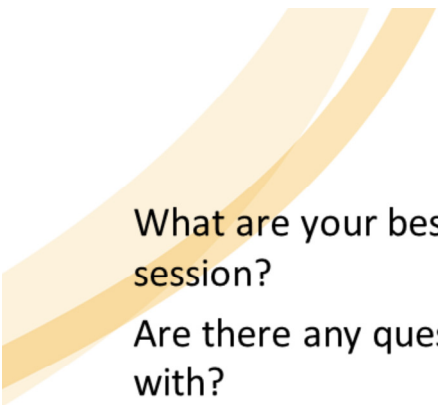


Working with children with Autism Spectrum Conditions using a SCERTS informed process

Alicia Crane (Educational Psychologist)
Amanda Gaukroger (Trainee Educational Psychologist)




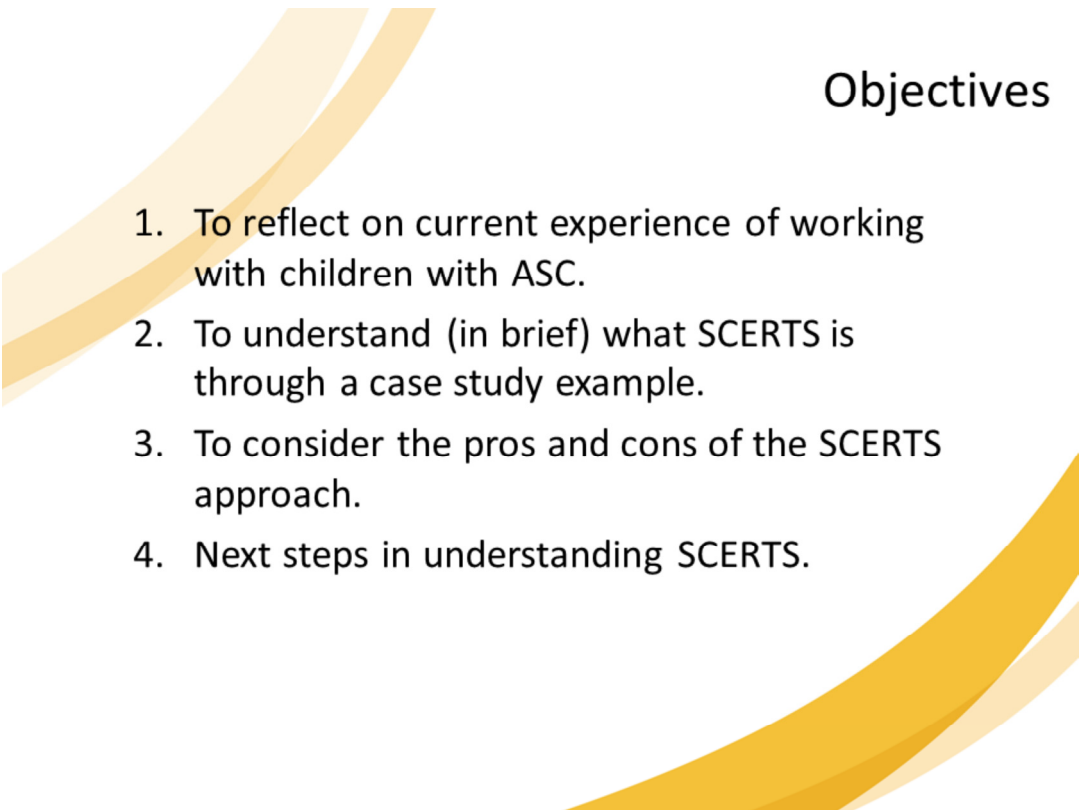


Best hopes?

What are your best hopes of achieving from this session?

Are there any questions that you have come with?





Objectives

1. To reflect on current experience of working with children with ASC.
2. To understand (in brief) what SCERTS is through a case study example.
3. To consider the pros and cons of the SCERTS approach.
4. Next steps in understanding SCERTS.

