

# Working in Partnership with Parents to Reduce Social Exclusion

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# Plan

- TreeHouse
- Multidisciplinary Team
- What is the Impact of ASD?
- Case studies
- Questions and Comments



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# TreeHouse

- Founded in 1987 by group of parents
- Vision: '***to transform, through education, the lives of children with autism and the lives of their families***'
- TreeHouse Trust (school and charity) promotes best practice in autism education nationally
- Currently 59 pupils in primary & secondary
- Building project: School and National Centre for training and development
- LA funded places
- high level of support and staff ratio



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# Multidisciplinary Team

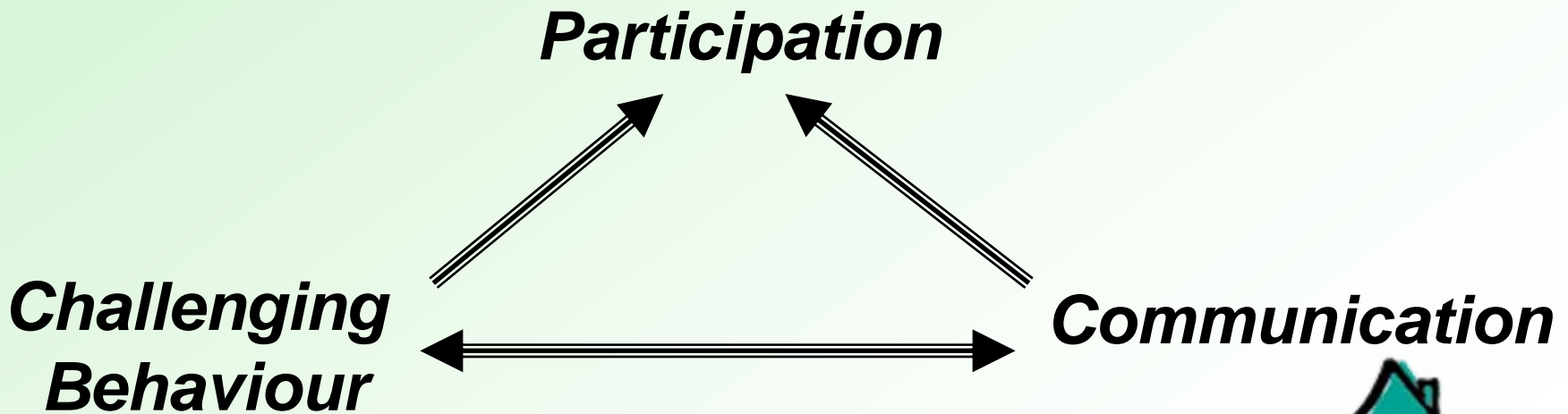
- **School values:**
  - Partnership with families - in both their child's education and in the wider context of building better services for all
  - Participation in society - creating maximum opportunities for children and their families to be members of an inclusive society
- Parents and professionals work together as a team to provide individual and wider curriculum targets for each pupil
- Professionals include Applied Behaviour Analysis Team (Consultant and Supervisor), Qualified teacher, Speech and Language Therapist, and Occupational Therapist
- Weekly team meetings to discuss the individual pupils and decide priorities, each team member shares their expertise



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# What is the impact of ASD?

- Difficulties in acquiring and understanding language, difficulties with social communication, and inflexibility of thought and behaviour
- Social communication and behaviour are inseparable
- **Behaviour** = anything a person does that may be observed



# Mackenzie – Communication

## January 2006

- Understanding was limited to nouns, verbs, simple adjectives, and 2 key word instructions
- Unable to understand prepositions, relational terms, time concepts or sequence
- 30-40% intelligible to familiar people
- Attempts to make requests not always successful leading to inappropriate behaviour and anxiety

## November 2007

- Able to understand 3 key word instructions and more complex language
- Able to understand prepositions and relational terms
- Able to understand time concepts and sequence (first, next, last)
- 50% intelligible to familiar and unfamiliar people
- Appears more confident when speaking, knows that communication is powerful



# Mackenzie – Behaviour

## January 2006

- Demonstrated high frequency of challenging behaviours
- Difficulty transitioning from one activity to the next and difficulty with changes in routine; strategies to support changes were limiting
- Appeared anxious and would pick at the skin on her fingertips until the skin bled

