

Stronger Together

**Successful Community Partnerships Serving Youth
with Special Needs in American Public Libraries**



Presented by Renee Grassi

Youth Services Manager, Dakota County Library, Minnesota, U.S.A.

LIBRARIES ARE FOR



EVERYONE

LIBRARIES
ARE FOR



EVERYONE

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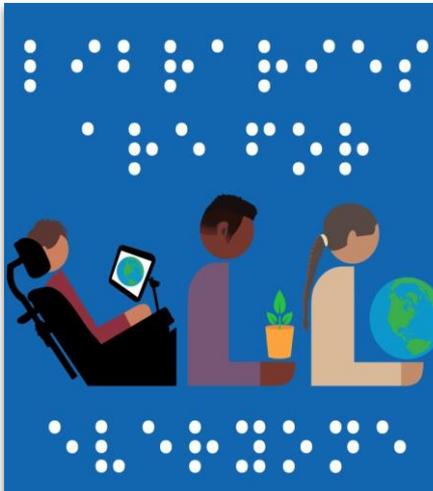
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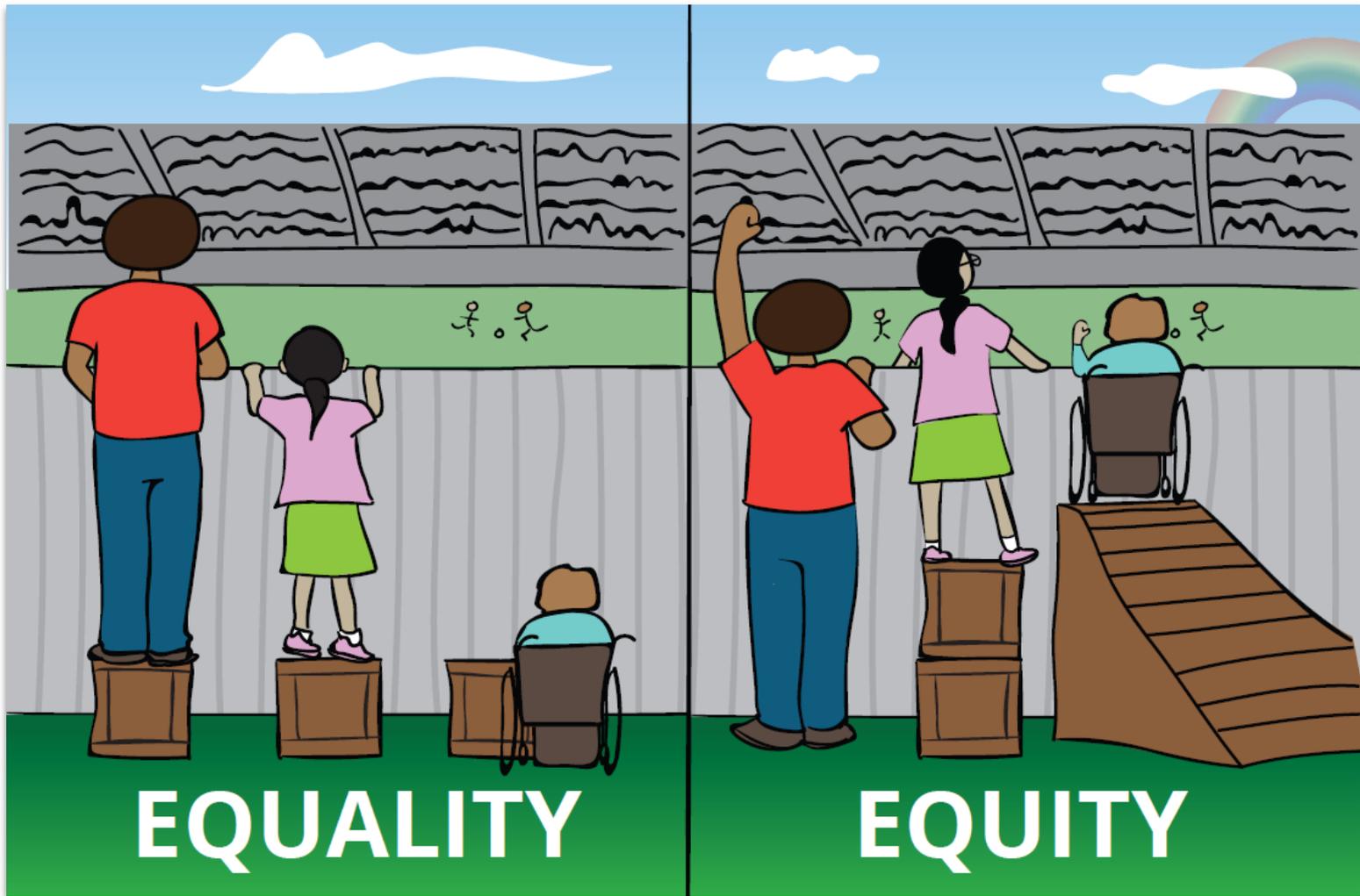


