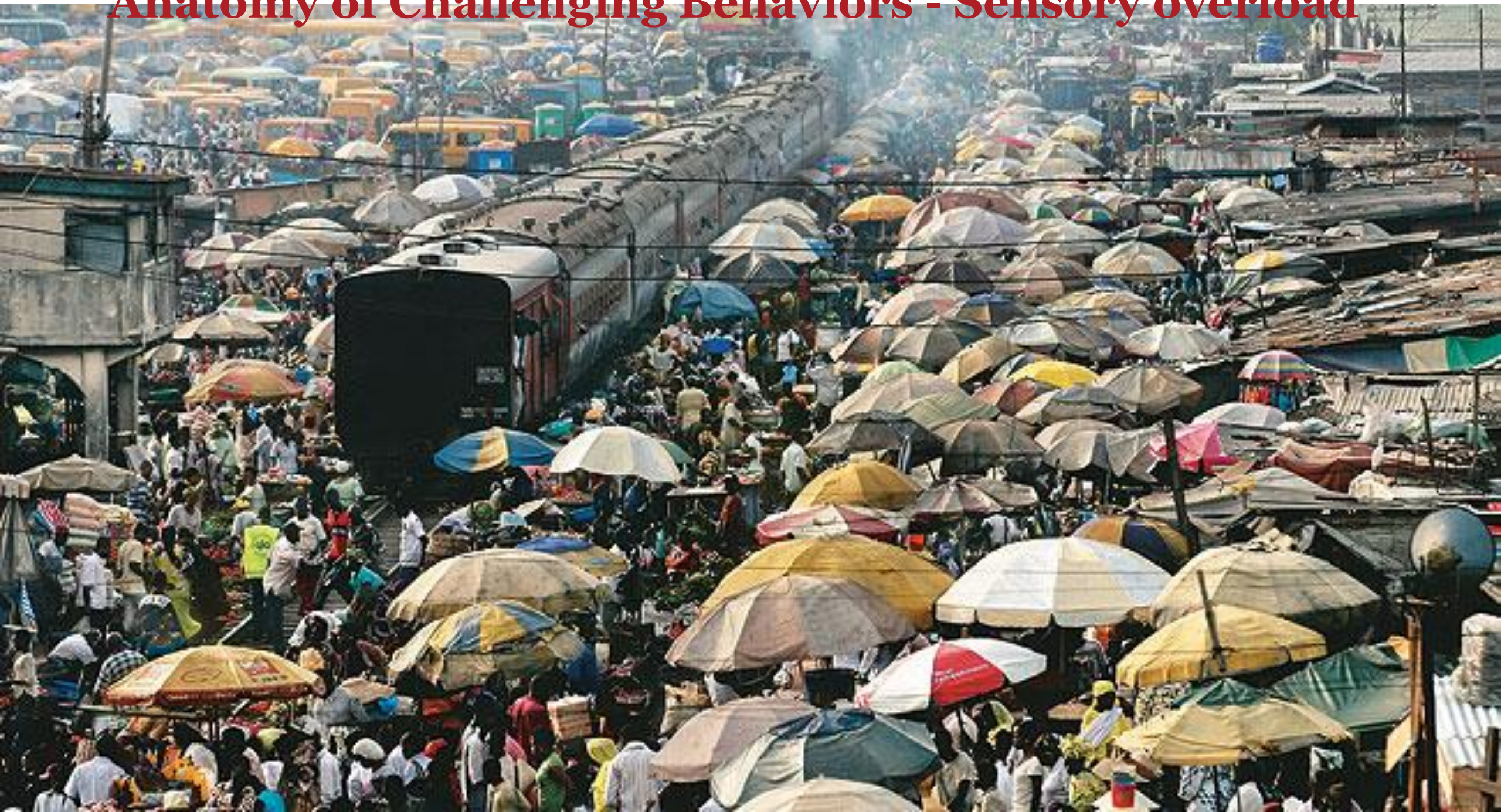


## Outline of this presentation:

- The anatomy of challenging behaviors
- It Takes a Village, let's explore all possible avenues
- How to find qualified providers with the right level of expertise and experience