## November 2007

- Challenging behaviours have decreased as language and communication skills have increased
- More able to tolerate changes in routine; strategies can be more flexible
- Increased confidence while communicating



# Mackenzie – Participation

## January 2006

- Unable to access mainstream peers
- Limited successful social interaction in the community
- Family and friends rarely understood Mac and were frightened by challenging behaviours
- Going out anywhere with family needed a social story and visual schedule

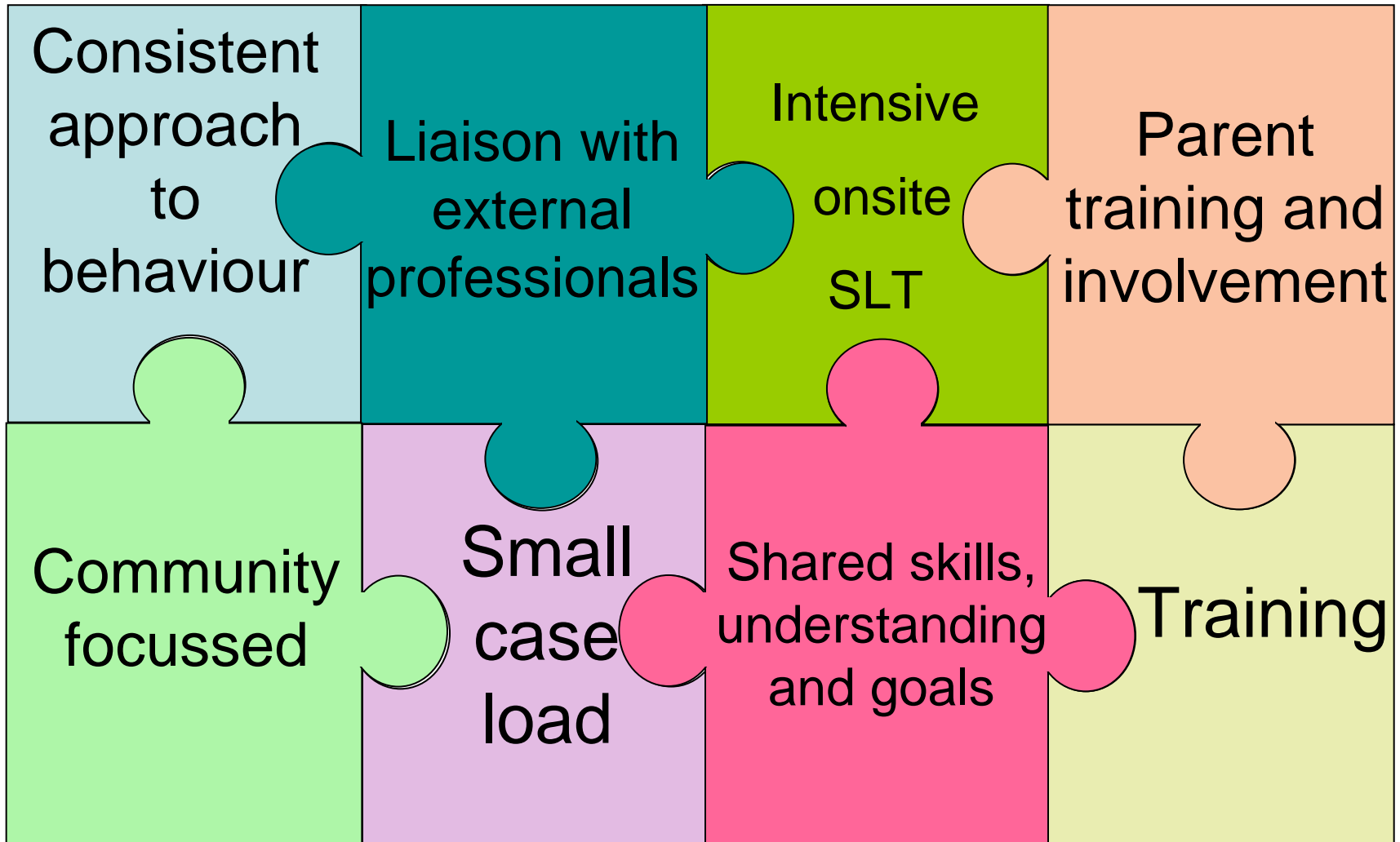
## November 2007

- Able to attend mainstream for 1/2 a day every fortnight
- Children from her mainstream school come up to Mackenzie and her mum in the community to say hello
- communication more successful; now able to participate in family gatherings
- Able to be more flexible and tolerate change as her understanding has increased



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# HOW ?