图书馆属于大家



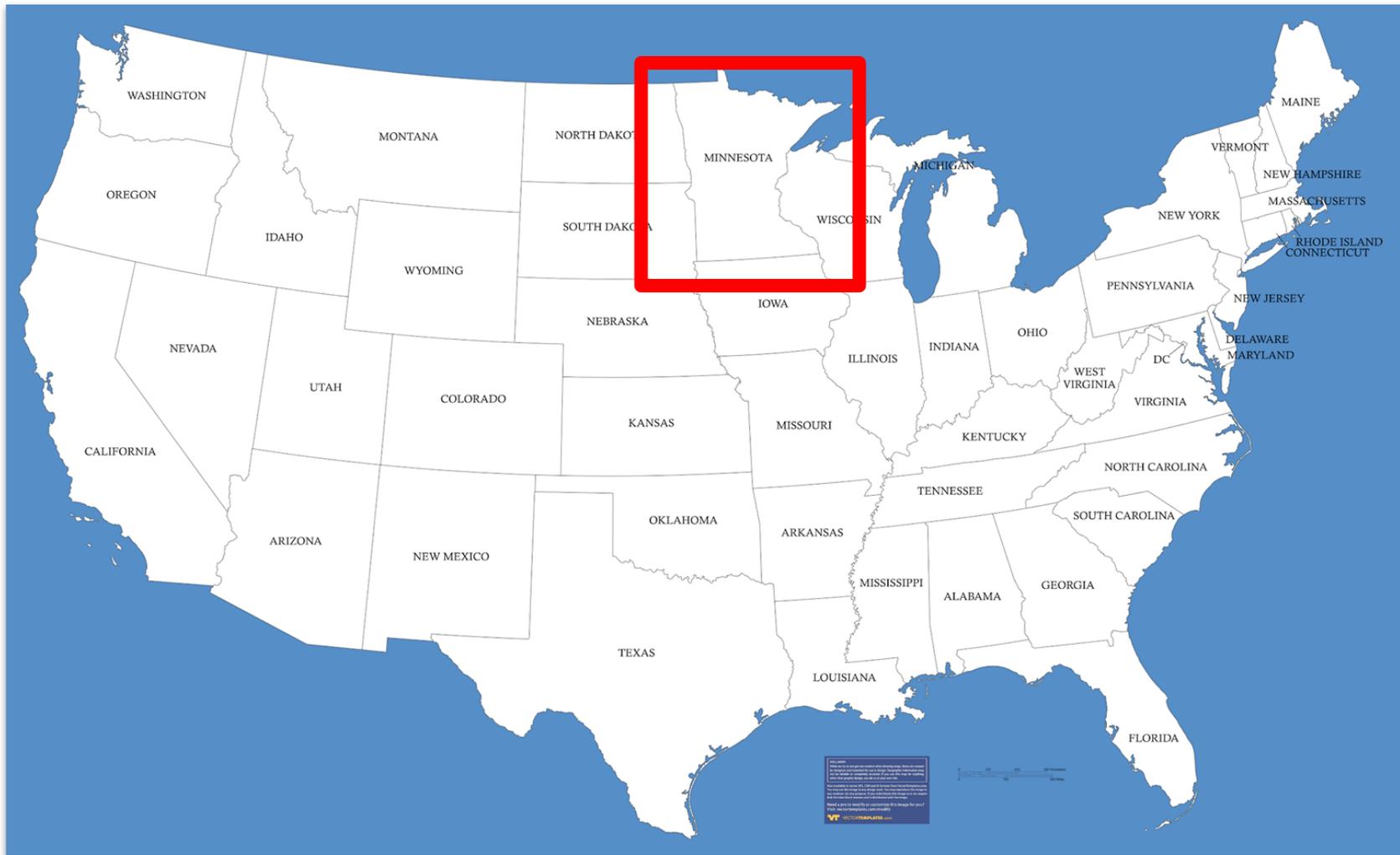
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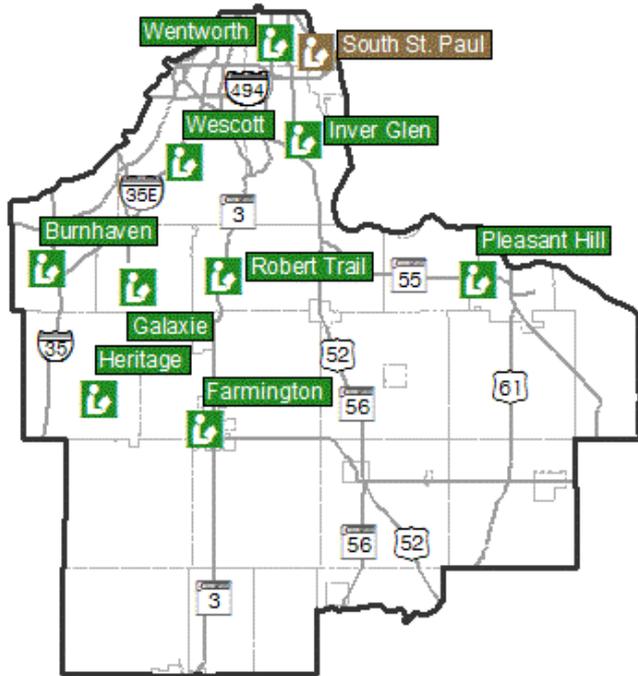
EQUITY



