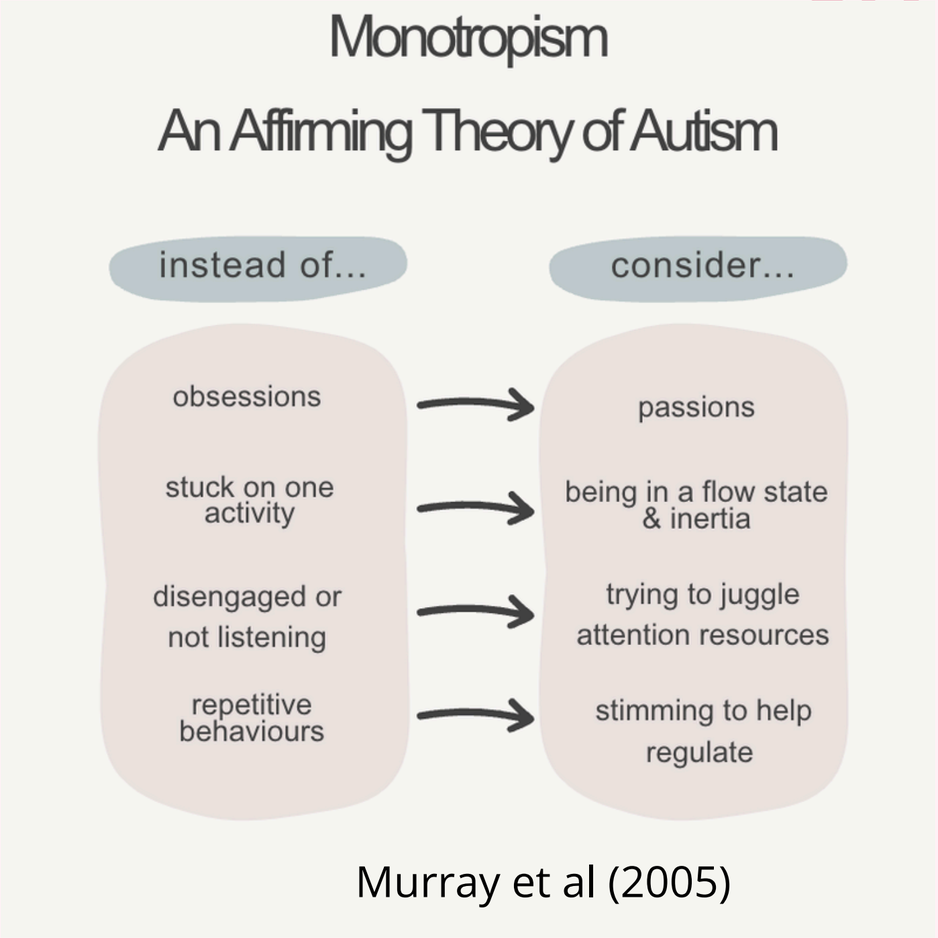
CHILD-LED PLAY AND MONOTROPISM IN GLPS: A JOURNEY OF RE-LEARNING

Cathy Shilling - The Speech Den
Helen Edgar - Autistic Realms

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Monotropism

"Monotropic minds tend to have their attention pulled more strongly towards a smaller number of interests at any given time, leaving fewer resources for other processes."
Fergus Murray
(monotropism.org)



Murray et al (2005)

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GLPs: Deep Focus & Intense Interests

- Intense, sustained focus on specific interests or tasks
- Can be harder switching attention
- Strong emotional and sensory responses within the focus area
- Differences processing multiple streams of information simultaneously

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Monotropism Helps Us Understand Strengths and Challenges

- Children learn best when immersed in a single focus
- Switching attention can be difficult or distressing
- Deep focus supports language, play, and regulation
- Echolalia = regulation | Repetition = safety
- Special interests = joy and meaning | Silence = deep processing

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FOCUSED ATTENTION ON MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE



- GLPs often attach to emotionally/ sensorily resonant phrases

- Language sounds rhythmic or tuneful

- Language is retained from meaningful, focused contexts

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Gestalts Anchored in Attention



- Gestalt language stored in emotional, sensory experiences
- Stored in safe, relational flow states
- Scripts repeated because they matter