Experience working with Autism?

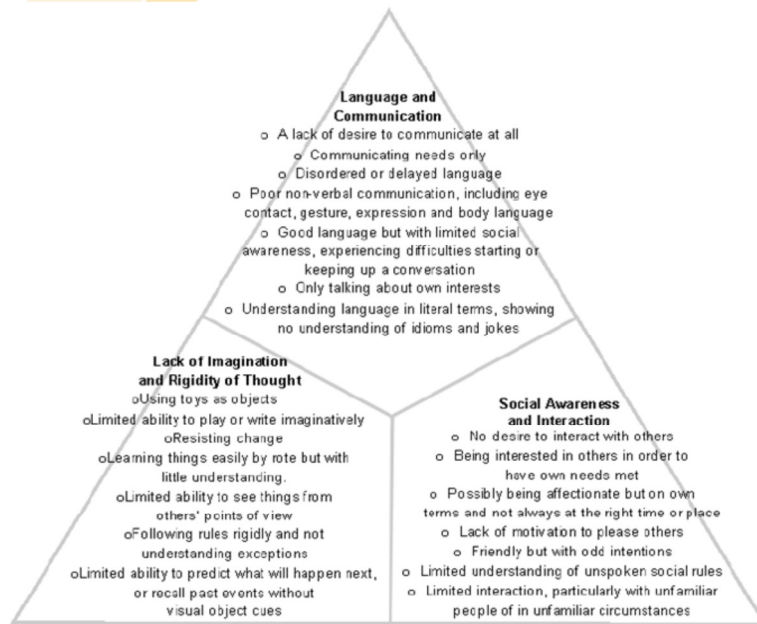


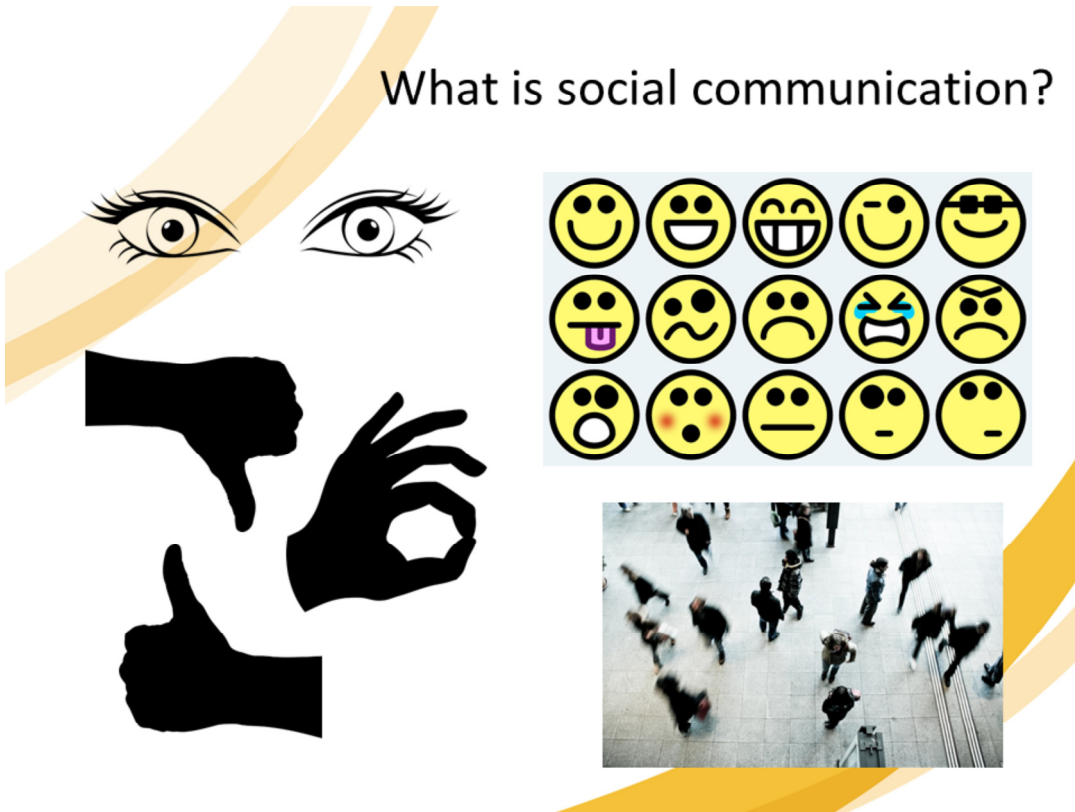
Figure 3. Triad of Impairments adapted from Ali & Frederickson (2006)