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MN GOVERNMENT



Dakota County Library



Residential Population: 421, 751

$\frac{1}{3}$ urban $\frac{1}{3}$ suburban $\frac{1}{3}$ rural

Nine library branches

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/libraries>

Autism Grant

1

Training

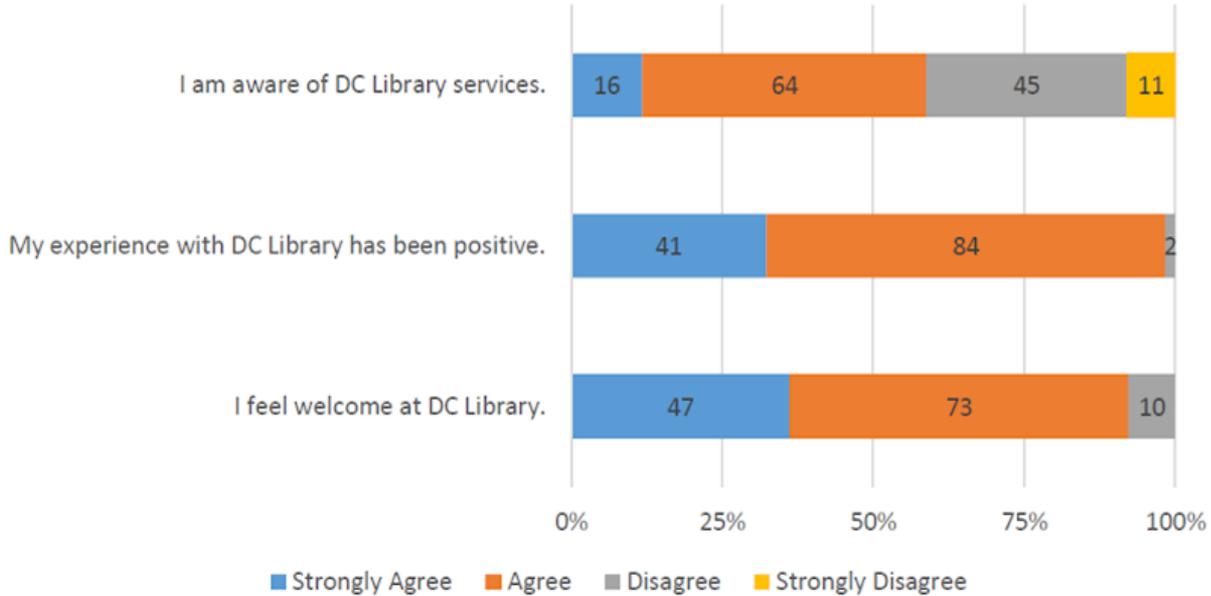
Dakota
C O U N T Y

2

Service
Development

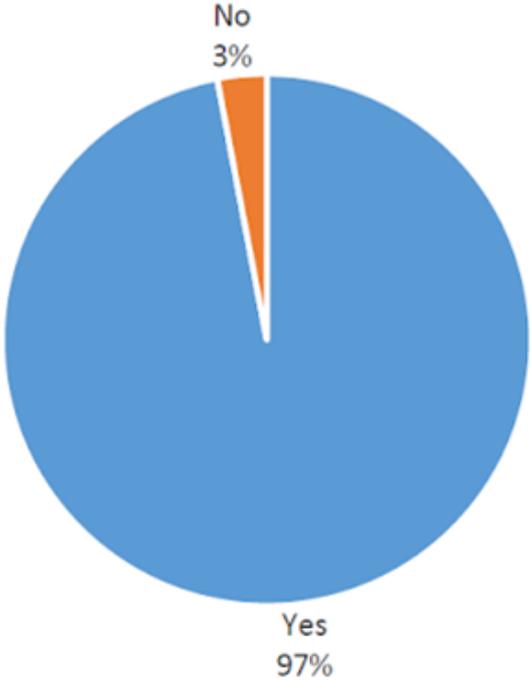
Library Survey

Figure 1. Experiences with Dakota County Library
N = 164



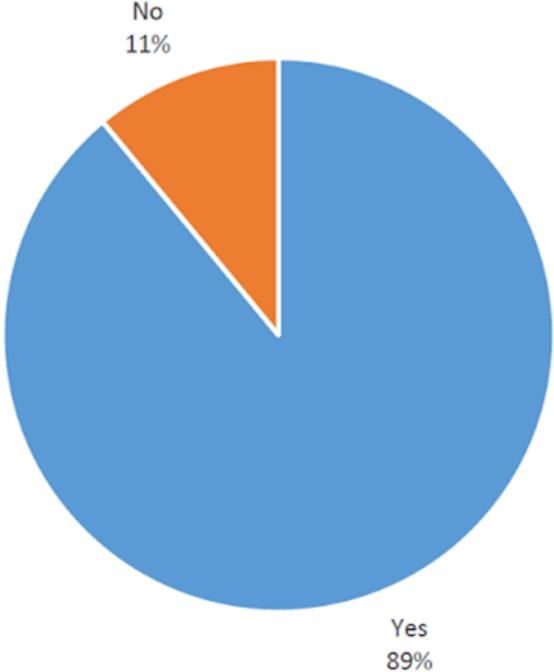
Library Survey

Figure 2. Percent of Participants Indicating Libraries Should and Should Not Integrate People with ASD into Existing Programs



