

How the Sensory-Based MIGDAS-2 Individualizes the Autism Diagnostic Process

Marilyn J. Monteiro, PhD



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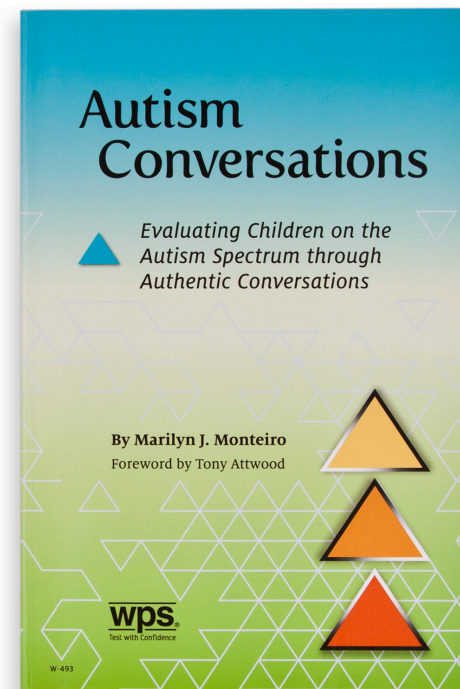


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Autism Conversations

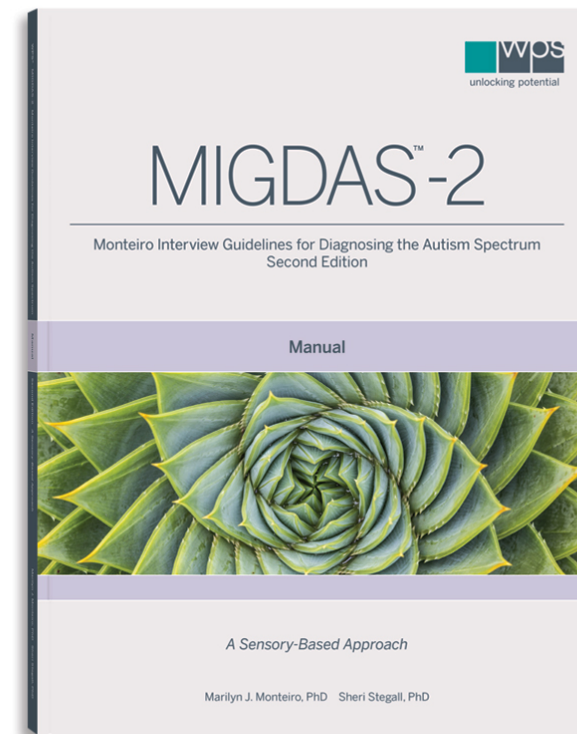


Evaluating Children on the Autism Spectrum Through Authentic Conversations

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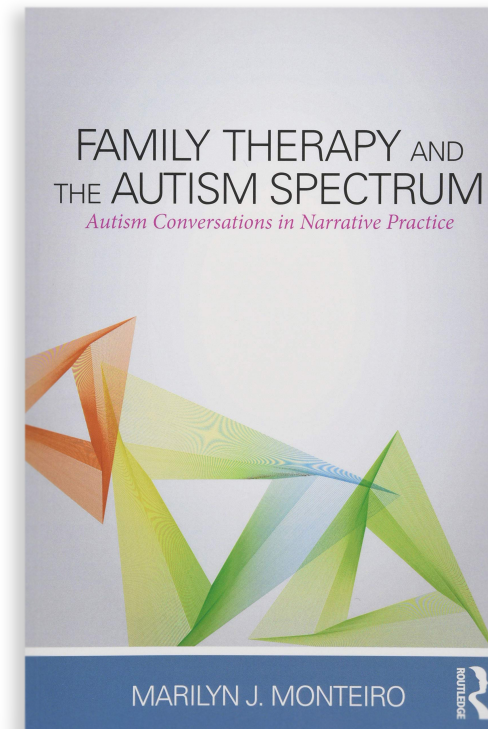
MIGDAS-2



