

Plain Language Social Interaction and Support

This resource applies the principles of the **Dynamic Development Plan (DDP)** to the core ethical standards established by the **Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)**. It is designed to be accessible, using plain language to ensure that students, educators, and neurodivergent individuals can align their support strategies with a neuro-affirming ethos.

1. Understanding Social Agency

The Big Idea: You have the right to choose how you interact with others.

- **What it means:** Being social does not look the same for everyone. Some people like to talk a lot, while others prefer to be quiet together.
- **The DDP Approach:** Instead of trying to change how you socialise, we look at your strengths. If you express yourself best through writing, digital tools, or sharing facts, that is a valid way to connect.
- **Support Goal:** To help you feel comfortable being yourself, rather than forcing you to act neurotypical.

2. Using Plain Language

The Big Idea: Everyone deserves to understand what is being said.

- **What it means:** Sometimes people use hidden meanings, sarcasm, or complicated words. This can be confusing and creates unnecessary barriers.
- **The DDP Approach:** We use **Communication Scaffolding**. This means we give clear, literal instructions and provide information in ways that are easy to process. We do not expect you to read between the lines.
- **Support Goal:** To make sure you have all the information you need the first time you hear or read it.

3. Focus on Your Goals

The Big Idea: Support should help you get what you want out of life.

- **What it means:** Some support plans try to make people appear more normal. We believe support must be ethical and focused on what you actually need.

- **The DDP Approach:** We use **Environmental Adaptation**. Instead of trying to fix the person, we fix the environment. If a room is too loud, too bright, or too crowded, we change the space so you can focus on your own goals.
- **Support Goal:** To help you succeed in the ways that matter most to you, based on your own definition of success.

4. Mutual Respect

The Big Idea: Your way of communicating is just as good as anyone else's.

- **What it means:** Communication is a two-way street. If there is a misunderstanding, it is a shared problem, not just your fault.
- **The DDP Approach:** We teach everyone about the **Double Empathy Problem**. We help your peers, teachers, and colleagues understand your social language so they can meet you halfway.
- **Support Goal:** To build a community where everyone respects different ways of thinking and speaking.

Summary for the Neurocoach

By following this guide, we ensure that every intervention is neuro-affirming. We do not use drills or forced social rules that require masking. Instead, we follow the evidence-based advice of **Lane Anthony (2024)** by prioritising the safety of the nervous system and the rights of the individual. When we respect social agency and use plain language, we create a genuine path for inclusion.