Think Pair Share

What is Autism? This about a child you work with and how their Autism presents, what are the key common features?
Information give – triad of impairments.

Before diagnosed often referred to as “social communication difficulties”.

What is social communication?



Think Pair Share

What is social communication and how do children with ASC differ in social communication skills to neurotypical children?

Information give

Social communication skills refer to all of the skills we need when using language to communicate and engage in conversations with other. Social communication encompasses the following skills: ... Understanding and using non-verbal communication skills, e.g. eye contact, facial expression, gesture, proximity and distance.

Children with autism are more at risk of emotional difficulties given the impact of the school context (social and sensory) as well as the difficulties they may have identifying their feelings (emotional literacy) and those of others...

What is emotional regulation?



Think Pair Share

What is emotional regulation and how do children with Autism differ in their emotional development compared to neurotypical children?

Information give

Ability to control which feelings you have

And the intensity of feelings

Emotional self-regulation or emotion regulation is the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed.

Helpful to have a framework through which we can support both social communication and emotional regulation...




What is SCERTS?

A framework which outlines stages of development and well evidenced strategies.

SC – Social Communication: Supporting a child's ability to communicate, comprehend and collaborate with others

ER – Emotional regulation: Supporting a child's ability to cope, make transitions, and actively engage with others

TS – Transactional Support: Interpersonal supports and learning supports embedded in the natural environment to foster SC and ER



Read from slides.

Transactional support can be a tricky concept to grasp...

What is “transactional support”?

Simply put, transactional supports are *strategies*.

Both the way the adults and children work with the person with ASC and the way the environment is adjusted.



Think Pair Share

What transactional supports (strategies) do you already use? How do you alter the environment for someone with Autism?

Information give

Case Study M

Determining communication Stage

Worksheet for Determining Communication Stage

Child's name: M Date: 03/4/19

1. Does the child use ALL of the following?

1a. Does the child use at least 3 different words or phrases (spoken, signed, pictures, written words, or other symbolic system)? ☒

1b. Does the child use at least 3 words or phrases referentially (i.e., to refer to specific objects, people, or activities)? ☐

1c. Does the child use at least 3 words or phrases with communicative intent (i.e., by coordinating the words or phrases with gestures or gaze for a communicative purpose)? ☒

1d. Does the child use at least 3 words or phrases regularly (i.e., often, not just on a rare occasion)? ☐

☒ No:
Use Social Partner stage forms.

☐ Yes: Go to Question 2.

Does the child use ALL of the following?

2a. Does the child use at least 100 different words or phrases (spoken, signed, pictures, written words, or other symbolic system)? ☐

2b. Does the child use at least 100 words or phrases referentially (i.e., to refer to specific objects, people, or activities)? ☐

2c. Does the child use at least 100 words or phrases with communicative intent (i.e., by coordinating the words or phrases with gestures or gaze for a communicative purpose)? ☐

2d. Does the child use at least 100 words or phrases regularly (i.e., often)? ☐

First step is to determine the student's communication stage. This quick worksheet identifies what stage the student is at

If in doubt go back to stage below – particularly with conversational partner

For language/conversation partner – be conscious that articulate ASD children who have good language may not be able to apply it socially so may be language partners rather than conversational partners.....