Monteiro Interview Guidelines for Diagnosing the Autism Spectrum, Second Edition

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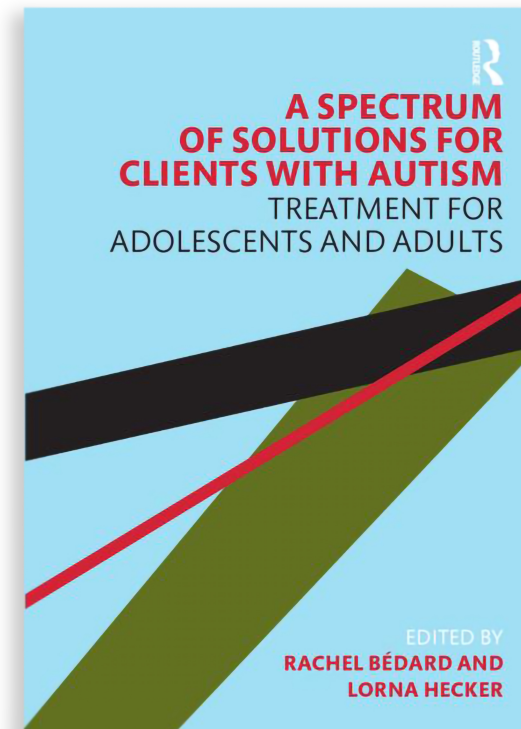
Family Therapy and the Autism Spectrum



Autism Conversations in Narrative Practice

Routledge

The Power of the Autism Spectrum Narrative



The Transformative Power of the Autism Spectrum Narrative

Chapter in Routledge Compilation

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?



- Interviewing children and their parents over the course of thousands of evaluations led to the development of the MIGDAS-2 system
- The MIGDAS-2 qualitative interview process emerged from the application of interview techniques that are in sync with the autism brain style and the resulting use of positive, descriptive language
- The conversational approach provided a way to connect with individuals and their parents in a meaningful way during the autism evaluation process

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- It also provided a structure to make the evaluation process enjoyable for the child, adolescent, or adult
- Children and their families were given a way to have a shared experience with the evaluator
- Both the child and the parents leave the autism evaluation experience with a nuanced and positive understanding of the child's individual story

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- This contrasts with the more common experience of being in a setting in which the individual is measured, observed, and scored—and then given a diagnosis or label with negative implications
- Although standardized measures play an important role in the autism evaluation process, they leave us without a compelling way to tell the nuanced story of the individual child, adolescent, or adult

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- Standardized measures like the ADOS-2 provide a solid, structured behavior sample that emphasizes social communication differences, with limited use of sensory-based materials
- The MIGDAS-2 is a qualitative diagnostic interview that is organized around exploring the individual's areas of preferred interest and inviting the individual to explore materials with interesting sensory properties

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- This sensory-based interview process removes the familiar, structured prompts that can mask the individual's underlying pattern of creating and maintaining routines with preferred topics and materials with interesting sensory properties
- Sensory-based routines become instantly recognizable with this process, as the individual's distinctive pattern of autism spectrum neurodiversity drives the approach to the materials and the conversation

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- The MIGDAS-2 qualitative interview process was designed to support evaluators when dealing with making differential and co-occurring diagnoses
- Standardized measures make it more challenging to parse out the underlying autism spectrum differences, leaving the evaluator hesitant to add that diagnosis
- This is especially the case with children and adolescents who are verbally fluent, twice exceptional, female, and/or racially or ethnically diverse

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- The conversational structure of the MIGDAS-2, using sensory fidget materials and topics of interest to the individual as the conversational entry points, results in a clear presentation of the autism spectrum brain style across age and ability levels
- The MIGDAS-2 visual framework, descriptive language, and accessible interview protocols were developed to support evaluators in creating the compelling individual story

You play a key role in supporting individuals with autism differences

- When you understand and describe how the individual with autism spectrum brain style differences views the world, you become a key advocate in promoting a positive personal narrative
- Your evaluation story supports the development of resiliency and a positive outlook for the child and the parents

Words We Want to Hear from Parents

“My son is not a label or a category. Having his diagnosis discussed with an appreciation of our son as a unique individual was reassuring to us.”

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



Parent responses after the adolescent MIGDAS-2 diagnostic interview:

- Kudos! Biggest compliment you could receive from Sally: “I felt understood.”
- Thanks so much. She enjoyed her time with you.

