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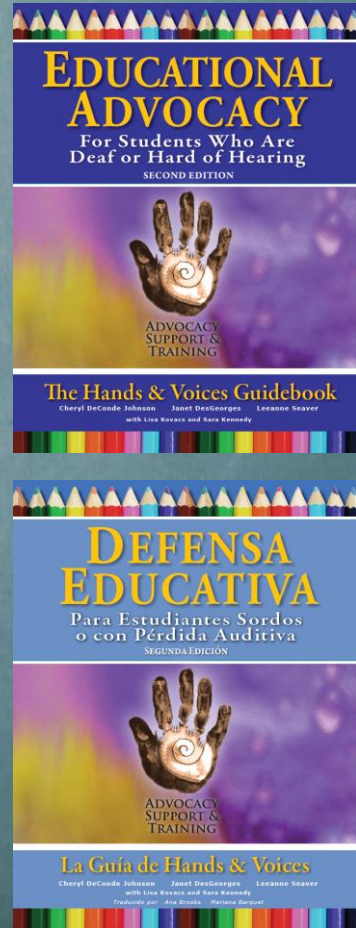
HANDS &  
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# The Mind's Eye: Understanding Theory of Mind and its Impact on Socialization

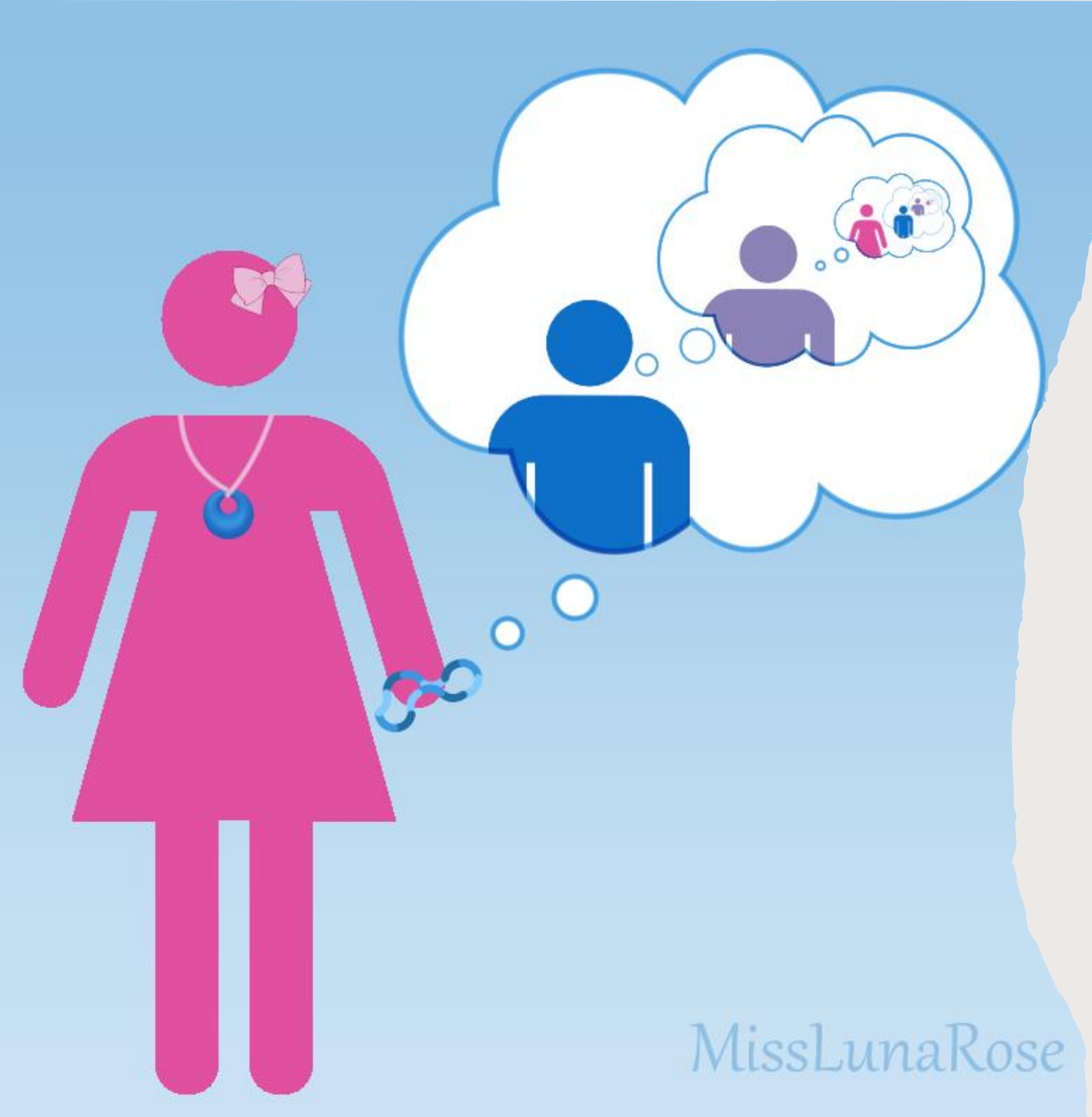
November 19th, 2024

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IL Hands & Voices Executive Director, Hands & Voices ASTra Trainer



Advocacy Support & Training Webinar Series



WHAT IS  
THEORY  
OF MIND?

TOM

MissLunaRose

# HERE'S WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY:

The theory of mind is a concept in psychology that refers how someone ascribes mental states - such as beliefs, intentions, desires, and emotions - to both oneself and others. This is not limited to only understanding what someone might believe or desire, but it extends to surmising their emotional state and thoughts as well. As we cannot directly see (only experience through their facial expressions or spoken words) what people are thinking, the concept has been aptly labeled as the 'theory' of mind.

# IT IS . . .

- The ability to attribute mental states to oneself
- The ability to attribute mental states to others
- The ability to understand that others have beliefs, desires and intentions that are different from one's own



# CHALLENGES —

## BEHAVIORS YOU MAY SEE

- Insensitivity to other's feelings
- Inability to take into account what others know
- Inability to negotiate friendships



# CHALLENGES

— BEHAVIORS YOU MAY SEE

- Inability to deceive/understand deception
- Inability to understand reasons for others' actions
- Inability to understand "unwritten rules"





COMPONENTS OF

**TOM**



# 1. PERCEPTION

The ability to perceive and recognize emotional and mental states is necessary in order to have a theory of mind. People with strong theory of mind are perceptive.