Case Study M Observation

SCERTS Observation Form

Child: M

Date: 27/3/19 – 1/4/19

| SCERTS Focus area | Observational Notes |
|----------------------|---|
| Social Communication | <p>27.3.19 – 9:05-9:35 – Corridor transition</p> <p>J sang ABC to try and help transition. He sang back (hummed incoherently), made eye contact and copied language e.g. mimicking J when she said 'a is for apple' M moved his mouth to make 'a a apple' along with J.</p> |
| | <p>9:35-9:45 – Classroom unstructured</p> <p>In classroom L started pouring water at the water tray and trying to entice M. After a few minutes M started to watch L from a distance. When L took out spinning water funnel and used it, M came over, touched L's hand and signalled he wanted more. M attempted to copy play with some physical support (L helped him to pour). He said 'pour' and 'go' during the play copying L. M showed willingness to communicate through imitating actions and copying words. M spent most of the time looking at the water and spinning, rather than interacting by making eye contact with L. He made eye contact fleetingly but use touch to get my attention.</p> |
| | <p>1.4.19 9:05-9:40 – Transition and classroom</p> <p>M communicated he didn't want to come in by sitting on the floor in the corridor outside the classroom. He was offered a number line by J (adult standing by the door to the classroom) and he came and took number line and walked into the classroom. M walked over to the water tray (overstimulated) put his whole body into the tray, lots of splashing, trying to dunk. M allowed G to come and play alongside him at the same water tray. M was physically redirected (using caring c.s. on back of arms) to the outdoor area (intention to use water tray outside). M ran into the playground and went to the gate and kicked shoes off, crying, jumping up and down.</p> <p>M watched adults walk to the water tray and kicked his shoes to signal he wanted them to be put on. He had stopped crying. L put his shoes on and he was calm. M started to shake the net side to side. L also got a pipe and began to copy his play. L touched her pipe onto M's net. He mirrored play by touching his net onto L's pipe. L touched M's t-shirt/belly with her pipe to initiate an interaction/laughter but M turned away and disengaged from play with L.</p> <p>1/4/19 9:40-9:45 – Table time</p> |

Consider:

Joint observations/planning

At least two contexts – home, school (classroom/playground/lunch) in the community

At least two group sizes – 1-1, small group, large group & familiar/unfamiliar partners

At least four activities – structured/unstructured, familiar/unfamiliar, easy/difficult, social/solitary, must do/fun, motor based/sedentary, preferred/non preferred, language based/non-language based, busy/calm.

Purpose- what are you looking for

Case Study M Observation



SCERTS in Action - Observation & Action Plan Form

Child Name: M

Date: 16/05/19

Activity: RE/Music

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Describe what the child did well (e.g., how the child communicated, soothed, coped, and engaged with his/her environment)</p> <p>V. Socially motivated with peers. Tried hard to engage with the learning activity. Coped well with transitions. Was able to follow the majority of verbal instructions; particularly if they were accompanied by gesture. Used ilama soft toy to hold while concentrating. Put arms around peers + this was incorporated. Always shows concern + is multi-se.</p> | | |
| <p>Visual Structure and Organization</p> <p>Do you think the child knows....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What they have to do? (their role in the activity) (clear visuals indicating expectations, turn-taking, and roles) Why they have to do something? (the desirability of the task) (sensory exploration / cause & effect / tied to special interests or real-life events) What is happening next? (the sequence of activities) (objects of reference, activity baskets, photo/picture schedules, written day planner) What the steps are within the activity? (count-down strips, visual timers, written help box) | <p>What supports are working? (How have partners effectively supported the child)</p> <p>Peer role models. Gestural prompts modelled by G. Sensory toy with words. Practical activity - music/sounds. Cause effect - quiet instructions. Structured turn taking with resources (e.g. A's drum, B's recorder). One resource at a time.</p> | <p>What are some next steps?</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model questions/answers to structure his answers. Clear beginning and end of task. Model example of end product. |
| <p>Social Communication</p> <p>Do you think the child knows....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What to say/communicate (visuals such as objects, photos, pictures, written words remind the child how to ask for help, comment, respond to questions, etc) When to take part (when to initiate) (the activity includes opportunities for student participation) | <p>What supports are working?</p> <p>Crossing who to work with. Peer role models</p> | <p>What are some next steps?</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>Conversation cues/questions at least 3. Adults to scaffold conversation. Over time get to generate one question of his own.</p> |
| <p>Emotional Regulation</p> <p>Do you think the child knows....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to soothe or engage by themselves? (how to regulate their emotions) (access to sensory supports, visual choices of coping strategies) That others are responsive and a source of emotional support? | <p>What supports are working?</p> <p>Sensory toy - feeling wall. Busy board (foot wobble wheel deck). Movement breaks.</p> | <p>What are some next steps?</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise his answers. |