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- Today, we're going to go through an overview of the MIGDAS-2 system of interviews and talk about how to integrate their use into your comprehensive autism evaluation toolkit
- The protocols support the development and use of respectful and accessible language to describe individuals in a way that is instantly understood and recognized
- When discussing the diagnosis
- When writing narrative reports

Why the MIGDAS-2 Process?

(cont.)



- The MIGDAS-2 process is built around a visual framework
- This framework provides you with an organizational system to guide the way you think—
- And talk—
- About the individual's autism spectrum brain style profile

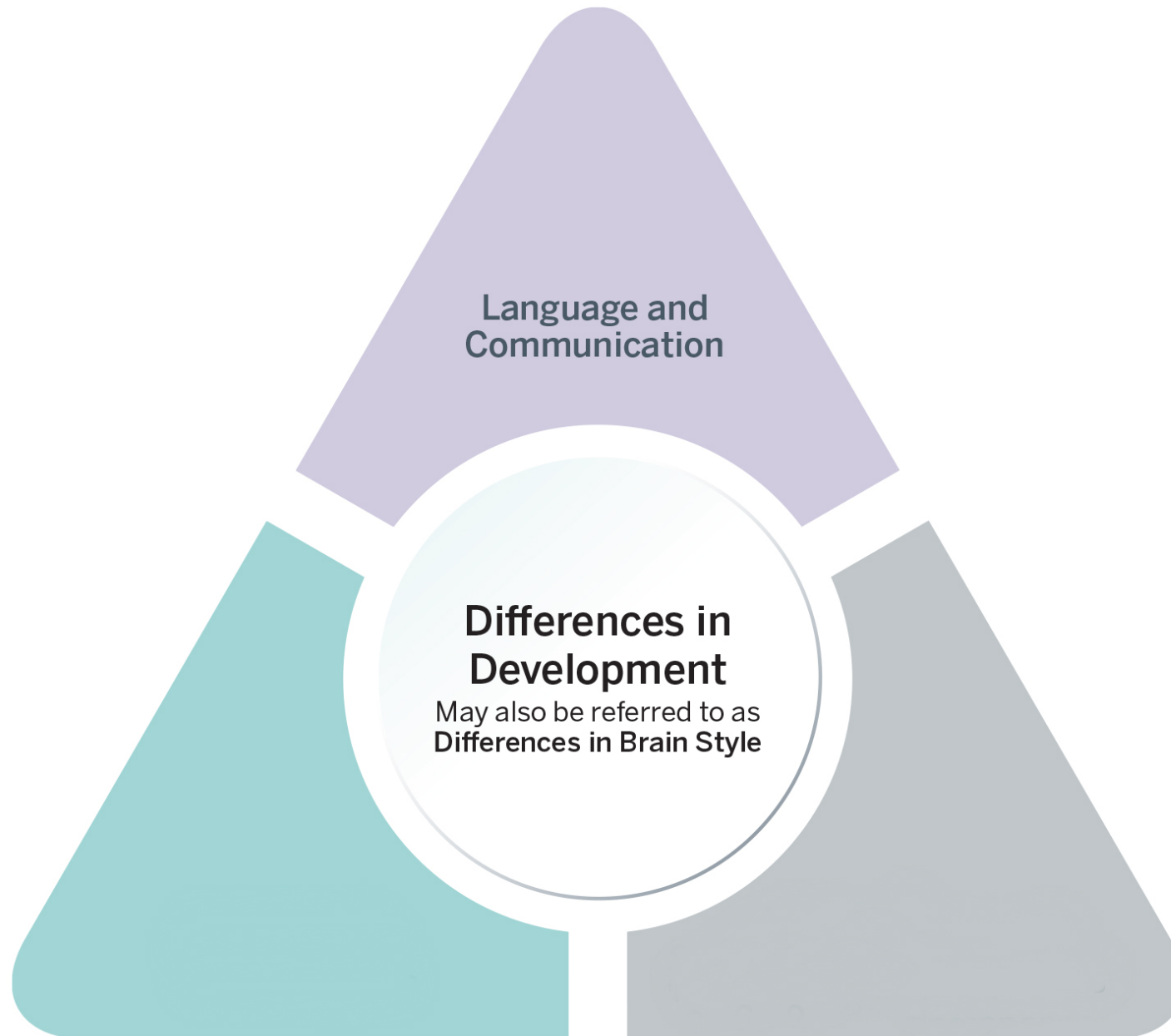


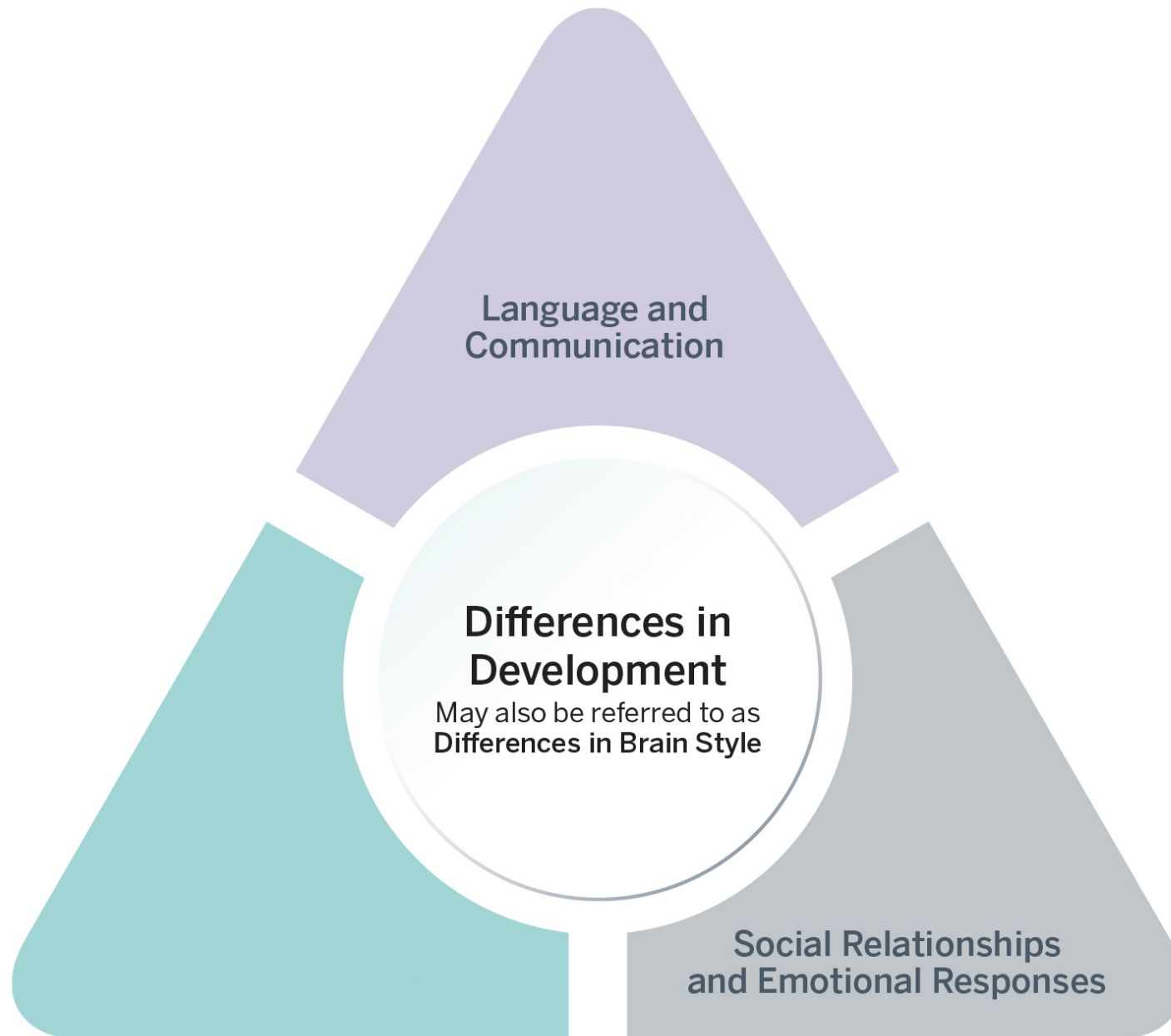
