

Living & Working with Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in British Columbia

A Manual for Parents
& Community Professionals



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Acknowledgements

The core purpose of this manual is to support parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder so that they can manage treatment programs for their children. Not that parents need to become behavior consultants (although some have) or doctors (although some are), rather that parents need to have enough relevant information to make informed decisions about how to support their child.

It was Dr. Joe Lucyshyn of the University of British Columbia who provided the fundamental concept for this approach. “Dr. Joe” has worked with ACT intensively over the last four years, traveling to present workshops on Positive Behavior Support across the province. It was on the treacherous descent into Castlegar Airport, in the Interior Region of B.C., that I started to speak to him of ACT’s goal of helping families to understand what good treatment looks like. Dr. Joe offered the concept of “connoisseurship”. Meaning that like connoisseurs of great art, parents do not have to be great artists themselves, but they can be supported to develop an understanding of what to look for in terms of excellent autism treatment.

As I have worked on the development of this manual, I have often considered the concept of connoisseurship. Essentially, the authors of this manual are helping ACT to build parental and community connoisseurship in B.C.

Special thanks go to all the parents who have sent ACT their photos and their insights into parenting a child with ASD. As a parent myself, I know that it is often difficult to reflect on the early days of diagnosis and treatment. The willingness of families to share their experiences with others, as well as photographs of their children, will be deeply appreciated by those who are building their own connoisseurship. They will also enjoy the cartoons of Dr. Bob Walter, who has lightened the more serious material that dominates this manual.

ACT is particularly grateful for the commitment of our authors, who have taken time from their already frantic schedules to consider the needs of families and community professionals for reliable information. Each contribution has gone through a number of revisions. Given how quickly the field of autism treatment is changing, it is likely that more will be required!

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Dr. Mary Ellen Ross – Parent and Member of ACT's Board of Directors

Dr. Elizabeth Hartney – Parent and Member of ACT's Advisory Council

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ACT – Autism Community Training Society has designed this manual to provide accurate and authoritative information as a service to enrich understanding of autism related issues in British Columbia. This information is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between a client/patient/site visitor and his/her existing physician or other professional.

This information should not be relied on to recommend a specific method or treatment for an individual child. ACT is not engaged in providing medical, psychological, financial, legal or other professional services. Readers should consult specialists to provide treatment information individualized for specific children or individual circumstances. Emergency questions or crisis situations (particularly regarding medical or mental health) should be directed immediately by telephone or in-person to qualified professionals.

Questions about eligibility and funding programs should be verified with the organizations providing the programs. Issues of employment and tax law should be verified by qualified professionals specific to individual circumstances.

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