

MiniModule : Masking & Camouflaging



Agenda

- Welcome & Minimodule overview
- Who is here?
- Why and What?
- Definitions
- Nimble Connection
- Video Snippet
- Why Do Individuals Mask?
- Reflect
- Share Out
- Approaches & Strategies
- Next Steps?





WHO IS HERE?



WHY AND WHAT?

Most individuals who mask neurodiverse characteristics do it to fit in; to be 'typical'!

Masking refers to the practice of concealing or suppressing aspects of one's neurodivergent traits or conditions, in order to fit in with the norms of school, workplace or society. This can be conscious or unconscious, especially in childhood.



- Method of protection, self-preservation
- Makes the individual appear to have more or different skills
- Can make others overestimate or hold disproportionately high expectations
- Can result in negative effects on mental health and wellbeing.
- Requires a significant amount of cognitive and emotional energy to constantly suppress one's natural tendencies. This quickly becomes exhausting.

Camouflage consists of complicated copying of behavior and/or masking certain personality features with an adaptive role that aids changes to different situational demands (in Alaghband-rad et al. , 2023)

NIMBLE CONNECTING

Consider a time recently when you were not your authentic self, "masking" some aspect of your personality, abilities, temperament, etc. so that you could fit in or have an easier time with a social or work task.



WHY DO NEURODIVERSE INDIVIDUALS MASK?

**Fear of stigma social expectation,
misunderstanding of neurodiversity,
lack of accommodations**



Daylilies symbolize resilience because of their adaptability to their environment.



What Is Neurodivergent Masking? | Neurodivergent Magic



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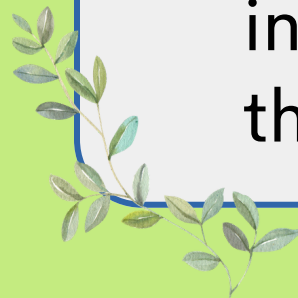


Watch on  YouTube

BREAKOUT GROUP REFLECTION ON VIDEO



1. What did you most relate to or resonate with in the video?
2. Where do you see masking in your work in the FASD space?
3. What are the needs behind individuals with FASD when the mask?



APPROACHES & STRATEGIES



Building relationships is key to 'getting through' the mask, especially with caregivers/parents, professional helpers.

Look at language and communication foundations for mismatches. We project our expectations on others (based on our culture and language) that could inadvertently increase masking.



Use trauma-informed techniques for:

- recognizing when an individual masks, and
- changing behavior when masking is not healthy.

APPROACHES & STRATEGIES

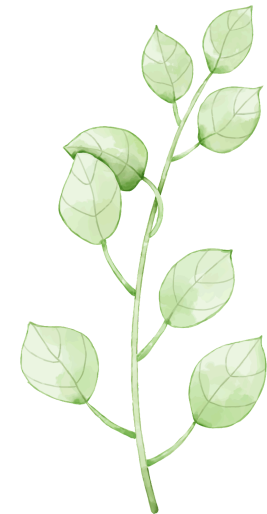
Focus on calming and coping strategies. Hypervigilance is a reality for many with FASD; masking may be an adaptive responses.

Strengthen opportunities for peer social supports.



Honor others' authentic selves.
Adopt strengths-based approaches.

When an individual is masking, use caution when diagnosing conditions or reinforcing and treating wrong diagnoses.



TAKE AWAYS

KNOW

A trusting relationship helps to address masking.

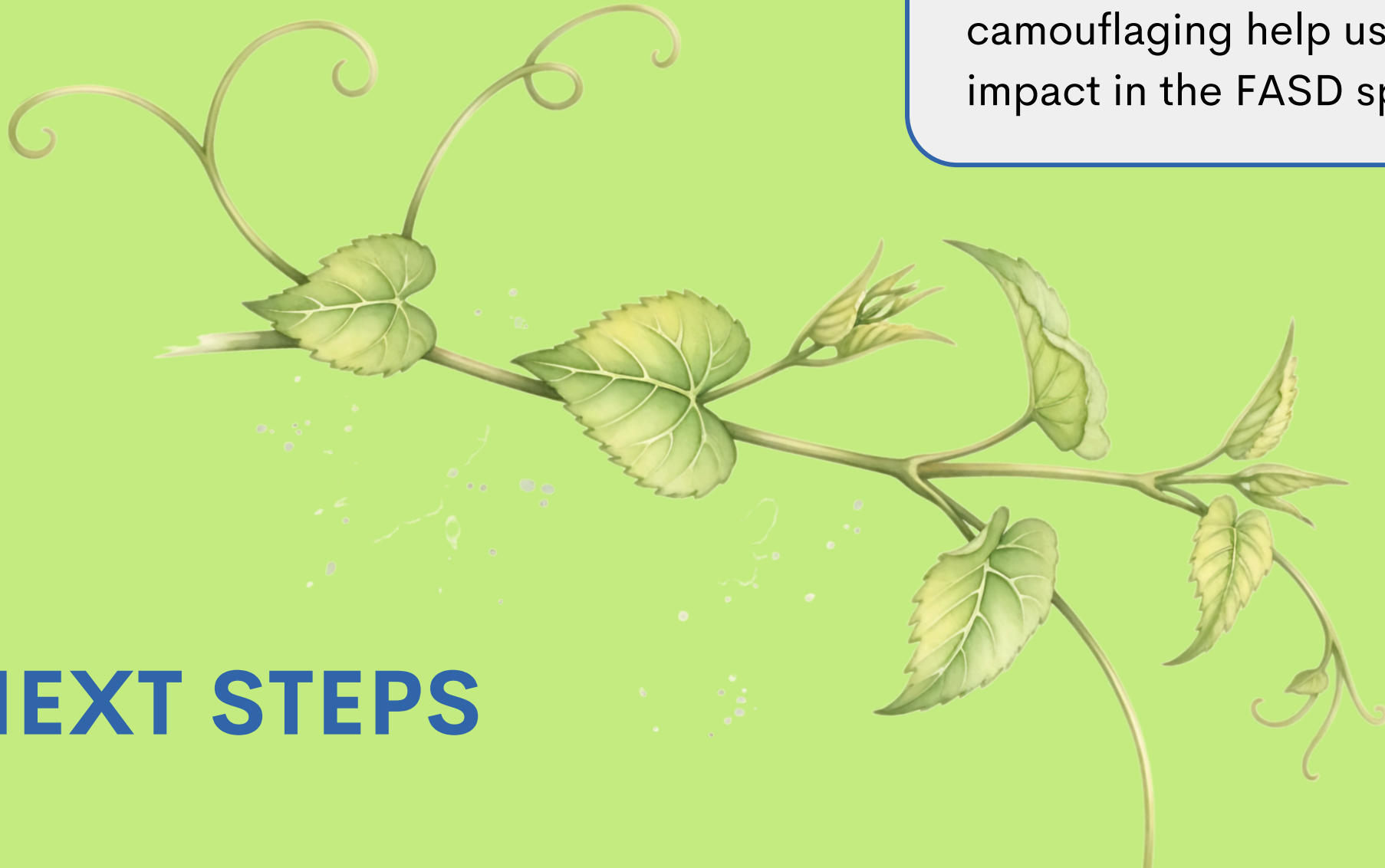


DO

Share ways of creating special relationship so we can increase our toolbox of skills.

How might a deeper understanding of masking and camouflaging help us increase our impact in the FASD space?

NEXT STEPS



THANK YOU

Let's root for each other and watch how we grow!