The Visual Framework

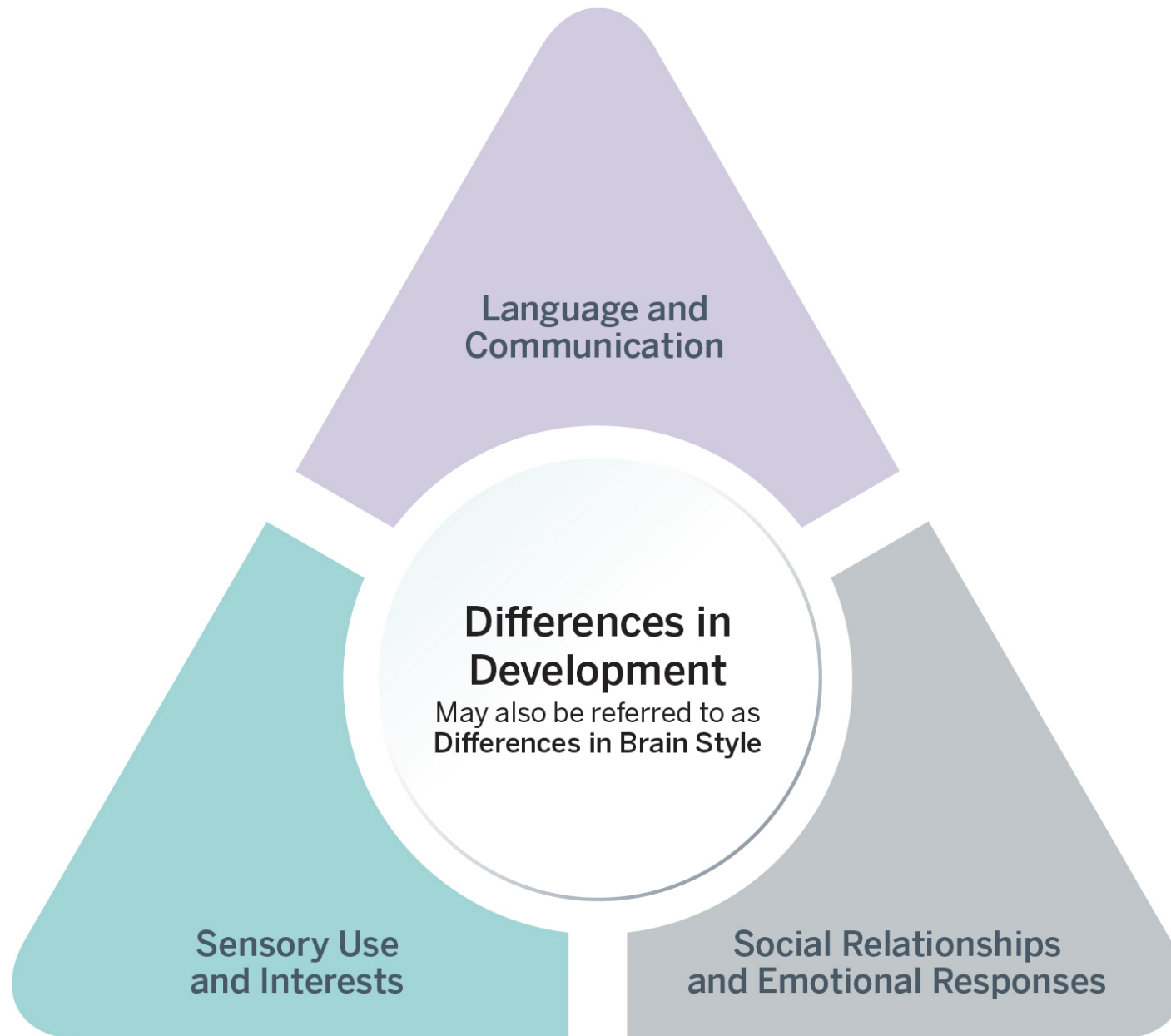
The Descriptive Triangle







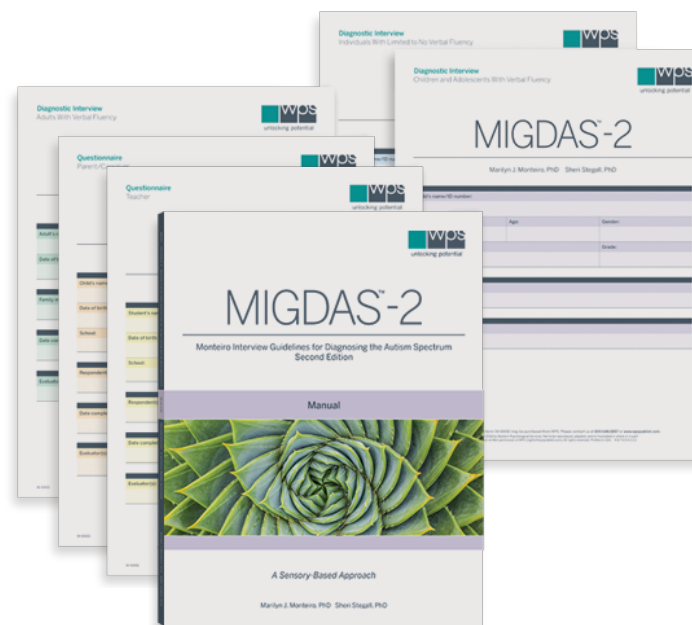




The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System



- Manual
- Parent/Caregiver Questionnaire
- Teacher Questionnaire
- Diagnostic Interview Protocols

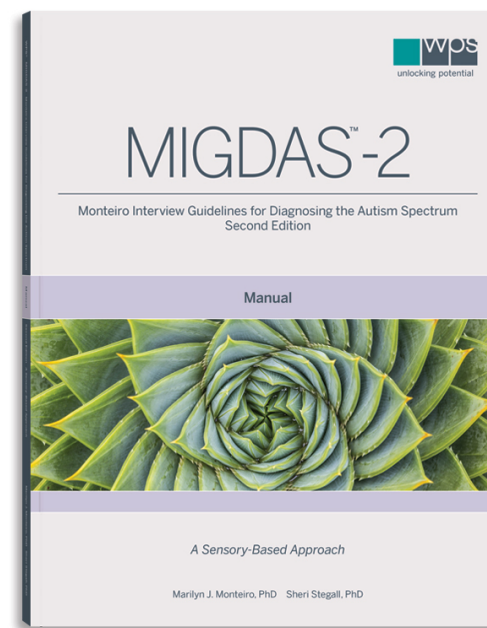


<https://www.wpspublish.com/migdas-2-monteiro-interview-guidelines-for-diagnosing-the-autism-spectrum-second-edition>

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Manual



- Provides completed protocols for cases across age and ability levels with autism spectrum differences as well as rules out cases (ADHD without ASD; intellectual disability without ASD; language disability with ASD)



The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Parent/ Caregiver Questionnaire



- The questionnaire booklet is for the clinician to either have a face-to-face conversation with the parent or have the parent complete the booklet and then have a follow-up conversation
- Conversational prompts are organized to start with areas of present concern and include prompts for parents to discuss positive qualities and attributes
- Prompts are provided for parents to tell information about the child's areas of preferred interest as well as sensory preferences and sensitivities

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Parent/ Caregiver Questionnaire

(cont.)



- The questionnaire booklet is designed to provide parents and caregivers with a structured way to tell their unique and singular narrative about their child
- The autism spectrum narrative can be clearly identified as the narrative unfolds
- The questionnaire provides an organized way to record and report stories that highlight the individual presentation of Autism Spectrum Disorder

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Parent/ Caregiver Questionnaire

(cont.)



- As a clinician, the questionnaire provides you with a structured opportunity to establish a relationship of trust that rating scales do not provide
- The interview booklet is designed so you can transcribe the responses given by the parent or caregiver—
- Including their story details—
- Into a compelling narrative for your assessment report

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Parent/ Caregiver Questionnaire

(cont.)