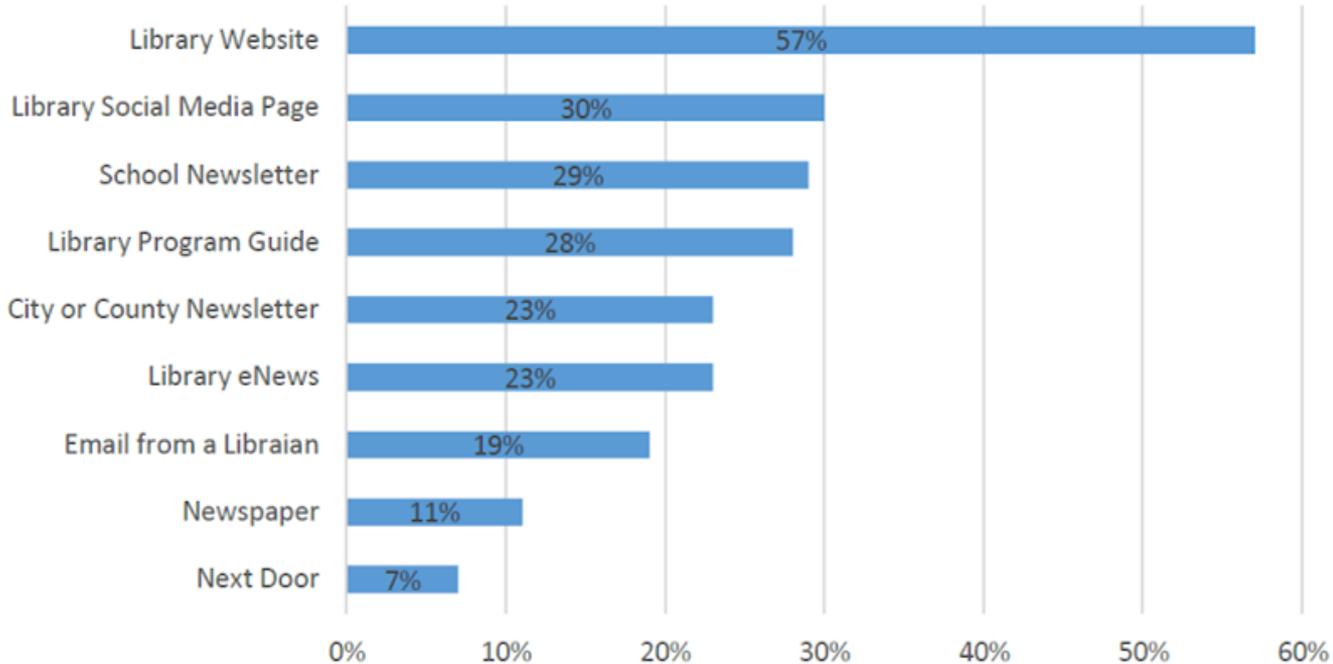
Library Survey

Figure 3. Percent of Participants Indicating Libraries Should and Should Not Offer Special Programming to those with ASD



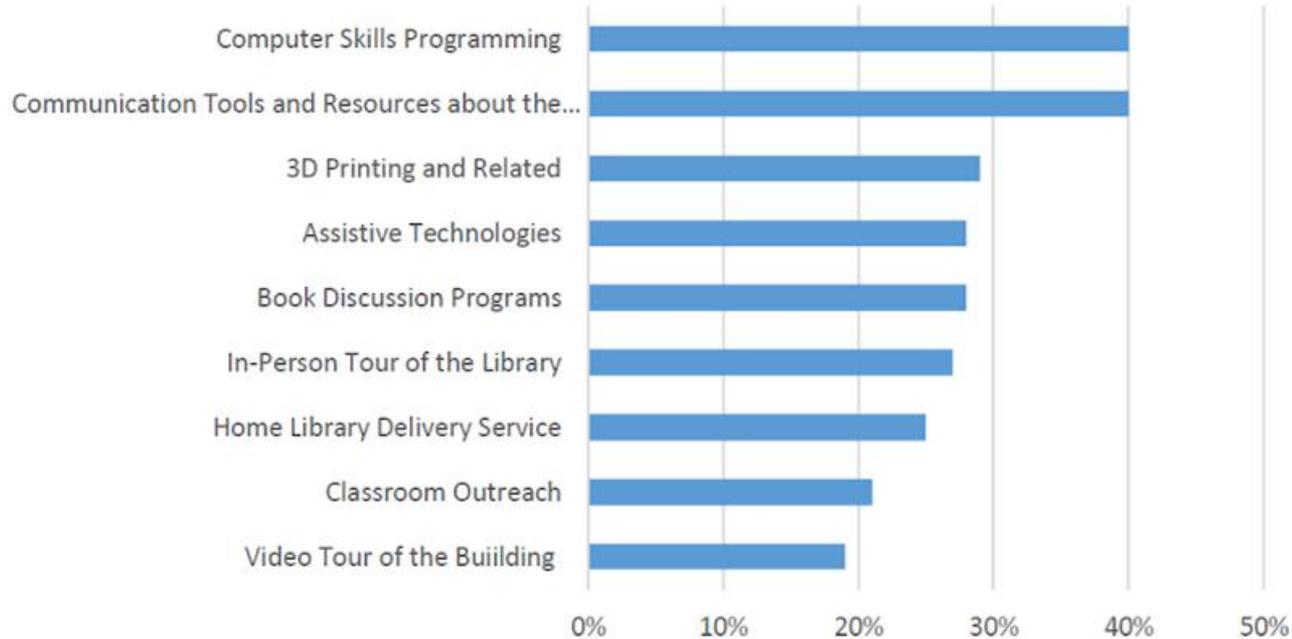
Library Survey

Figure 4. Percent of People Finding Communication Methods for Library Services Helpful (N = 146)



Library Survey

Figure 5. Percent of People Indicating Given Service Would Be Useful (N = 146)



Library Survey

“I am so delighted that Dakota County Library is even thinking about being more inclusive. What a great thing for families.”

