

## BOOK REVIEW

By Spencer D. Nolan, M.S. Ed.

Aspy, R., & Grossman, B.G. (2007). **The ziggurat model: A framework for designing comprehensive interventions for individuals with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome.** Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.



What if someone told you that he or she had created a framework for developing and implementing intervention plans for individuals with autism and Asperger Syndrome (AS) that was comprehensive and efficient, yet thorough; had a broad range of applicability; was individualized; fostered team work; and was consistent with recent federal and state guidelines?

Sounds too good to be true, right? Most of us strive to develop and implement intervention plans with these features and benefits but have lacked the advantage of a tool to guide us in doing so in a timely manner. That is, until *The Ziggurat Model* arrived.

*Comprehensive.* The Ziggurat model presents a five-level approach to intervention plans that progresses in a hierarchical order starting with sensory differences and biological needs, reinforcement, structure and visual supports, on to task demands, and, finally, skills to teach. Addressing each of the lower levels fosters success at the higher levels, thereby promoting maximum success for individuals with autism and AS. Moreover, this unique approach may be used to develop a general program or one that addresses specific behavioral concerns.

*Efficient, yet thorough.* Drs. Aspy and Grossman have accomplished a major feat in creating a model that is easy to understand and use and is sensitive to the limited time available to parents and professionals, yet does not sacrifice thoroughness. The model goes beyond the five levels listed above to incorporate two specially designed tools for use in ongoing assessment: the ABC-I, which aids in analyzing patterns of behavior and reminds us of those characteristics of autism and AS that may impact the individual; and the Underlying Characteristics Checklist (UCC), which helps identify these characteristics.

Further, for each of the levels of the Ziggurat, this innovative resource provides (a) descriptions of strategies that may be used to address them at a point of intervention: antecedent, behavior, or consequence; (b) considerations for incorporating these strategies; and (c) research to support them. Finally, The Ziggurat Model contains multiple case studies and a troubleshooting guide.

*Broad range of applicability.* The model may be used with individuals of all ages and ability levels. That is, it is just as valuable for a young child with classic autism as it is for a college student with AS.

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*Individualized.* The Ziggurat Model emphasizes the importance of building from each individual's unique needs, as opposed to providing a cookie-cutter approach to intervention.

*Team-based.* Collaboration and communication between parents and the multidisciplinary team are naturally fostered and enhanced. The Ziggurat model helps everyone understand their vital role in an individual's intervention plan and, therefore, makes them more effective partners.

*Consistent with recent federal and state guidelines.* Teams that implement the Ziggurat model can be confident that they are addressing federal and state priorities emphasizing the use of evidence-based practices, response-to-intervention, functional behavior assessments, and positive behavior interventions and supports.

This revolutionary tool has the potential to significantly, and perhaps most important, positively and proactively, impact the lives of individuals with autism and AS, their families, and the professionals with whom they work. Aspy and Grossman's book will aid you and your team in making this goal a reality.



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