- The interview booklet is designed as a qualitative narrative tool to be used along with standardized autism-specific behavior rating scales

Questionnaire
Parent/Caregiver

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MIGDAS-2

Marilyn J. Monteiro, PhD | Sheri Stegall, PhD

Child's name/ID number: _____

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Respondent(s): _____ Relationship to child: _____

Date completed: _____

Evaluator(s): _____

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The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Teacher Questionnaire



- The teacher questionnaire is designed for teachers to write their narrative responses to prompts about the student in the school setting
- When given several days to complete the conversational prompts, teachers tend to report more detailed and nuanced behavior information than they provide on behavior rating scales
- Designed to be given to teachers along with standardized autism-specific behavior rating scales

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Teacher Questionnaire

(cont.)



- The MIGDAS-2 teacher questionnaire prompts teachers to describe positive qualities of the student, along with describing behavioral differences
- The interview booklet is designed so you can transcribe the responses given by the teacher—
- Including their story details—
- Into a compelling narrative for your assessment report

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Diagnostic Interview Protocols



There are three interview protocols:

- Individuals with limited to no verbal fluency
- Children and adolescents with verbal fluency
- Adults with verbal fluency

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Diagnostic Interview Protocols

(cont.)



Each interview protocol:

- Is organized around the three areas of the Descriptive Triangle
- Provides descriptive language that contrasts behavior descriptions
 - Consistent with ASD
 - Not consistent with ASD

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Diagnostic Interview Protocols

(cont.)



- Each page in the interview protocols provides:
 - Prompts to guide the evaluator in structuring the conversation or nonverbal sharing of sensory materials
 - Observations with descriptive language
 - Space for notes to record specific and memorable things the individual says and does
- Let's look at a few items taken from the diagnostic interview protocol for children and adolescents with verbal fluency

Items from Language and Communication

Item Number 2: Content of Preferred Topics

Speaks in a narrative that has a sensory, self-directed quality (focused on details of his or her narrative to the exclusion of the participation of the evaluator) Repetitively manipulates one or more of the sensory items throughout the conversation	Conversation focuses on conveying information to the evaluator Acknowledges evaluator by responding with joint attention comments, eye contact, head nods, or other social communication gestures
Maintains focus on preferred topics Uses recurring phrases (e.g., “well, actually”) to regain control of the conversation and direct it back to a preferred topic	Discusses a variety of topics; engages in a reciprocal exchange of information with the evaluator regarding the topic of discussion and displays equal interest and engagement in the conversation regardless of the topic

- The left-side descriptors are consistent with ASD
- The right-side descriptors are not consistent with ASD
- These descriptors help you as the evaluator to identify what your experience was with the individual during the diagnostic interview

Items from Language and Communication

Item Number 2: Content of Preferred Topics *(cont.)*

Speaks in a narrative that has a sensory, self-directed quality (focused on details of his or her narrative to the exclusion of the participation of the evaluator) Repetitively manipulates one or more of the sensory items throughout the conversation	Conversation focuses on conveying information to the evaluator Acknowledges evaluator by responding with joint attention comments, eye contact, head nods, or other social communication gestures
Maintains focus on preferred topics Uses recurring phrases (e.g., “well, actually”) to regain control of the conversation and direct it back to a preferred topic	Discusses a variety of topics; engages in a reciprocal exchange of information with the evaluator regarding the topic of discussion and displays equal interest and engagement in the conversation regardless of the topic

- The descriptive language helps evaluators recognize their experience after the interview as they read the contrasting language
- The language provided not only describes autism specific behavior patterns in the three key areas but also describes the neurotypical behavior patterns one might expect to see

Items from Language and Communication

Item Number 2: Content of Preferred Topics (*cont.*)

<p>Speaks in a narrative that has a sensory, self-directed quality (focused on details of his or her narrative to the exclusion of the participation of the evaluator)</p> <p>Repetitively manipulates one or more of the sensory items throughout the conversation</p>	<p>Conversation focuses on conveying information to the evaluator</p> <p>Acknowledges evaluator by responding with joint attention comments, eye contact, head nods, or other social communication gestures</p>
<p>Maintains focus on preferred topics</p> <p>Uses recurring phrases (e.g., “well, actually”) to regain control of the conversation and direct it back to a preferred topic</p>	<p>Discusses a variety of topics; engages in a reciprocal exchange of information with the evaluator regarding the topic of discussion and displays equal interest and engagement in the conversation regardless of the topic</p>

- This language highlights goals for the individual, as the wording in the right-hand boxes is designed to help evaluators identify goals for intervention, teaching, and coaching
- The protocols shape the process for the evaluator to systematically identify the descriptors that fit their experience, building a pattern of observations that lead to a diagnostic outcome

The MIGDAS-2 Protocol System: Diagnostic Interview Protocols

(cont.)