Perceptiveness can include the ability to identify facial expressions, body language, and other social cues that signal a person's emotional state.





## 2. CONTEXTUALIZATION

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Effectively attribute perceived behaviors to mental state requires contextualization. This requires us to use situational information, past experiences, cultural beliefs, and social norms. This allows us to understand the most likely mental state that a person has based upon a given situation.

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### 3. PERSPECTIVE TAKING

The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It involves suspending your own perspective and looking at a situation from another person's point of view. This skill helps us understand and predict how others might feel or react in certain situations.





## 4. PREDICTING

Theory of mind helps us predict how a person might behave based upon their current mental state.

Predicting refers to both understanding mental states *and* an individual's personality, and at the end of it all, putting the two together.



## 5. SOCIAL LEARNING

The process of acquiring knowledge through social interactions. In part, we develop a theory of mind socializing or playing together. Through sustained engagement with others, we develop an understanding of the connection between their behaviors and mental states.

The image features two human head silhouettes drawn in a dark blue line, facing each other. The interior of each head is filled with a colorful arrangement of Tetris blocks. The left head contains a smaller, simpler arrangement of blocks in shades of green, brown, orange, and dark purple. The right head contains a larger, more complex arrangement of blocks in shades of purple, brown, teal, orange, yellow, green, and red. The background is a light gray wood-grain texture.

