

Building Bridges

Guide to Support Co-Parenting

Caregiver Collaboration

Conflict, disagreements, or lack of communication between parents/caregivers and the support team can make it difficult to navigate access to supports for an Autistic child. It is important to recognize that disagreements and conflict are common. Caregiver collaboration is when all parties involved in a child's care are working together to the best of their ability and maintaining open communication with one another. Caregiver collaboration can vary extensively from one family to the next. The approach that works for one child, youth or family may be very different from what works for another.

Why It Matters

Divorce, shared custody, separation, family loss, or change in family structure may affect all aspects of the Autistic child's life such as:

- ◆ access to services
- ◆ mental health
- ◆ routine
- ◆ education
- ◆ future goals



What to Remember

When it comes to collaboration consider the following:

- ◆ different expectations of caregivers
- ◆ different household structures
- ◆ each caregiver's time limitations
- ◆ different resources available to each caregiver, such as access to family, respite, finances, or vehicle
- ◆ health restrictions of caregivers

What Caregiver Collaboration Can Look Like

Effective collaboration centres on prioritizing the child's well-being. By keeping discussions focused on the child; caregivers can foster clarity, reduce conflicts, and encourage collaboration. Here are some important areas to consider when supporting the Autistic person:

Support Needs

- ◆ child's needs and relevant supports will constantly be evolving
- ◆ frequency and timing of appointments
- ◆ costs of services
- ◆ access to funding
- ◆ changes in goals and the child's progress
- ◆ child's skills and abilities

Communication

- ◆ discuss appointment responsibilities and schedule regular check-ins
- ◆ decide who is included in communication about the child
- ◆ choose an appropriate mode of communication (e.g., text, email, shared calendar, or mediation apps) with your team

Roles

- ◆ roles of each caregiver may look different (e.g., pick-ups/drop-offs, overnights)
- ◆ shared access and amount of time with each caregiver can change over time
- ◆ define and plan roles related to funding (e.g., access, decision-making, and distribution)

For more information, contact Kerry's Place Autism Services:

+1-833-77-KERRY/1-833-775-3779

intake@kerrysplace.org

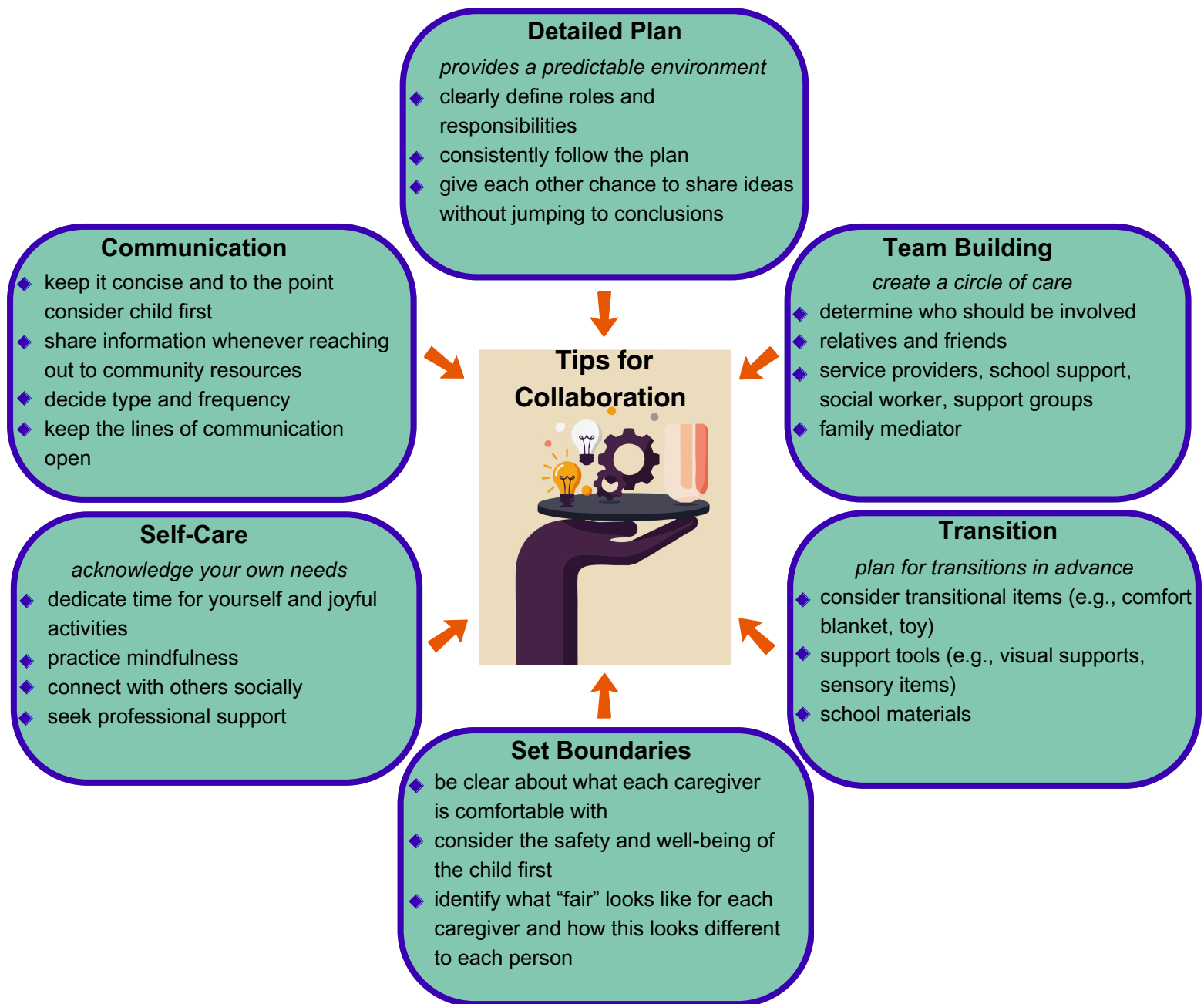
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Consider co-parenting as a collaboration that focuses on ensuring your child's well-being and needs are met. It is important to recognize and prioritize your child/youth's best interests and their experience when they are with you.

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