**BEHAVIOURAL SKILLS TRAINING AND TACTILE PROMPTING DEVICES: EVALUATION OF A CAREGIVER TRAINING INTERVENTION TO TEACH SAFETY SKILLS TO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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**1) Objective:** The current study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural skills training (BST) for teaching caregivers how to also use BST in conjunction with a tactile prompt to teach their children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) help-seeking behaviour. This study will also evaluate the overall social validity of the training package.

**2) Method:** A non-current multiple-baseline across three participants design is being used to assess the effect of BST training on parent implementation of BST and tactile prompting to teach his/her child with ASD help-seeking behaviour. Participants include three caregivers and their children with ASD ages 5-10. BST and tactile prompting devices will be used to teach help-seeking behaviour. BST is a treatment package that includes: instructions, modeling, rehearsal and feedback. Tactile prompting devices remove the need to deliver prompts intrusively in the natural environment.

The dependent measures include help-seeking behaviour of the child with ASD, caregiver correct implementation of the BST and tactile prompting intervention package and a measure of social validity. During each trial a point system will be used to assess child behaviour. Participants will earn 1 point for engaging in each of the following behaviours: (a) calling out for their caregiver in a louder than conversational voice, (b) locating a store employee, and (c) informing the employee that he/she was lost. Caregiver correct implementation will be measured as a percentage correct on a treatment integrity checklist. Finally, caregiver satisfaction of the intervention are being measured using an adapted version of the *Treatment Acceptability Rating Form–Revised*[[1]](#endnote-1). Inter-observer agreement is being calculated on 30% of the sessions.

**3) Results:** Preliminary results indicate that Participant 1 met mastery after 21 trials, and the caregiver successfully faded the tactile prompting device. Follow-up data at 2 months and 4 months showed that Participant 1 maintained the help seeking behaviour.  Data collection with Participant 2 is currently underway.  Preliminary results show that the intervention package is also effective for teaching help-seeking behaviour to this participant. Data collection for Participant 3 is forthcoming.

**4) Discussion/Conclusions:** Alarmingly, nearly half of children with ASD elope or bolt, and more than half of these children go missing for a concerning duration of time and/or enter into dangerous situations. Becoming separated or lost from a caregiver can pose a potential safety risk to children with ASD. BST and tactile prompting devices have been shown to be an effective method for teaching children help-seeking behaviour[[2]](#endnote-2)[[3]](#endnote-3). This study contributes to the limited empirical research on parent training using BST to teach help-seeking behaviour to children with ASD.

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