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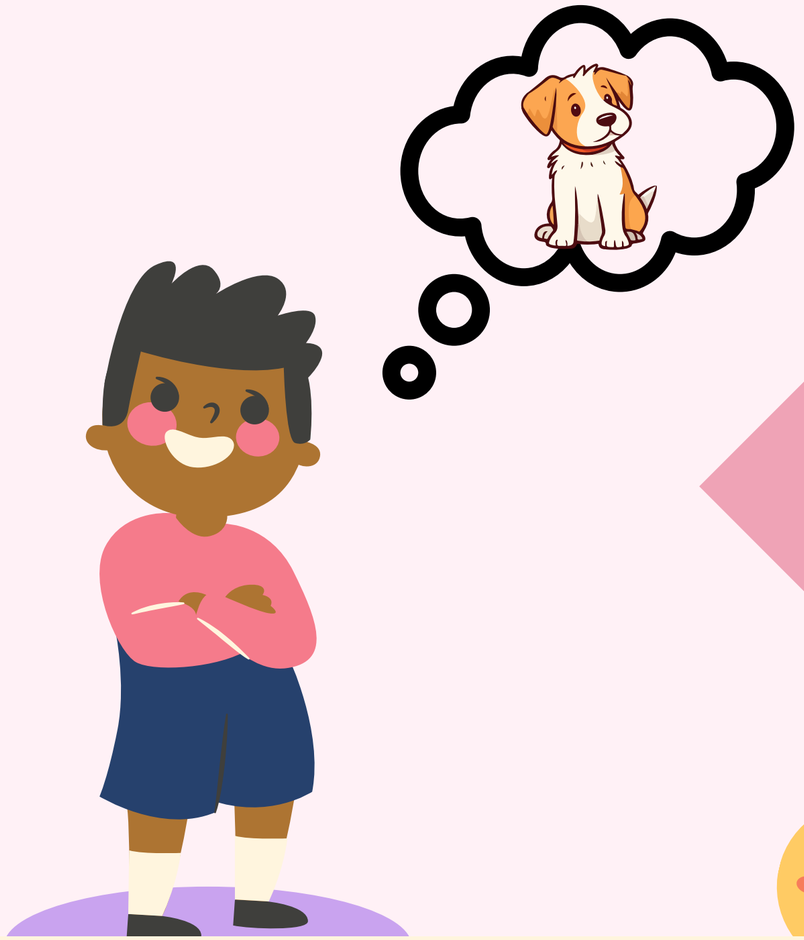
Scripts as Connections in Shared Flow



- Scripts = emotional anchors and regulation tools
- Provide safety, signal needs, invite connection

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GLPs and Regulation

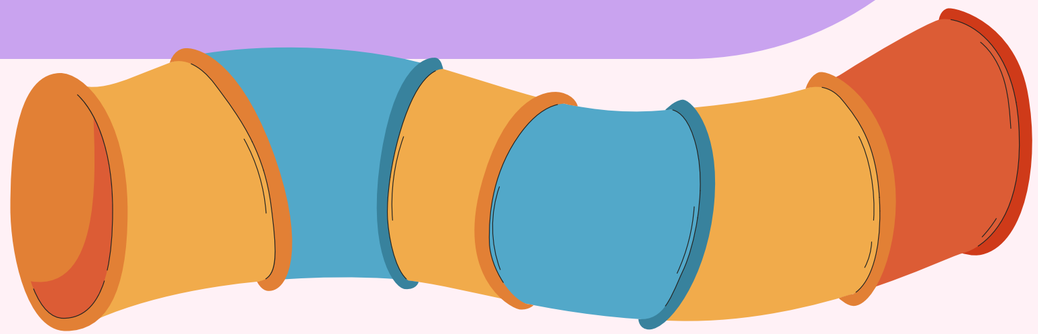


- GLPs return to familiar gestalts when overwhelmed
- Repetition helps regulate emotion and attention
- Important when environment is unpredictable to help feelings of safety

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LANGUAGE TIED TO INTERESTS



- Monotropic focus supports deep language growth
- Language tied to meaningful themes and interests/ experiences
- Repetition builds flexibility
- Model declarative language (especially important for our PDAers)

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WHAT IS CHILD-LED PLAY? A JOURNEY OF UNLEARNING



- Reframe deficit thinking and let go of neuronormative expectations, understand neurodivergent spiky profiles

- Child chooses and leads the activity - they have autonomy

- Adult follows—no prompts or corrections

- Follow child's focus without interrupting, allow time for repetition and pauses

- Validate GLP learning style and monotropic flow

- Build independence, confidence, and co- regulation

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Play Schemas, Monotropism & Sensory Needs



- Children express focus through schemas:
- Trajectory, Transporting, Enveloping
- Rotation, Positioning
- Respect and align with these actions

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MINIMIZE DISRUPTIONS TO THE ATTENTION TUNNEL & BE NEURO-AFFIRMING



- Prompting and redirecting disrupts the attention tunnel and a person's flow

- Wait for invitation to join in or try parallel play

- Join their rhythm and flow

- Autism + Environment = Outcome (Beardon, 2017)

- Seek out neuro-affirming practitioners and support (be wary of neurodiveristy-lite and harmful Postive Behaviour Support strategies)