“I definitely agree that a multidisciplinary approach is essential to consistency and success in a programme . . . I feel that I am a part of the team and it is my job to ensure that Mac can utilise her skills in her everyday life.”

- *Mac's mum*



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# Joel – Communication

## January 2006

- Had almost no speech; could say “go” and “star”; rarely attempted new words
- Pointed to things he wanted
- Used basic PECS and a few Makaton signs
- Did not try to communicate with new people
- Could inconsistently understand and follow simple instructions

## November 2007

- Significant improvements; can use 3 and 4 word phrases; attempts to repeat everything
- Builds sentences by using his communication book with word approximations
- Has expanded his receptive and expressive use of Makaton signing
- Tries to communicate with a much larger group of people
- Able to request things he wants and does not want; reduced frustration
- Can participate in a simple conversation



# Joel – Behaviour

## January 2006

- Had limited access to environments other than home; often appeared scared in new situations and with new people
- Would get frustrated easily and showed lack of persistence
- Highly inflexible and sought to achieve sameness
- Engaged in limited activities
- Variability in response; was often passive in order to escape situation and to maintain control

## November 2007

- Continues to display challenging behaviour in certain situations
- Decrease in challenging behaviour because adults can negotiate and explain things with greater success and Joel can understand and communicate his needs
- Becoming more flexible in many ways
- Is more willing to fill his time with other activities instead of the TV without being prompted



# Joel – Participation

## January 2006

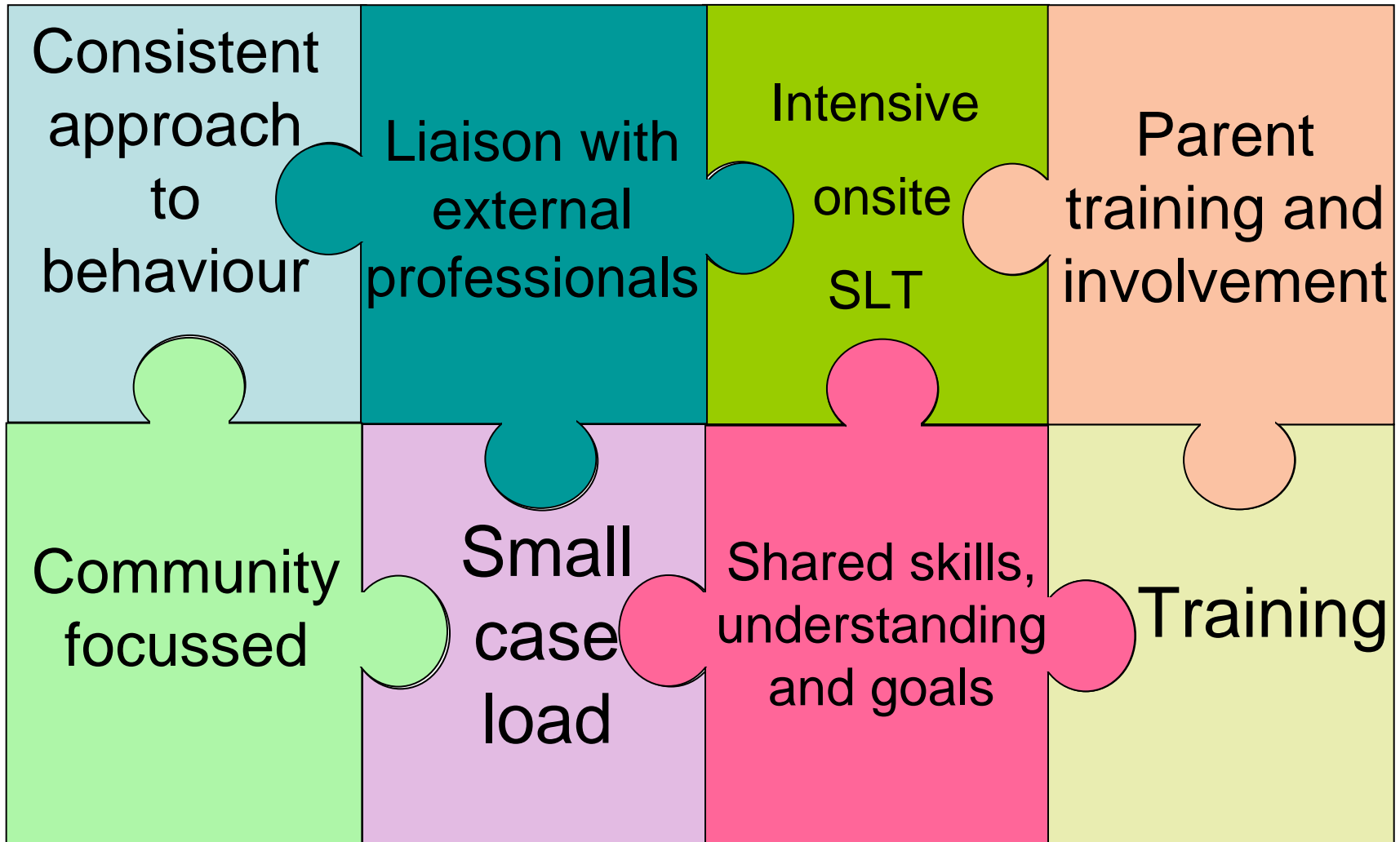
- Extremely limited opportunities in the community
- Would not participate in play with other children
- Would avoid going anywhere with crowds or children
- Family parties were a major problem
- Did not attend school as his family had not been offered an appropriate place