# Anatomy of Challenging Behaviors - Sensory overload

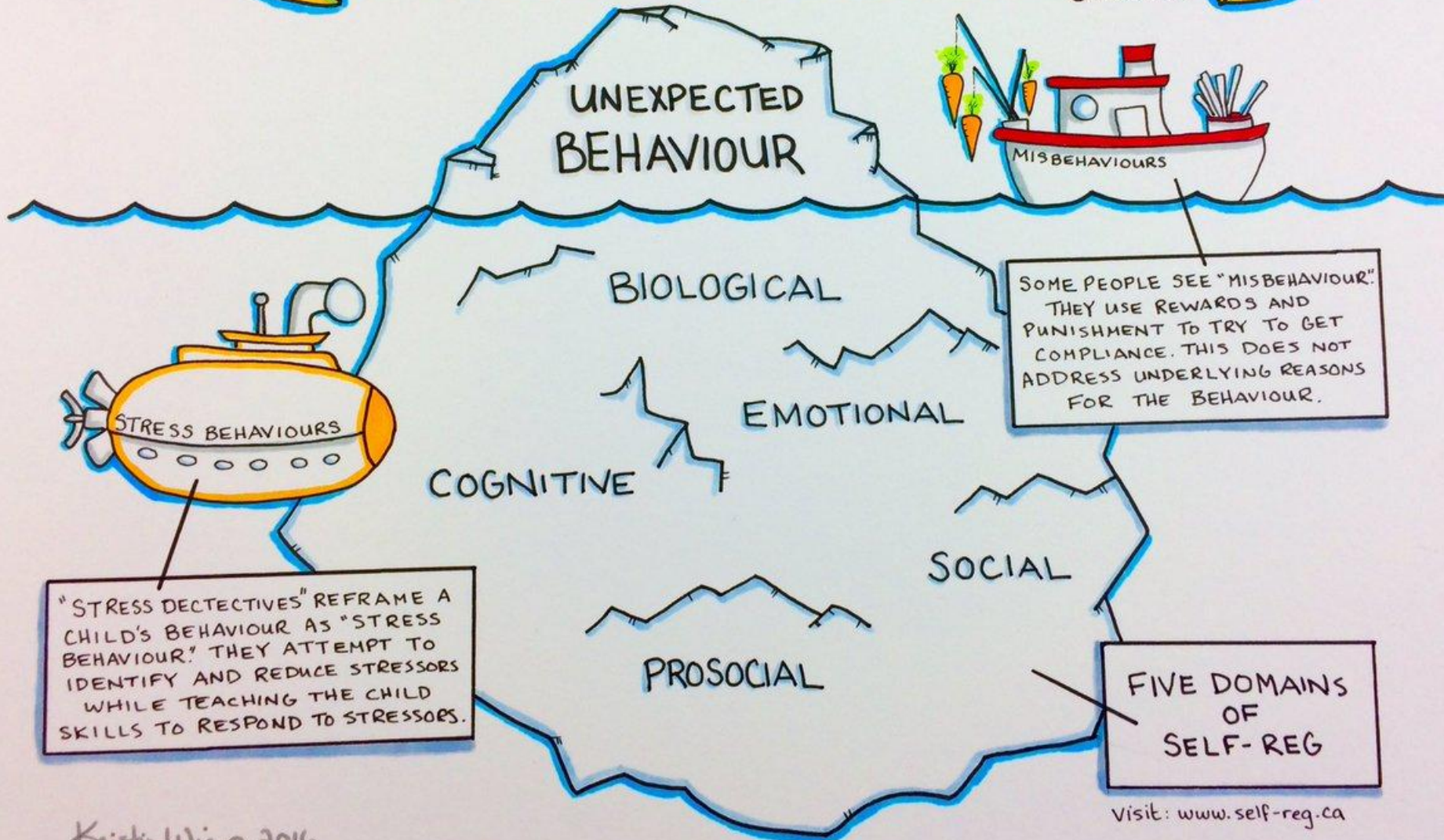






# BEHAVIOUR IS COMMUNICATION

@kwiens62



Kristin Wiener 2016

Stress Behavior

Identify & Reduce Stressors

Teach Skills:  
Respond to Stressors

Don't get Outnumbered

# Guiding Principles



**ACCESS TO CARE**

**SCHOOL BASED HEALTH SERVICES**



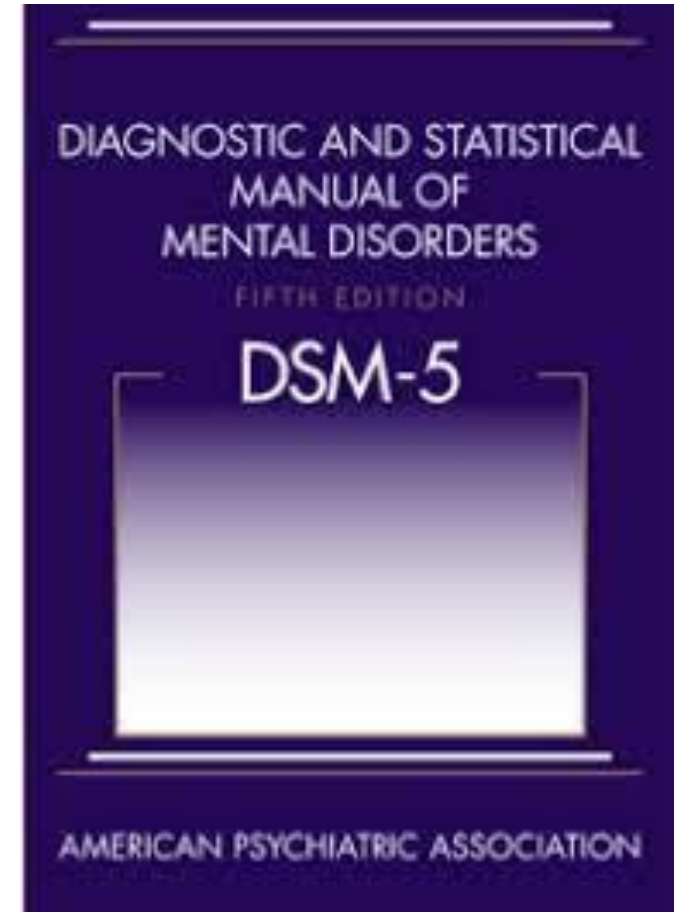
**HEALTH BENEFITS: EPSDT, MHPAEA, MHP**

**MEDICAID WAIVERS**

# Medical Necessity



- Medicaid and many private insurance carriers require treatment to be “medically necessary” before covering
- Your child’s doctor can write a letter to support this if insurance denies
- Letter of medical necessity has to show that the member’s symptoms are having a negative impact on development and/or communication and/or demonstrating injurious behavior



# What do the laws say?



No matter what type of insurance your son and daughter has, there are laws that give them rights and protections. The four laws that I want to highlight are:

1. Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)
2. ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974)
3. State and Federal Mental Health Parity Laws





## Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)

- a. The EPSDT Program is a required healthcare benefit for all Medicaid-eligible children 3-21 years old
- b. ASD screening, diagnosis, and evidence-based treatment, including ABA and NDTs, are covered benefits under EPSDT





1. Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) 1974—(ERISA) is a federal law that sets standards for most retirement and health benefit plans offered by private sector employers. The Department of Labor provides oversight.
2. ERISA establishes minimum standards for health, retirement, and other welfare benefit plans that are established by an employer. Families have a right, under ERISA, to file a claim in court after exhausting the internal appeals process. Other participant rights include access to plan information, timely and fair process for benefit claims, notice of benefit determination, and access to records.

