



ASHLEY'S HOUSE

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Life Skills Learning Centre Model

At ASHLEY'S HOUSE, we:

- Cherish each member for their unique strengths, skills, and individuality.
- Honor the values, thoughts, and ideas of others.
- Uphold the belief that everyone deserves opportunities that empower them to succeed.
- Recognise that respect, cooperation, and commitment are the foundations of daily practice in our learning environment.
- Promote positive partnerships with effective communication.

Aims

- To inspire and lead in a way that fosters learning development.
- To employ staff equipped with the skills, knowledge, and training necessary to uphold consistently high standards.
- To create a safe and supportive environment that acknowledges and celebrates individual needs.
- To discover and utilise students' strengths and interests to encourage meaningful learning experiences.
- To cultivate a positive approach to learning that contributes to achieving potential.
- To sustain an provision that respects the perspectives and expertise of all participants in a student's learning process.
- To develop tailored programs
- To nurture the abilities and confidence needed for living as independently as possible, with dignity and a strong sense of self.

A hybrid model of structured and co-productive learning for autistic teen girls can be an incredibly effective way to balance the need for routine, predictability, and support with the benefits of collaboration, creativity, and student-centred learning. This model acknowledges the unique needs of autistic girls, who may experience a different set of challenges and strengths compared to their male peers or neurotypical girls. By blending structured approaches with co-productive, participatory learning, this hybrid model can help autistic teen girls feel more empowered, engaged, and capable of navigating both academic and social environments.

Key Principles of a Hybrid Structure and Co-Productive Learning Model

Clear Structure with Flexibility

Autistic teen girls may thrive in environments that provide clear routines and expectations, but also need enough flexibility to pursue their interests and engage in collaborative, creative activities.

Structured time: The day can begin with a predictable schedule, such as a morning check-in, followed by core subjects (math, science, etc.), interspersed with sensory breaks and opportunities for self-regulation.

Flexible, project-based learning: In the afternoon or in specific blocks of time, students engage in more flexible, co-productive learning activities such as group projects, creative exploration, or skills development based on their interests.

Clear and Visual Communication

Autistic teens, especially those who may be less verbal or have sensory sensitivities, often benefit from clear and visual communication. This helps with both structure and participation.

Visual Schedules: These can help girls understand the flow of the day, the tasks they will need to complete, and transitions between activities.

Task Lists and Timers: For projects or independent tasks, a visual checklist or a timer helps provide structure while allowing girls to manage their own pace. This is especially useful in co-productive activities, where students may choose to work at different speeds or explore various topics.

Personalised Learning Pathways

Autistic teen girls have diverse interests and learning needs. Some may excel in math and technology, while others may have a passion for arts, writing, or environmental issues. Co-productive learning allows these students to:

Explore Individual Interests: Girls can be involved in choosing the direction of projects, activities, or topics that align with their strengths and interests. For example, if a student loves graphic design or digital storytelling, she might collaborate with peers to create a multimedia project.

Set Personalised Goals: The hybrid model allows for flexibility in goal-setting, where students can develop personal learning goals alongside any academic ones. This can include social-

emotional learning (SEL) goals, such as improving social communication, or academic goals, such as mastering a particular skill or topic.

Supportive Social Learning Opportunities

Many autistic girls face challenges in social interaction, but they often benefit from structured social learning experiences. These can be integrated into the co-productive learning model through:

Group Projects: Students can collaborate on projects in small groups, where they share roles, work on specific tasks, and communicate openly with peers. The structure of having defined roles helps students feel more secure in the collaborative process.

Peer Mentoring and Buddy Systems: Paired or small group activities with neurodiverse peers offer autistic teen girls opportunities to practice social skills in a supportive and structured environment.

Flexible Use of Technology and Assistive Tools

Technology can be a valuable tool for both structured learning and co-productive activities. It can provide visual supports, help students express themselves creatively, and serve as an outlet for self-regulation.

Assistive Technology: Tools like speech-to-text software, communication apps, or sensory-friendly tech (such as noise-cancelling headphones or visual timers) help autistic girls engage with both structured tasks and more flexible, project-based learning.

Creative Tools for Co-Productive Learning: Digital storytelling apps, design software, or collaborative tools (like Google Docs, Canva, or online coding platforms) allow students to contribute to creative, group projects.

Support for Self-Regulation and Emotional Learning

Autistic teen girls often face challenges with emotional regulation, stress management, and self-awareness. Structured routines provide a sense of predictability, while co-productive learning can build emotional intelligence by providing opportunities to reflect, collaborate, and manage challenges in a group setting.

Calming and Sensory Breaks: Short, structured sensory breaks are crucial to help students self-regulate and avoid burnout, especially in more flexible, high-energy group activities.

Self-Advocacy and Emotional Reflection: The co-productive model can include opportunities for girls to learn how to express their needs, discuss challenges, and reflect on their emotional experiences, helping them build self-advocacy skills.

Implementing a Hybrid Approach with Autistic Teen Girls

1. Structured Learning Blocks with Co-Productive Project Time

Morning (Structured)

Begin with a **predictable routine**, such as a morning check-in, which helps the girls get grounded for the day.

Visual supports (e.g., task lists, visuals for specific instructions) and opportunities for breaks during transitions.

Afternoon (Co-Productive Learning & Exploration)

After core lessons, students transition to project-based or interest-driven learning. In this flexible environment, girls can:

Collaborate on group projects aligned with their interests, such as building a community garden, creating a podcast, or designing a website.

Engage in exploration-based learning: The teacher facilitates this by guiding students to explore topics of interest through research, discussion, and collaborative work.

Use creative tools (e.g., video editing software, drawing tools, or online platforms) for personal or group projects.

2. Blended Learning Pathways

Individualised Learning: Autistic girls may need different levels of structure and guidance. Some may prefer hands-on, concrete tasks, while others may prefer more open-ended exploration. Creating individualised learning pathways within the framework of the hybrid model is key. This can be done through:

Personalised projects (for example, researching a topic of personal interest)

Flexible assessments that value both process and outcomes, such as portfolios, journals, or presentations.

3. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Incorporate structured SEL components into co-productive learning, such as:

Group discussions or reflective sessions after projects where students talk about what went well, what they found challenging, and how they handled emotions during the task.

Peer interactions in structured formats like "Circle Time" or small-group discussions, where students practice communication skills and express their feelings in a safe space.

4. Feedback and Interaction

Build in regular feedback loops where students can reflect on their learning and receive feedback from teachers, peers, and themselves. In the co-productive model, feedback should be constructive, focused on growth and learning, rather than simply assessing performance.

Encourage students to **revisit and revise their work**, fostering a growth mindset. For example, they might choose to improve their project based on peer feedback or personal reflection.

Challenges and Solutions

Managing Sensory Sensitivities

Solution: Provide quiet spaces for breaks, allow sensory-friendly tools (headphones, soft lighting), and offer options for working in different environments (indoor vs. outdoor spaces, quiet vs. collaborative areas).

Balancing Flexibility and Structure

Solution: A well-balanced schedule with clear time frames for both structured and co-productive activities can reduce anxiety. Visual schedules help autistic girls anticipate transitions, making them feel more in control.

Ensuring Inclusivity and Equity in Participation

Solution: Teachers should offer multiple ways for students to participate, such as verbal communication, written work, or digital expression. Encourage all students to take on roles suited to their strengths in group projects.