EXAMPLES OF

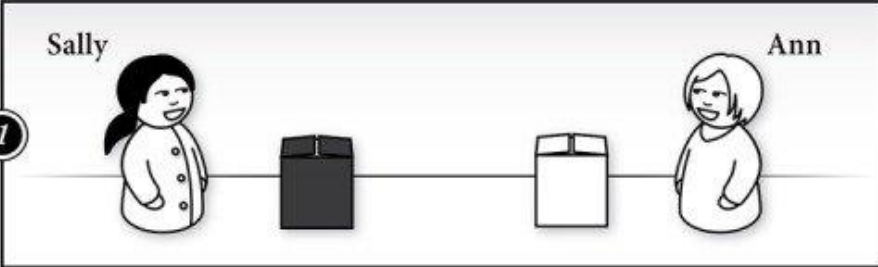
TOM

# UNDERSTANDING “FALSE BELIEF”

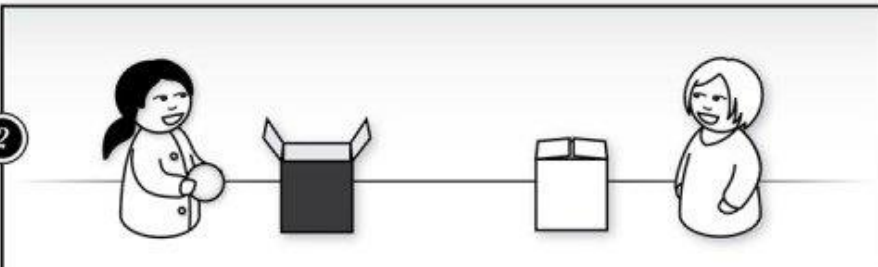
## Sally and Ann

If a friend watches you place a candy in your pocket but you secretly move it to your bag when they're not looking, a child with Theory of Mind understands the friend will mistakenly believe the candy is still in your pocket.

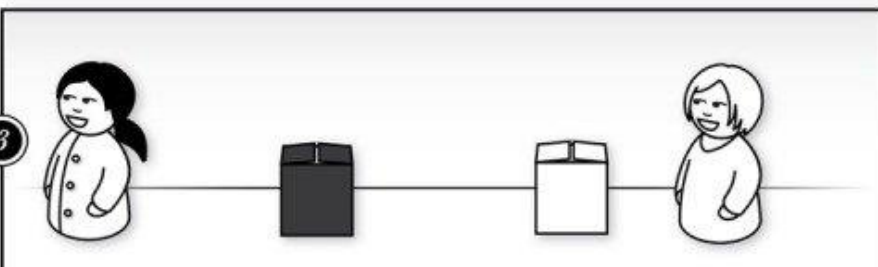
**1** Sally has a black box and Ann has a white box.



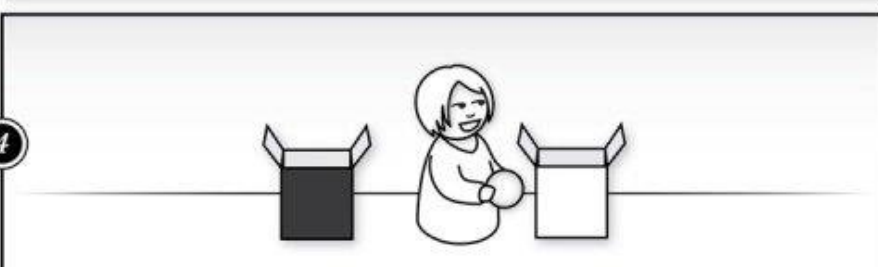
**2** Sally has a marble. She puts the marble into her box.



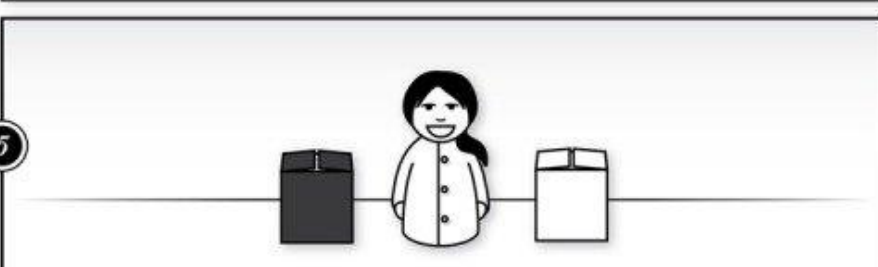
**3** Sally goes for a walk.



**4** Ann takes the marble out of Sally's box and puts it into her box.



**5** Sally comes back and wants to play with her marble.  
Where will Sally look for her marble?



# “EMPATHY”

If a sibling is crying because they dropped their ice cream, a child with Theory of Mind will understand the sibling is upset, even if the child still has their own ice cream.







## “DECEPTION”

A child decides to trick their friend by pointing in the wrong direction when asked about the location of a hidden object, understanding the friend does not know the actual location.

# UNDERSTANDING “OTHERS’ IGNORANCE”



A child knows they learned something new at school and also understands that their parent doesn't know this information yet because they weren't at school with them.

# “PREDICTING BEHAVIOR”

A child expects a friend to look for a missing toy in the last place they left it, showing an understanding of the friend's beliefs and intentions.