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SAP Summary Form
Social Partner Stage

Child's name: M

Quarterly start date of observation: Spring 2009 Child's age: 5

SCERTS Profile

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Joint Attention

JA1 Engages in reciprocal interaction

JA2 Shares attention

JA3 Shares emotion

JA4 Shares intentions to regulate the behavior of others

JA5 Shares intentions for social interaction

JA6 Shares intentions for joint attention

JA7 Persists and repairs communication breakdowns

Symbol Use

SU1 Learns by imitation of familiar actions and sounds

SU2 Understands nonverbal cues in familiar activities

SU3 Uses familiar objects conventionally in play

SU4 Uses gestures and nonverbal means to share intentions

SU5 Uses vocalizations to share intentions

SU6 Understands a few familiar words

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Mutual Regulation

MR1 Expresses range of emotions

MR2 Responds to assistance offered by partners

MR3 Requests partners' assistance to regulate state

MR4 Recovers from extreme dysregulation with support from partners

Self-Regulation

SR1 Demonstrates availability for learning and interacting

SR2 Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level during familiar activities

SR3 Regulates emotion during new and changing situations

SR4 Recovers from extreme dysregulation by self

The SCERTS Profile is a Comprehensive Educational Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Copyright © 2005 by The University of Maryland System. All rights reserved.

Case Study M SAP-Summary

SAP summary form allows you to track their progress and see how they are going in each area. This is useful to undertake outcome setting

Case Study M

Outcome setting

M SCERTS framework Summer 1 2019

| | Small Step Week 3 and 4 | Review | Small Step Week 5 | Review | Short term outcome | Long term outcome |
|--|--|--------|--|--------|---|---|
| | JA 2.1: Looks towards people: Use motivators in front of adults face to encourage M to look at the adult. Adult looks at the child in the eyes, looks at his face for a few seconds and then gives them the motivator. | | JA 2.1: Looks towards people: | | JA 2.1: Looks towards people: Criterion: The children directs gaze spontaneously (without prompting) toward another person's face. Looking toward people may occur without a communicative signal or may support communication. | JAS: Shares attention JA 2.1: Looks towards people JA 2.2: Shifts gaze between people and objects JA 2.3: Follows contact point (=SU2.4) JA 2.4: Follows distal point (=SU2.5) |
| | SU 6.1: Responds to own name: Adult to put a motivator in clear container, place things out of reach, have parts of toys in clear containers to increase opportunities to request. Shake and show the container to engage M and then say his name then encourage the request with PECs. | | SU 6.1: Responds to own name: | | SU 6.1: Responds to own name: Criterion: The child responds to his or her name at least two times by turning toward or looking at the person immediately (within two seconds) after the child's name is called. | SUA: Understands a few familiar words SUA.1: Responds to own name SUA.2: Responds to a few words in familiar social games SU 6.3 Responds to a few familiar person, body part or object names SU 6.4: Responds to a few frequently used phrases in familiar routines. |
| | MR2.1: Soothes when comforted by partners When M is unregulated with regards to behaviour (shows signs of biting or scratching) follow his communication needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do some body breaks – proprioceptive movements. 1. Wall push 2. Trampoline jumps (x10) 3. Log roll with weighted blanket 4. Stomach on ball 5. Bouncing on ball | | MR2.1: Soothes when comforted by partners | | MR2.1: Soothes when comforted by partners Criterion: The child soothes or calms down quickly (i.e. within 30 seconds) when partner offers comforts verbally or non-verbally, with the expectation of periods of time when the children is experiencing extreme dysregulation, fear, or violations of expectations. | MR2: Responds to assistance offered by partners MR2.1: Soothes when comforted by partners MR2.2: Engaged when alerted by partners MR2.3: Responds to bids for interaction (=JAS.1) MR2.4: Responds to changes in partners' expression of emotion (=JAS.3) MR2.5 Attunes to change in partners' expression of emotion (=JAS.4) MR2.6: Makes choices when offered by partners (=JAS.1) |