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HOW WE CAN SUPPORT GLPS



SUPPORTING GESTALT LANGUAGE PROCESSORS THROUGH THE LENS OF MONOTROPISM

- VALIDATE SCRIPTING AND USE AS BUILDING BLOCKS
- FOLLOW INTERESTS AND JOIN THEIR FLOW
  ALLOW SILENCE AND CHILD-LED DIRECTION
- AVOID DIRECT PROMPTING,
  REDUCE QUESTIONS AND REDIRECTING
- MODEL LANGUAGE FROM THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE
  (I LOVE ... LET'S TRY.... HOW ABOUT...)
- RESPECT SENSORY NEEDS, BODILY AUTONOMY AND
  ALLOW PROCESSING TIME

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Find Out More & Join
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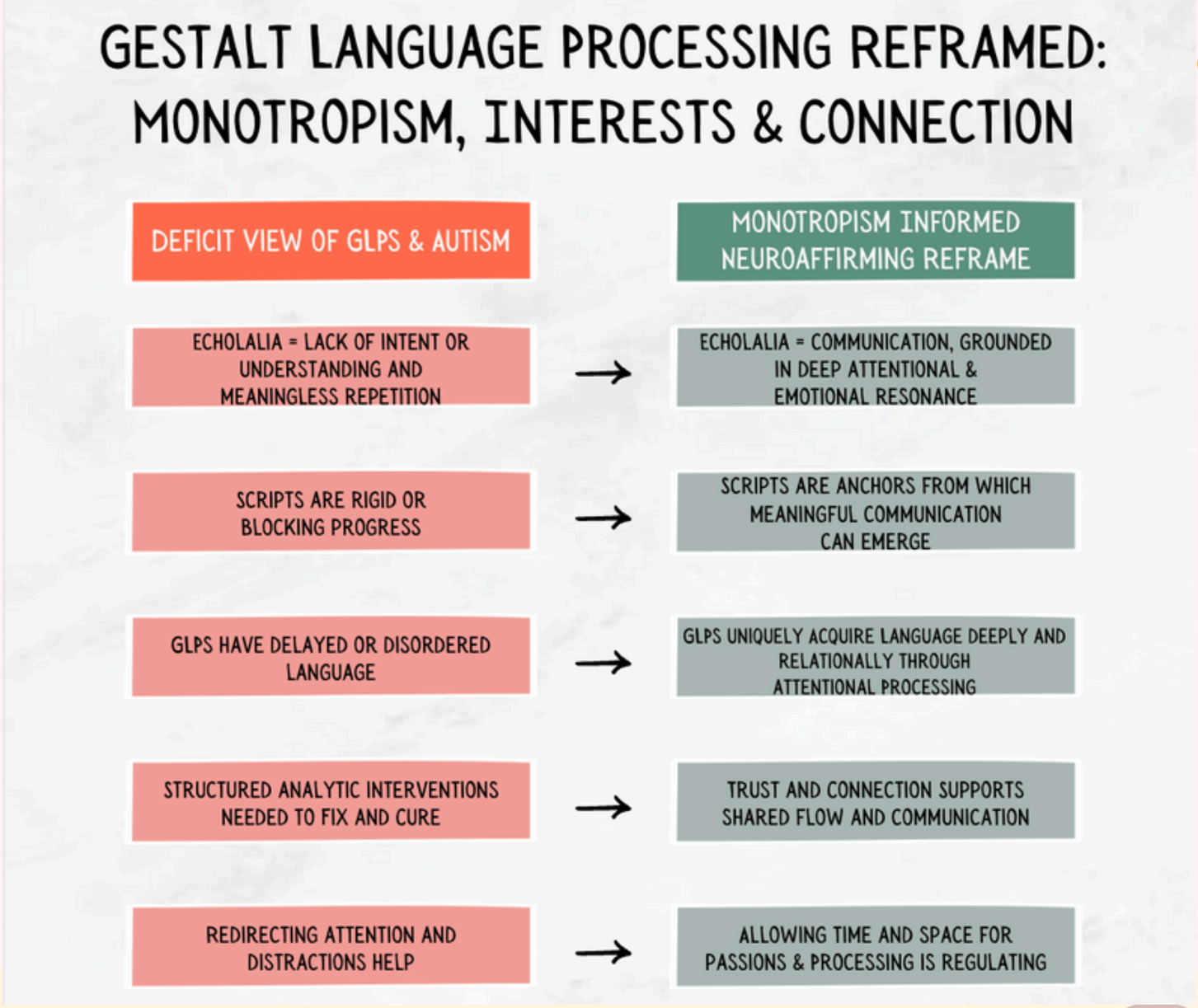
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Summary & Final Thoughts



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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US !

www.autisticrealms.com

www.thespeechden.com

www.monotropism.org

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