HEARING LOSS & IMPACT ON

TOM

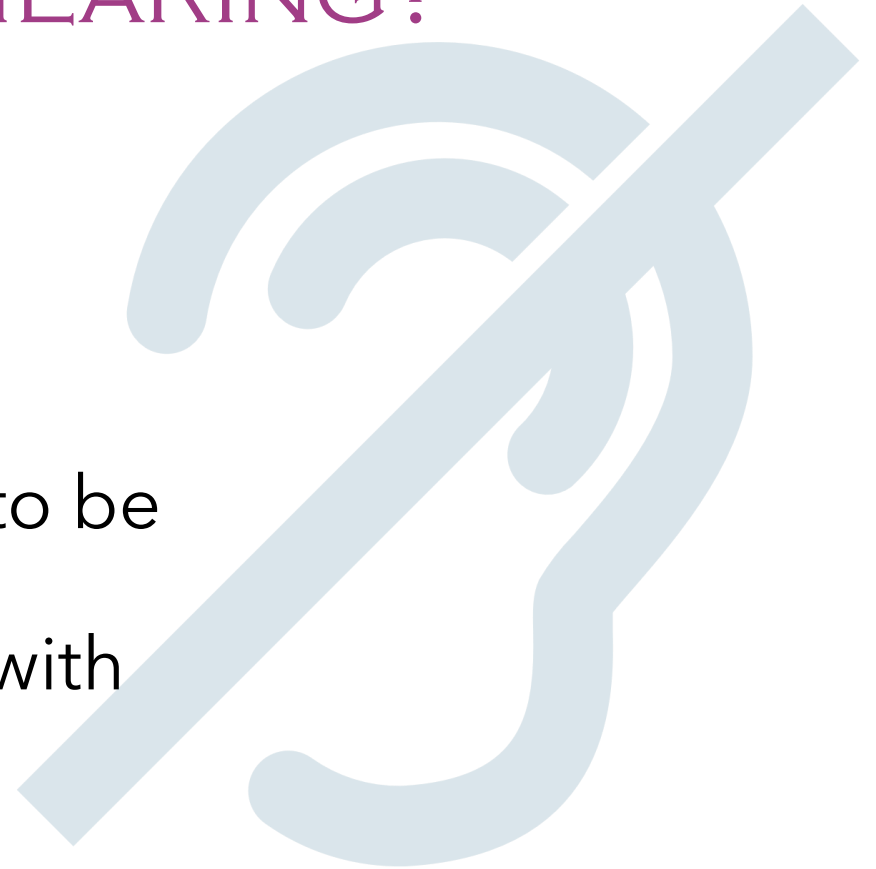


## DEVELOPMENT OF TOM REQUIRES:

- The ability to use/understand language involved in discussing mental states
- The ability to reason and infer
- The ability for effective social interaction

# WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING?

- At risk for delays in developing ToM
- Delays in ToM can affect other areas of development
- Many children with hearing loss appear to be very egocentric, and this can cause misunderstandings, i.e., young children with hearing loss who do not share may be considered selfish
- There are ways to help develop ToM



# WHAT CAUSES DELAYS IN TOM?



- Lack of Incidental Learning
- Brain Injury and/or Cognitive Delay
- Brenda Schick "Social Cognition and Theory of Mind" says, "The content of our minds is not a visible thing. We can only figure out what others know and believe from their... behavior, ...facial expressions, ...what they do and from ...what they say."



HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH

**TOM**



- Assume nothing; explain everything!!
- Explain the Culture
- Teach emotion words
- Use vocabulary associated with mental states





ed

**Embarrassed**

**Sad**

**H**

# TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

- ❖ Teach emotion words
- ❖ Express how you feel
- ❖ Think about/say how the other person feels

# USE YOUR FACE!!!

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- Use facial expressions and voice inflections to provide information on how you feel!!
  - Ever watched an interpreter interpret for the deaf?
- 



# WHAT DO STUDENTS WHO ARE DHH NEED TO DEVELOP TOM?

—

- NEED PERSPECTIVE-TAKING DISCUSSIONS (in the moment, info about truth vs mistaken belief, how you know)
- TALK ABOUT “STATE OF MIND” (thought that..., feared that..., felt that...)
- VOCABULARY (general & feeling words)
- ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAISE

# This is problem solving:

I don't like the way we are doing it.



What way would you like to do it?



We could try this other way-how about that?



2012  
Arms

We could FORGET the whole thing-how about that?



We could try THIS way-how about that?

T

Talk about typically unspoken thoughts and feelings.