## November 2007

- Is more willing to interact with other children at home and at school
- Can listen and understand when adults explain what is going to happen; is able to prepare himself for events
- Family parties continue to be difficult but parents are able to work through these problems better than before
- Is willing to speak on the phone with family members; significant increase in his ability to participate in family life



# HOW ?



“Joel’s entire educational plan has contributed to his present level of participation in all aspects of life ...

All areas of his current education work together to form the big picture, each part as important as the next and each would be less effective without the others.”

- *Joel’s mum*



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# Mohammed – Communication

## January 2006

- No conventional means of communication; unsuccessful attempt to teach PECS
- No intelligible speech; minimal attempts to imitate
- Unable to make requests to satisfy basic needs and desires
- No social communication or commenting
- Parents unable to communicate with Mohammed and vice versa
- Limited understanding of language – nouns and verbs

## November 2007

- Communicates consistently using speech at the 2-3 word level, supported by Makaton and communication book
- Socially motivated – uses greetings, makes requests and comments, asks questions
- Able to communicate successfully with a wide audience including parents and siblings
- Understanding of language now at 3 key word level – includes more descriptive language



# Mohammed – Behaviour

## January 2006

- High levels of challenging behaviour within mainstream school, home, and community
- High levels of challenging behaviour aimed at gaining adult attention and escaping from tasks; often unsafe
- Parents unable to interact with Mohammed and his sibling at the same time
- Inflexible behaviour; desire for sameness and routines

## November 2007

- Less frequent challenging behaviour across all environments
- Reduction of unsafe behaviours
- Parents can interact with both children at the same time
- Inflexibility reduced; more able to cope with changes in day to day activities
- More willing to try new activities