# Mental Health Parity (MHP) Laws



## Mental Health Parity

- Means that mental health services are covered by insurance in a manner comparable in scope and limitations to other medical and surgical benefits
- There are two types of Mental Health Parity Laws, one is a State Law and the other is Federal
- If your insurance plan covers mental health, MHP applies!



# How Do I Access My Benefits?



## Verify insurance coverage

- a. Call your insurance company, insurance case manager, or employer's HR/benefit specialist to see what your insurance plan covers for ASD and other DD treatment
- b. Or request a copy of your Plan Document/Certificate of Coverage from your insurance or your employer

# How to access benefits using Medicaid?



- Coverage is included in all plans
- Most therapies/treatments can be accessed through a prescription, ABA requires prior-authorization
- You can find providers by calling your insurance
- We recommend calling everyone, and referring back to the list of providers frequently!



# Placement Considerations and Payers

Least restrictive and safest options for crisis stabilization:  
Home/Community Based  
Partial Hospitalization  
Residential Placement



**Hospital Based Day Programs & Specialty Schools** (IEP, Health Plan)



**Therapeutic Boarding Schools (21 & under)** IEP, Health Plan



**Residential Treatment Center (21 & over)** (Health Plan, Medicaid Waivers)



**Children's In-home Intensive Behavior Support (CIIBS)** MEDICAID WAIVER

# Positive Behavior Support



## Family / Professional Partnerships

- Families know their own child better than anyone else on the assessment team and are affected the most by the strategies employed to address behavior and skill development. PBS plans must be a good fit for both the child and the family in order to be the most effective.