Using the summary sheet you can set outcomes no more than $\frac{3}{4}$

Having short and long term outcomes allows what may be a big step for a child to be broken down and more manageable. It is also important to think about how they will achieve these and what resources and needed to support them



Benefits?

- Increase joint attention for the child.
- Increase “symbol use” (such as visuals and gestures) for the child.
- Increase expressive language for the child.
- Staff think more positively about the function of the child’s behaviour.
- Staff report better teamwork.
- Assists sharing good practice.
- Helps to plan intervention.
- Helps problem solving discussions.
- Helps communication between professionals.
- Single framework for tracking detailed progress over time.

Think Pair Share
Information give

SCERTS brings together a number of evidence-based theories and practices within one overarching framework.

O’Neill et al. (2010) explored the use of SCERTS in a special school, and found it to increase the joint attention, symbol use and expressive language of participants. Staff also reported SCERTS to positively change their practice and thinking in relation to functions of behaviours. It was commented that to be most effective, SCERTS needs to be adopted by the whole school.

Molteni, Guldberg & Logan (2013) found SCERTS to enhance teamwork when working with pupils with ASD. The framework enabled professionals to exchange daily good practice, plan educational work together and discuss and problem-solve challenges. The Team Around the Child approach was identified as

being a particularly successful element of SCERTS, which encourages team working when supporting SEN pupils.

Greathead et al. (2016) concluded SCERTS to be a promising technique in enabling children and young people with severe or profound learning difficulties and complex needs to be able to share their views.

A number of research studies have used SAPs to monitor pupil progress in developing a range of skills. For example, Makovsky (2016) used SAPs to investigate the effectiveness of music-play for children with ASD. This demonstrates the usefulness of SCERTS assessment tools in tracking progress in pupils over time.

More benefits?

- Gives time to reflect and step back from working directly with the child.
- Helps when you get stuck.
- Gives a *named approach* which is evidence based.
- Helps remind you of all the strategies in your toolkit.
- Can be affirming to review all the strategies currently in place.
- Solution focussed.
- Helps to build understanding of the child's world.
- Helps you notice small developments.
- Can help to manage consistency between home and school.

Think Pair Share
Information give

Any other potential benefits? (anecdotal)

Gives time to reflect and step back from working directly with the child.

Helps when you get stuck.

Helps remind you of all the strategies in your toolkit.

Gives a named approach which is evidence based rather than "we have lots of strategies which we know work with children with ASC".

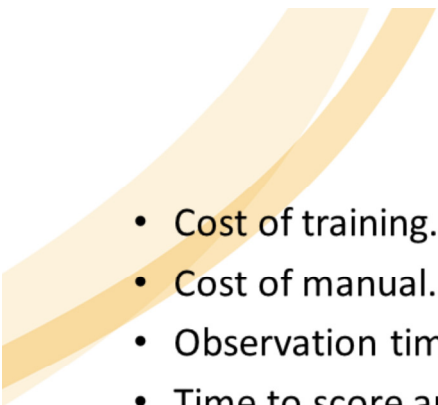
Solution focussed.