H

Help children expand vocabulary related to thinking, feeling and problem solving.

I

Identify inferences the child makes and comment on them.

N

Nurture imagining and thinking, using question prompts and models.

K

Knowledge is key. Help students make connections between storybooks and experiences in everyday lives to build knowledge of others.



SOCIALIZATION AND

**TOM**

# DEVELOPMENTAL DHH SOCIAL SKILLS

- ✓ **SELF-CONCEPT/SELF-ESTEEM:** believing in self, accepting hearing loss
- ✓ **FRIENDSHIP:** being loyal and trustworthy, caring about what the other person wants
- ✓ **SOCIAL INTERACTION:** compromise, empathy, understands impact of hearing loss
- ✓ **PRAGMATICS:** practical communication within the situation, social cues, self-advocates, clarifies



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

“The communication nature of (hearing loss) is **inherently isolating**, with considerable effect on the interaction with peers and teachers that make up the educational process.

This interaction, for the purpose of transmitting knowledge and developing the child’s self-esteem and identity, is **dependent upon direct communication**. Yet, communication is the area most hampered between a deaf child and his or her hearing peers and teachers.”





“However, when social-emotional skills are explicitly taught, students can develop self-awareness, manage their emotions, set and achieve personal goals, and develop positive relationships.

The development of these skills assists them with decision making and responsible behaviors related to school success.”

“Expanded Core Curriculum for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing”,  
Iowa Department of Education Bureau of Student Family Support Services

WHAT ELSE  
CAN YOU DO  
TO HELP  
DEVELOP  
SOCIAL SKILLS?

“Mediate” experiences to *Explain the world around them.* Use an actual situation that is happening right now to explain the feelings, thoughts, actions, of the people involved.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS?

- ❖ Think aloud for your problem solving.
  - ❖ Weigh possibilities, questions to ask
  - ❖ What you are thinking, inferring
  - ❖ Share decisions & reasons for decisions
- ❖ Give them opportunities to think through a problem themselves or with peers.

# WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- Fill them in (what is known/understood by others)
- Identify feelings and emotions
- Use “mental state” words to fully indicate feelings you hear, see, and infer



# SUPPORT PEER TO PEER INTERACTIONS

- Model friendships
- Teach rules
- Require direct communication





LANGUAGE & LITERACY &

TOM

# Tips for READING with kids who are DHH

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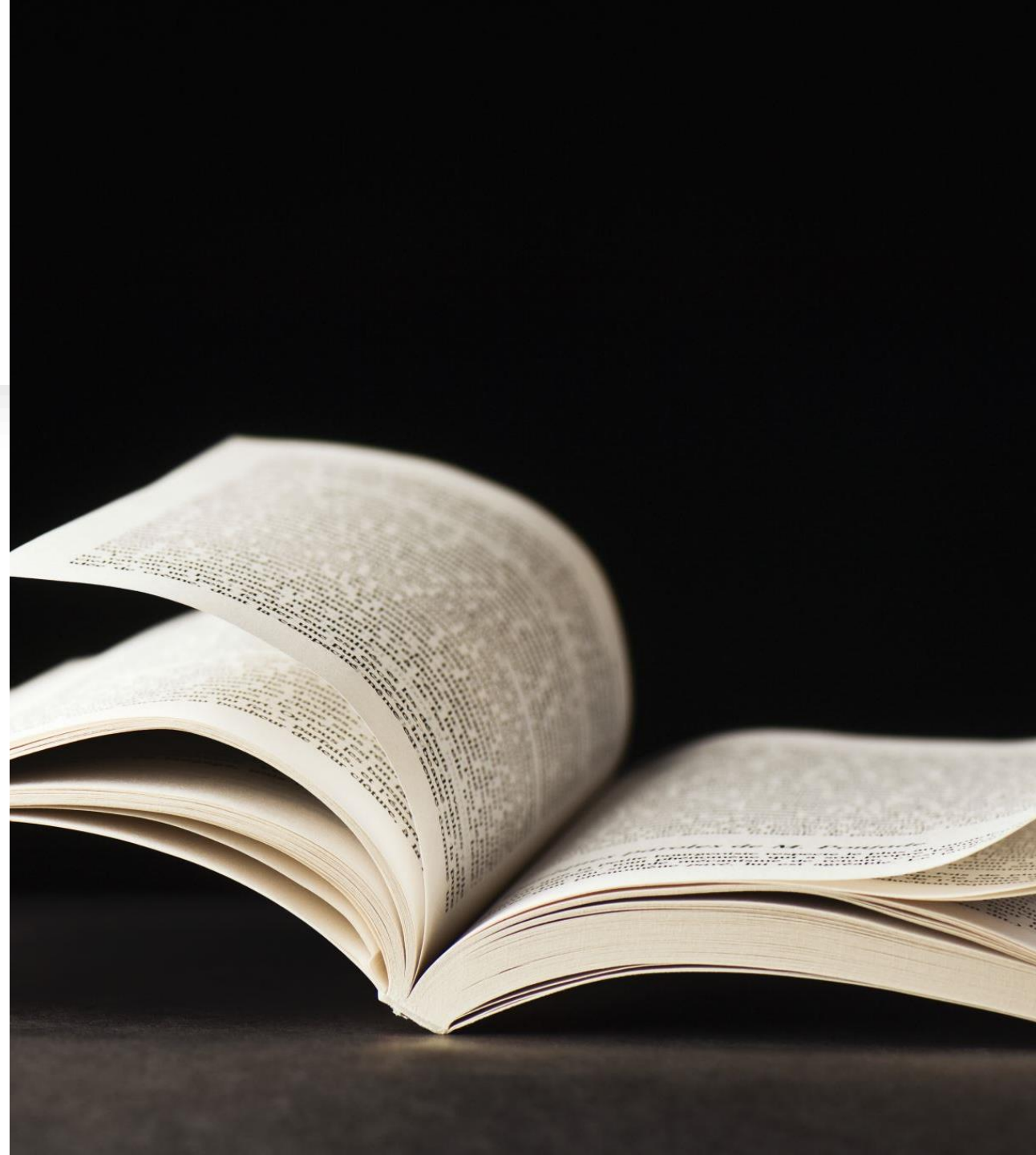
- Name and discuss emotions.
- Point out differences in likes/wants.
- Point out different perspectives.
- Fill in the blanks: about what isn't said, but is supposed to be understood by the reader or characters.
- Adjust facial expression/body language/signing style/voice to fit the characters.





# EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Describe a time when you felt the same way as the characters in the story you read.
  - Discuss those feelings
- Read books showing differences in what people like and want.
- Read books showing different perspectives.
  - Discuss what you have read



# REMEMBER TO

Have **HIGH** Expectations!

- ☑ Behavior
- ☑ Responsibilities
- ☑ Social skills



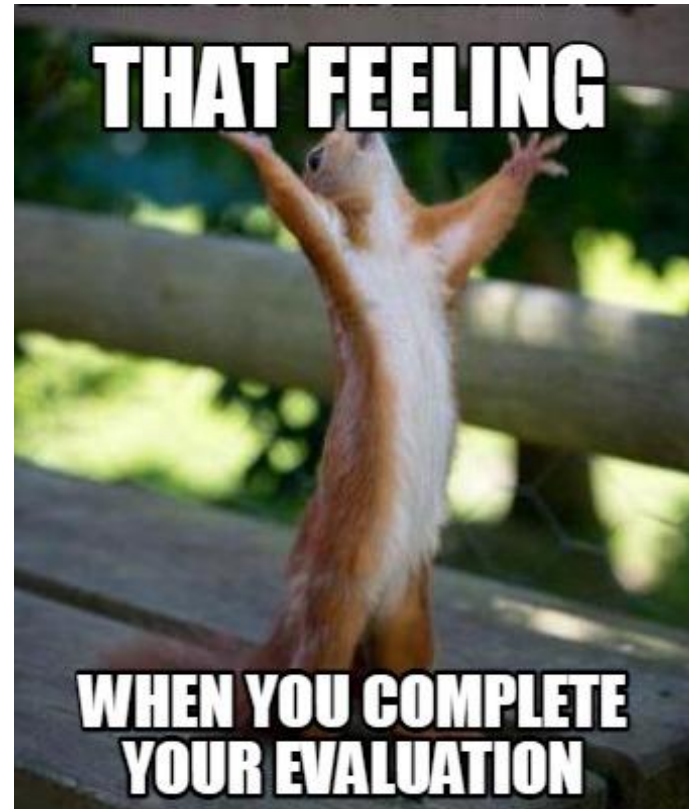
Require others to have **HIGH** expectations also!

# Your Turn...

Please type your questions in the Q&A box



# Thank you!



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<https://handsandvoices.org/astra/webinars/>