# Provider Qualifications



**Behavior Specialists: Ph.D. or M.A. level therapists with expertise in Positive Behavior Support in the family context**

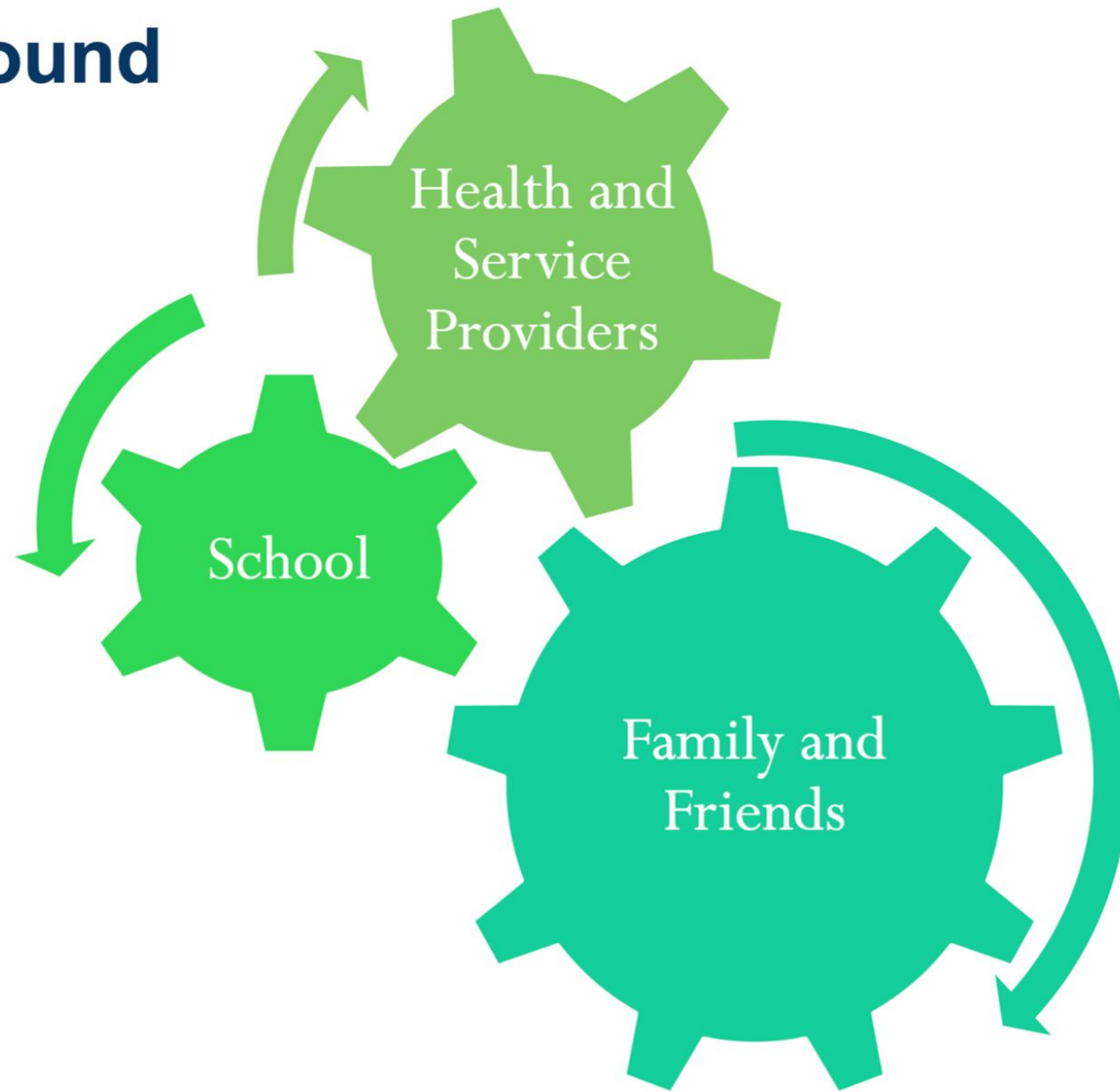
- Conduct Functional Assessment
- Design written Positive Behavior Support Plans
- Provide training and consultation
- Collect and review data
- Oversight – ensure ongoing efficacy of plan

**Behavior Technicians: Experienced line therapists**

- Implement treatment according to design
- Work alongside families in the home



# Wraparound



Behavior Specialists involve the family members in the design as well as the implementation of strategies and take into account the following contextual characteristics:

family constellation;

daily routines and frequent activities;

availability of natural supports;

cultural background;

values held by the family; and

health of family members.