Helps to build understanding of the child's world.


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Can help to manage consistency between home and school.

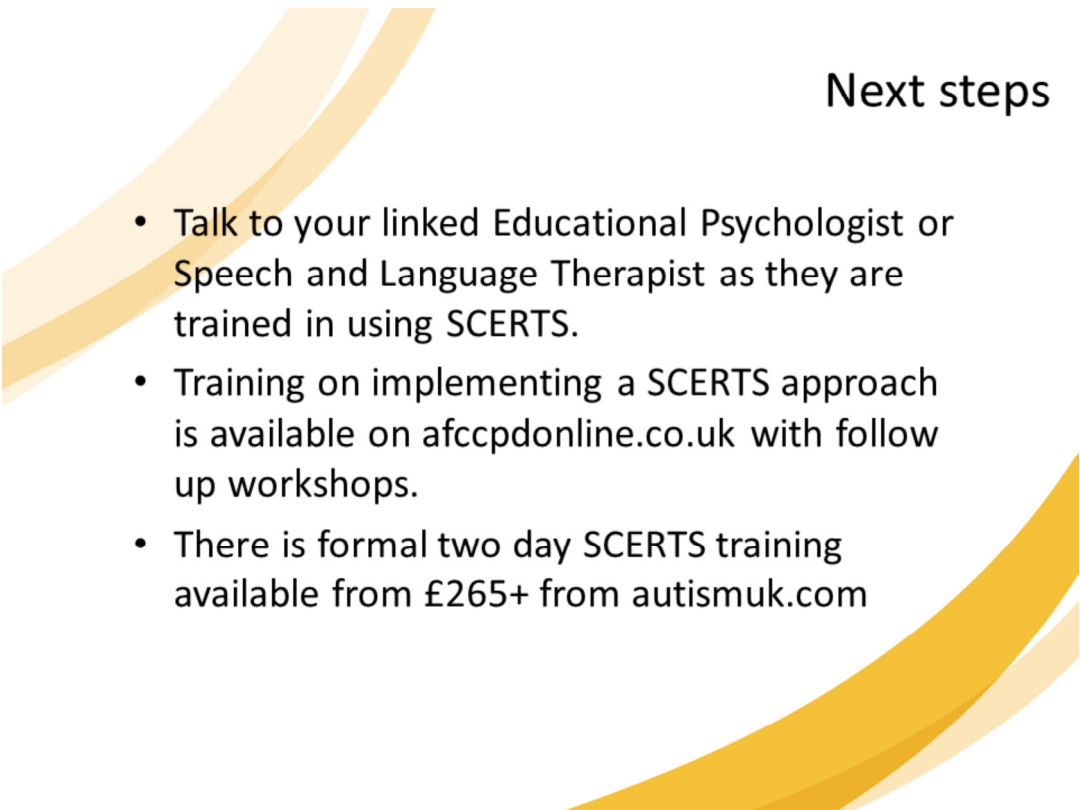


Potential challenges?

- Cost of training.
 - Cost of manual.
 - Observation time (two adults).
 - Time to score and fill in forms.
- 

Information give – we understand that there are some obvious challenges to implementing a new approach...

Think Pair Share – what are the other potential barriers that you may have? Problem solve together.



Next steps

- Talk to your linked Educational Psychologist or Speech and Language Therapist as they are trained in using SCERTS.
- Training on implementing a SCERTS approach is available on [afccpdonline.co.uk](https://www.afccpdonline.co.uk) with follow up workshops.
- There is formal two day SCERTS training available from £265+ from [autismuk.com](https://www.autismuk.com)

<https://www.afccpdonline.co.uk/education/courses/bookings/default.asp>

<https://www.autismuk.com/training/the-scerts-model-2-day-training/>



Evaluation form

Thank you for listening!