# Mohammed – Participation

## January 2006

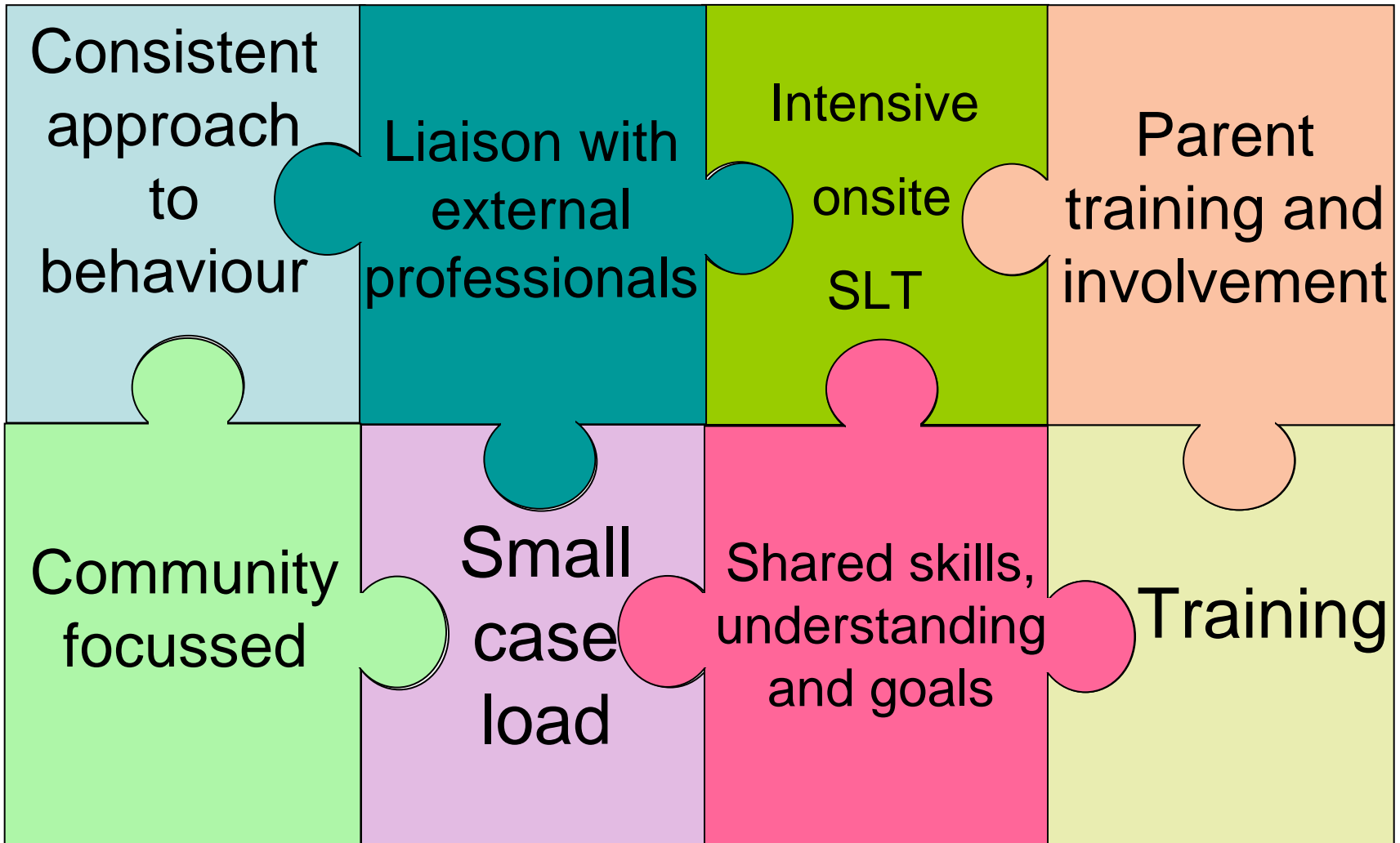
- Was excluded from mainstream classroom
- No interest in sibling or peers
- No appropriate play skills
- Unable to walk safely within the community
- Unable to go on shopping trips
- No leisure skills
- Unable to participate in group teaching situations

## November 2007

- Attending mainstream school with support from TreeHouse staff
- Shows high levels of interest and motivation towards peers and sibling
- Has broader range of play skills
- Can walk safely in the community and can visit shops with adult supervision
- Has range of leisure skills
- Enjoys small group teaching; comments on the activity and peers



# HOW ?



# George – Communication

## January 2006

- Used PECS in limited way; could not communicate all his needs
- Gap between ability to understand language and ability to express language
- Interested in interacting socially with adults; greeted others by waving 'hello'
- Used challenging behaviours to express frustration

## November 2007

- Points to PCS and written words in a communication book to create sentences; can communicate majority of his needs
- Greets others by waving 'hello' and can ask people their name with communication book; can tell others he has something to say, what he likes and wants
- Ability to understand & express language are more equal



# George – Behaviour

## January 2006

- High frequency of self injurious behaviour and aggression to others at home and school for most of the day; often triggers were unknown
- Inflexible behaviour at home and school; and a desire to maintain control
- Would have a tantrum if he did not get what he wanted
- Displayed unsafe behaviours, such as bolting into the street

## November 2007

- Significant decrease in frequency, intensity, duration of self-injurious behaviour
- No aggression toward others
- Clear reasons for challenging behaviour
- More flexible at home and school because can understand explanations