Pattern of Observations:

- With the MIGDAS-2 diagnostic interview process, no score is derived
- The pattern of descriptors is summarized under Pattern of Observations
- Let's review the information that goes into the Pattern of Observations for verbally fluent children and adolescents in the three key areas

Pattern of Observations

PATTERN OF OBSERVATIONS			
	Consistent with ASD	Not consistent with ASD	Unclear
Sensory Use and Interests			
1. Response to materials that have visual and movement properties			
2. Response to materials that have auditory properties			
3. Response to materials that have tactile properties			
4. Response to introduction of preferred topics			
5. Body movements and mannerisms			
Overall for this section			
Language and Communication			
1. Intonation and inflection			
2. Content of preferred topics			
3. Quality, clarity, and relevance of speech			
4. Reciprocity			
5. Idioms and colloquial expressions			
6. Jokes and riddles			
Overall for this section			
Social Relationships and Emotional Responses			
1. Eye contact and eye gaze			
2. Facial expressions and overall quality of emotional responses			
3. Perception of self in relation to others			
4. Anxiety or agitation level			
5. Self-awareness of anger and agitation triggers			
6. Feelings and description of wishes, self, and ways to make school a better place			
Overall for this section			
Overall pattern (all sections)			

Pattern of Observations

(cont.)

- Each protocol provides a Pattern of Observations summary page to facilitate the systematic collection of observations prior to determining the diagnostic outcome

PATTERN OF OBSERVATIONS			
	Consistent with ASD	Not consistent with ASD	Unclear
Sensory Use and Interests			
1. Response to materials that have visual and movement properties			
2. Response to materials that have auditory properties			
3. Response to materials that have tactile properties			
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4. Anxiety or agitation level			
5. Self-awareness of anger and agitation triggers			
6. Feelings and description of wishes, self, and ways to make school a better place			
Overall for this section			
Overall pattern (all sections)			

What Materials Are Needed to Use the MIGDAS-2 Protocol System?

- In addition to purchasing the manual and sets of protocols, you will need to collect sensory materials that contain visual, tactile, movement, and sound qualities
- A list of suggested sensory materials are available on the WPS website



What Training Is Needed to Use the MIGDAS-2 Protocol System?

- Participating in a full-day workshop will prepare experienced autism evaluators to begin using the MIGDAS-2 system as part of their autism evaluation toolkit
- Online training workshops are currently available once a month through my website:
www.marilynmonteiro.com
- WPS will be offering MIGDAS-2 online trainings on their platform starting in 2021
- You can also request that your state professional organization or school district sponsor a full-day MIGDAS-2 training workshop



What About Using the MIGDAS-2 Protocol System During the Pandemic?

- It is possible to complete the parent and teacher interviews through a secure online platform, and they lend themselves well to this necessary distancing
- The diagnostic interviews for children and adolescents with verbal fluency can be modified for use remotely by having the individual share objects and topics of interest in their familiar home surroundings while speaking with the evaluator
- The diagnostic interviews for children with limited to no verbal fluency can be modified for use remotely by having the parent and the child interact with preferred materials at home and noting the social communication and sensory patterns of behavior
- The adult diagnostic interview protocol works well remotely, as information is collected regarding the individual's behavioral profile both currently and by history
- <https://pages.wpspublish.com/telepractice-101#faq>

Questions?



Thank You

- I hope this answered some of your questions about the MIGDAS-2 system
- Stay safe and healthy, and in the words of a child with whom I've had many autism conversations:

Keep up the good work!

Get valuable support from professionals you can trust:

WPS Assessment Consultants
consult@wpspublish.com



Ann Rogers



Ashley Arnold



Douglene Jackson



Laura Stevenson



Stephanie Roberts

Additional Resources Available by WPS:

SEL Page: <https://pages.wpspublish.com/sel>

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