“Thank you for doing this important work.”

Staff Training



Trained 120 library staff

Hosted 5 workshops

Topics Covered

- What is Autism?
- Customer service tips
- Positive communication strategies
- Suggestions for supports in programs and environments

ausm[®]
autism society of minnesota

Book Discussion



Monthly club for individuals with autism, other disabilities & neurotypical individuals ages 14+

All reading levels welcome; all formats supported

Participants vote on monthly themes

Themes include classic authors, mystery, historical, action, adventure, fantasy and sports

Goals

- Teach life skills on using the Library
- Socialization and connection
- Practice communication skills
- Support reading and literacy



Makerspace Programs



Outreach program in partnership with MOFAS (Minnesota Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)

Teens ages 12-17 with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome & co-occurring disabilities

Program Goals

- Introduce Library and makerspace technologies
- Teach 3-D printing and stop-motion animation
- Build rapport with staff
- Parent and caregiver respite



Sensory-Friendly Saturdays



Children ages 3 to 8 with siblings and caregivers

Designed for kids with autism spectrum disorder, disabilities, or kids who have difficulty sitting still

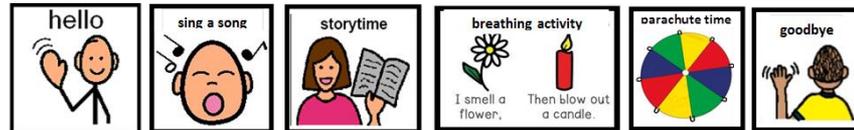
Provides a safe, welcoming, non-judgmental environment for all abilities

Program adaptations and supports include

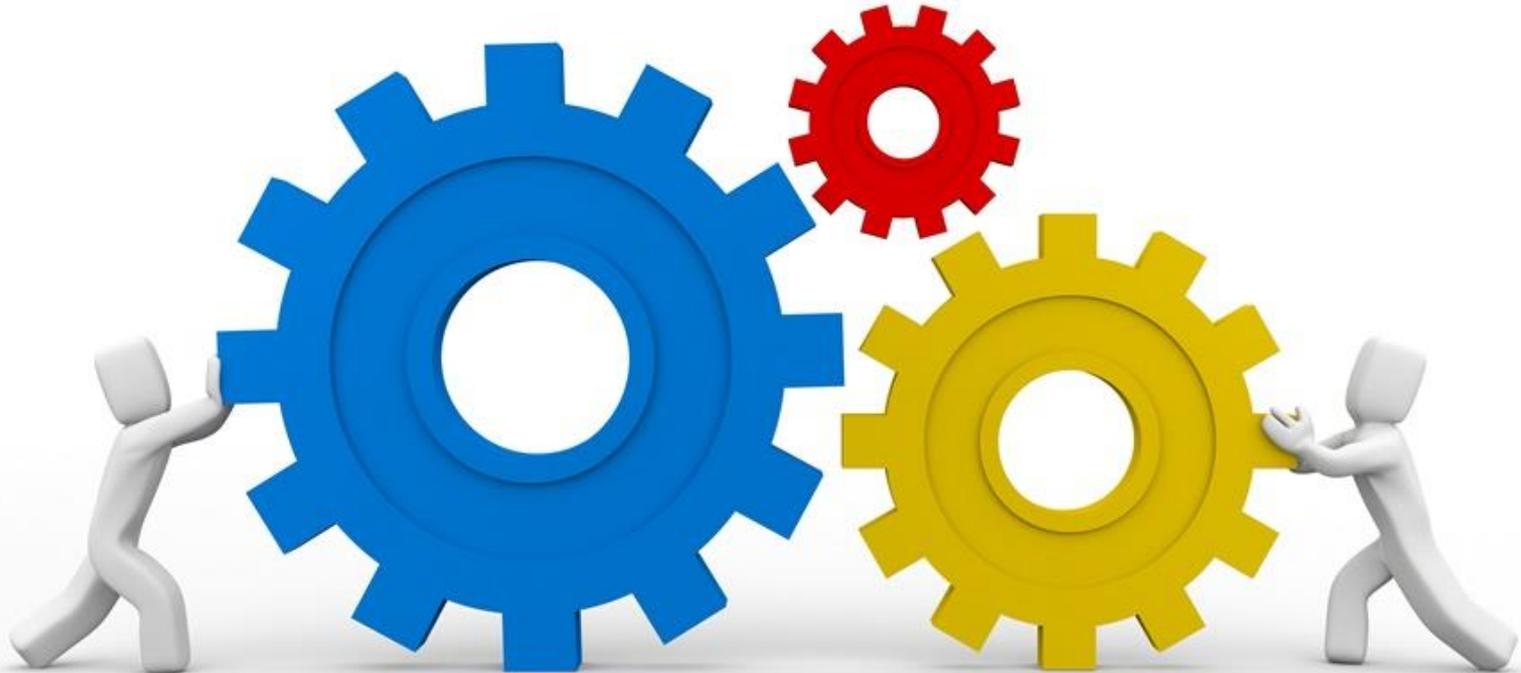
- Adapted Stories
- Fidgets and Sensory Toys
- Gross Motor Activities
- Sensory Corner
- Large Group Schedule
- Individual Schedules