## Hospital Based Day Programs & Specialty Schools



Start consulting a seasoned educational consultant, this could be a psychologist, psyD or an educator

Team considerations:

- Frequency and intensity of dangerous challenging behaviors & lack of reasonable and adequate reduction/stabilization
- Functional Behavior Assessment by a qualified provider
- Positive Behavior Support that addresses dangerous behaviors
- Therapeutic Goals for each of the identified areas of need
- Adequate student to staff ratio at all times (transportation, recreation, mealtimes)
- Extended Day & Extended Year to ensure minimal disruption in routine and schedule
- Does the specialty school have a verifiable track record of positive results for the adolescent or young adult population?

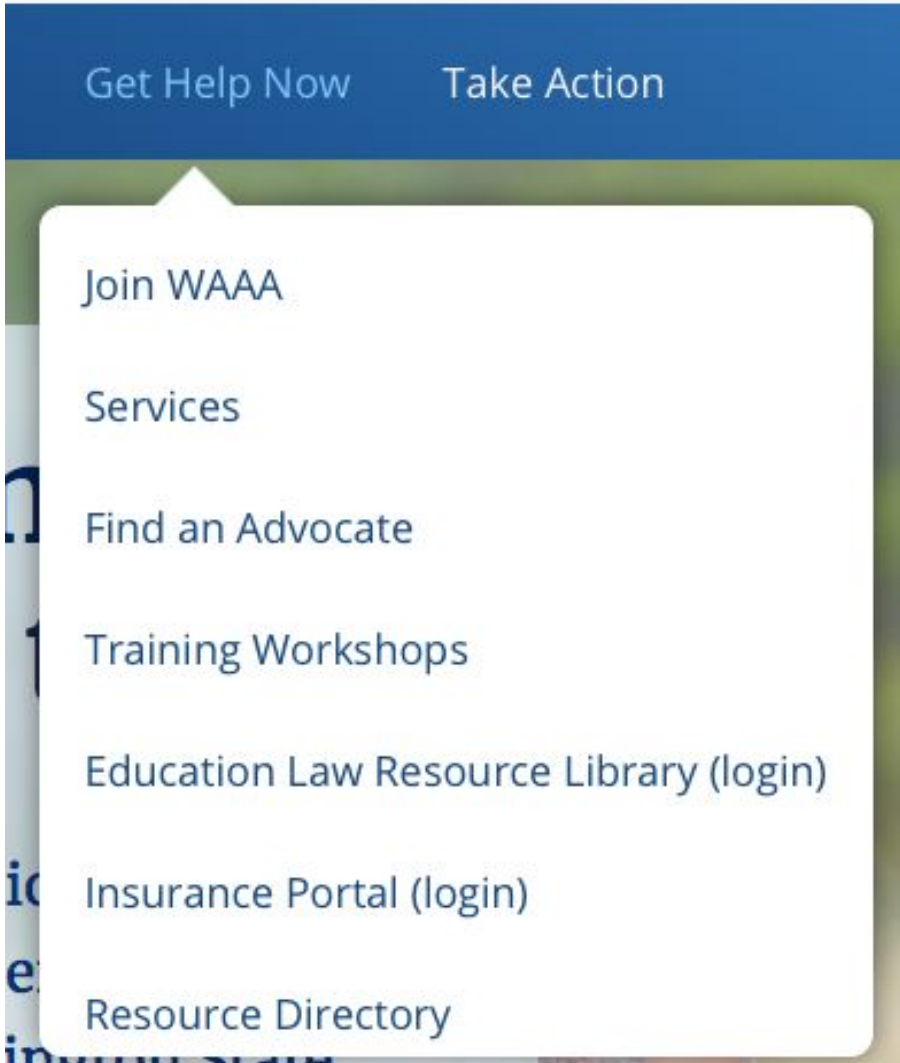
# Therapeutic Boarding School



## Team considerations:

- Has there been lack of reasonable and adequate reduction/stabilization with partial hospitalization/specialty school
- What interim placements are recommended (i.e. Wilderness Programs)
- Long term therapeutic boarding school
- Step down program (transitioning to a less restrictive environment)
- Who pays?
  - School Districts (often requires involvement of a special education attorney)
  - Health plans pay for the medical/behavioral & neurodevelopmental therapies
  - Medicaid Waivers will not cover “institutional” placements