# George – Participation

## January 2006

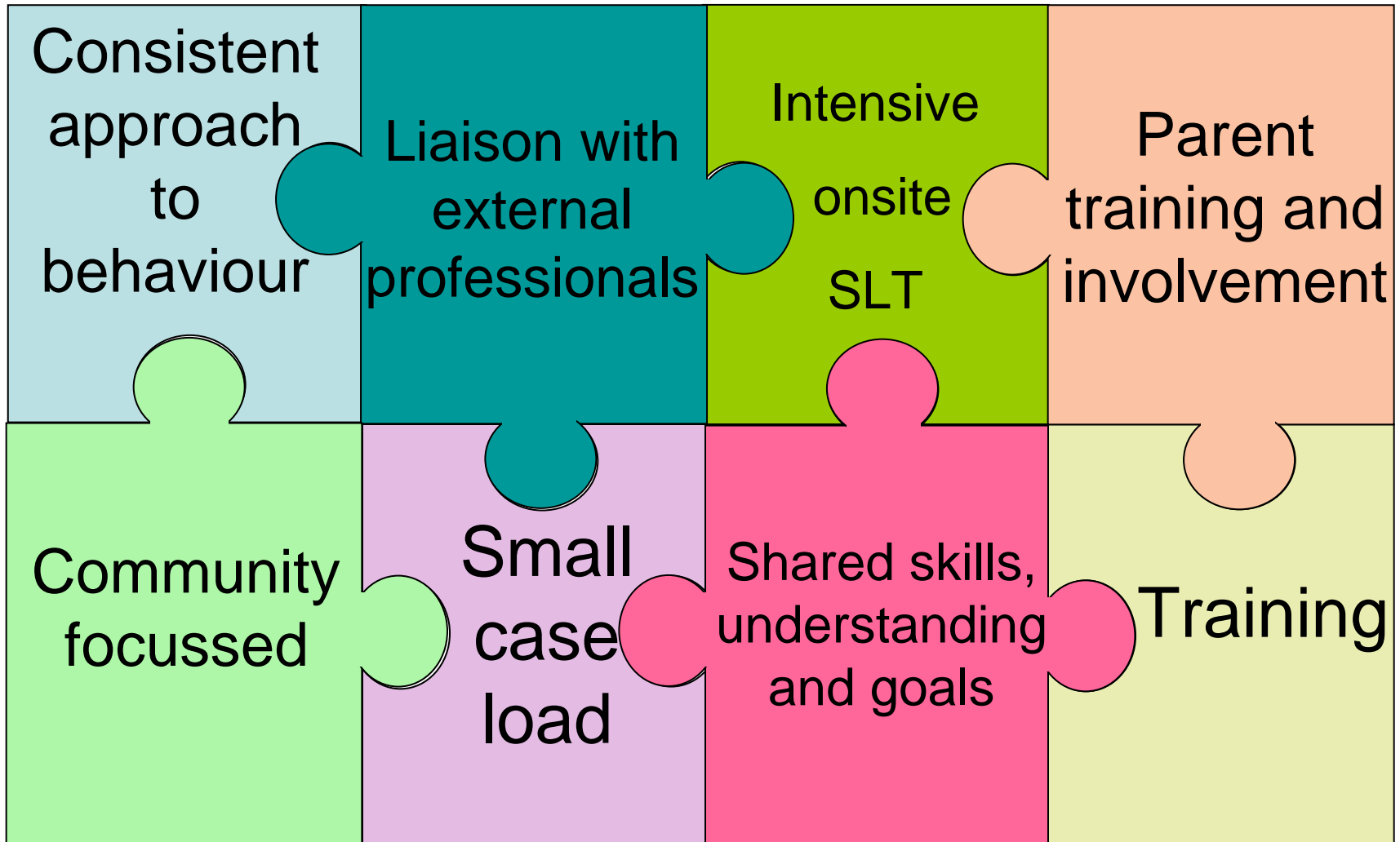
- Mum's actions were controlled by George
- Was unsafe in community
- Spent all day at school in a "quiet room" with one adult; rejected offers to participate in groups in class
- Mainly ate lunch in separate room; sometimes joined class at separate table in lunch hall
- Wanted social interaction but had limited means of communication

## November 2007

- Mum can explain situations; George is more flexible because he understands changes that occur
- Participates in class all day and enjoys being in groups with peers
- Able to walk safely in community; enjoys taking trips to shops & cafes with support
- Enjoys interacting with wider range of people
- Shares what he did the night before with adults



# HOW ?



# Questions and Comments

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