# Self-Advocacy tools



## WAA Education Law Library

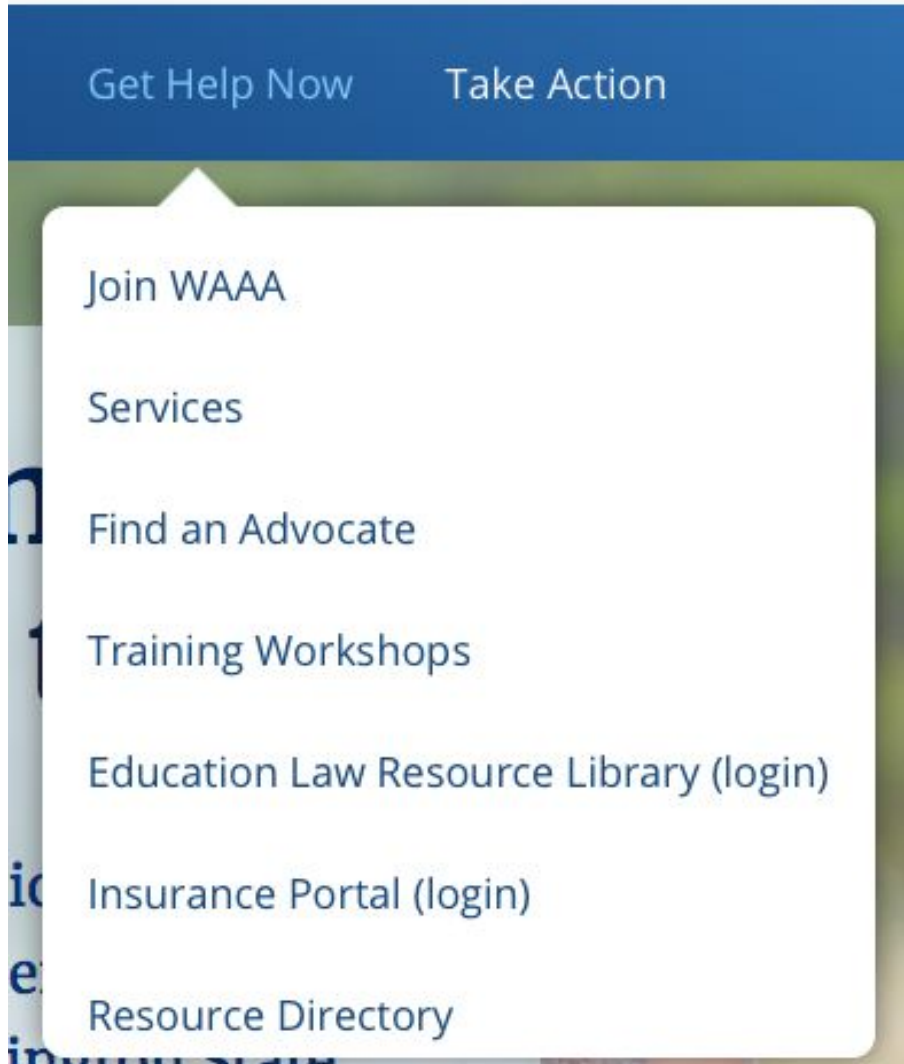
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- › Transportation
- › Blueprints To Special Ed. Sept. 2020
- › Blueprints To Special Ed. Q&A March 2021
- › Blueprints To Special Ed. Presentation March 2021





# Self-Advocacy tools



**Private Insurance**

You can find information on diagnoses and treatment, choosing providers, encouraging your employer to add Autism benefits, information on navigating your benefits and more.

**Medicaid**

You can find information on navigating Medicaid diagnosis and treatment, medical necessity, working with insurance case managers, the Premium Payment Program and more.











## [WAA Insurance Portal](#)

# Self-Advocacy tools



Get Help Now    Take Action

- Join WAAA
- Services
- Find an Advocate
- Training Workshops
- Education Law Resource Library (login)
- Insurance Portal (login)
- Resource Directory

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