YouTube Video “Activate: A Sensory Approach to Storytime”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqlogzrZ53M>



Community Partnerships



Library Programs



Autism Spectrum Disorder 101
presented by Robyn DeCourcy from
Autism Society of Minnesota

**A Look At Autism Research with
University of Minnesota's Autism
Initiative** presented by Dr. Amy Esler
and Jaclyn Gunderson from the
University of Minnesota

Faces of Autism presented by
author, photographer, advocate, and
parent Tera Girardin

Public Health Department

GOOD BOOKS FOR TOUGH TOPICS

Realistic fiction

All the Bright Places
by Jennifer Niven
Depression, suicide

Exit, Pursued by a Bear
by E.K. Johnston
Sexual assault, trauma

Girl in Pieces
by Kathleen Glasgow
Cutting, self-harm

I'll Give You the Sun
by Jandy Nelson
Grief, LGBTQIA+ relationships

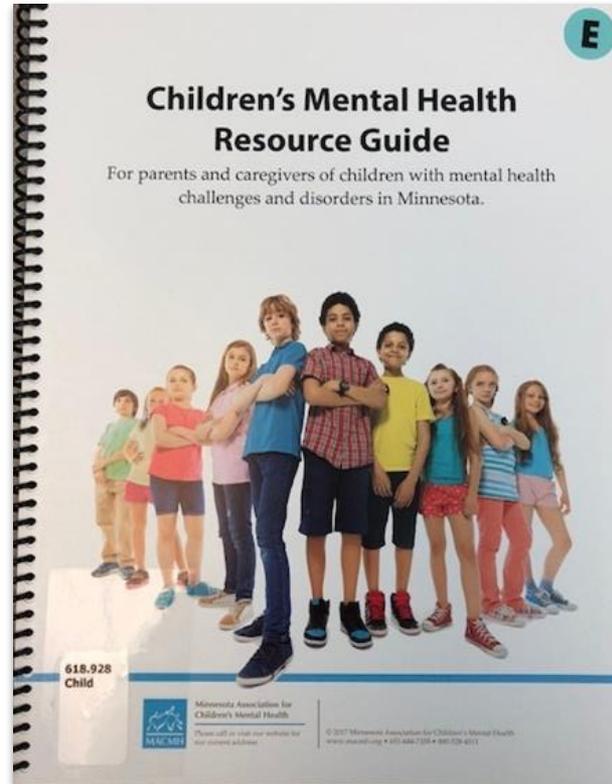
Long Way Down
by Jason Reynolds
Teenage gun violence

Other Broken Things
by Christa Desir
Alcoholism, addiction

The Sun Is Also a Star
by Nicola Yoon
Deportation, immigration status

Turtles All the Way Down
by John Green
Mental illness

When My Heart Joins the Thousand
by A.J. Steiger
Bullying, autism



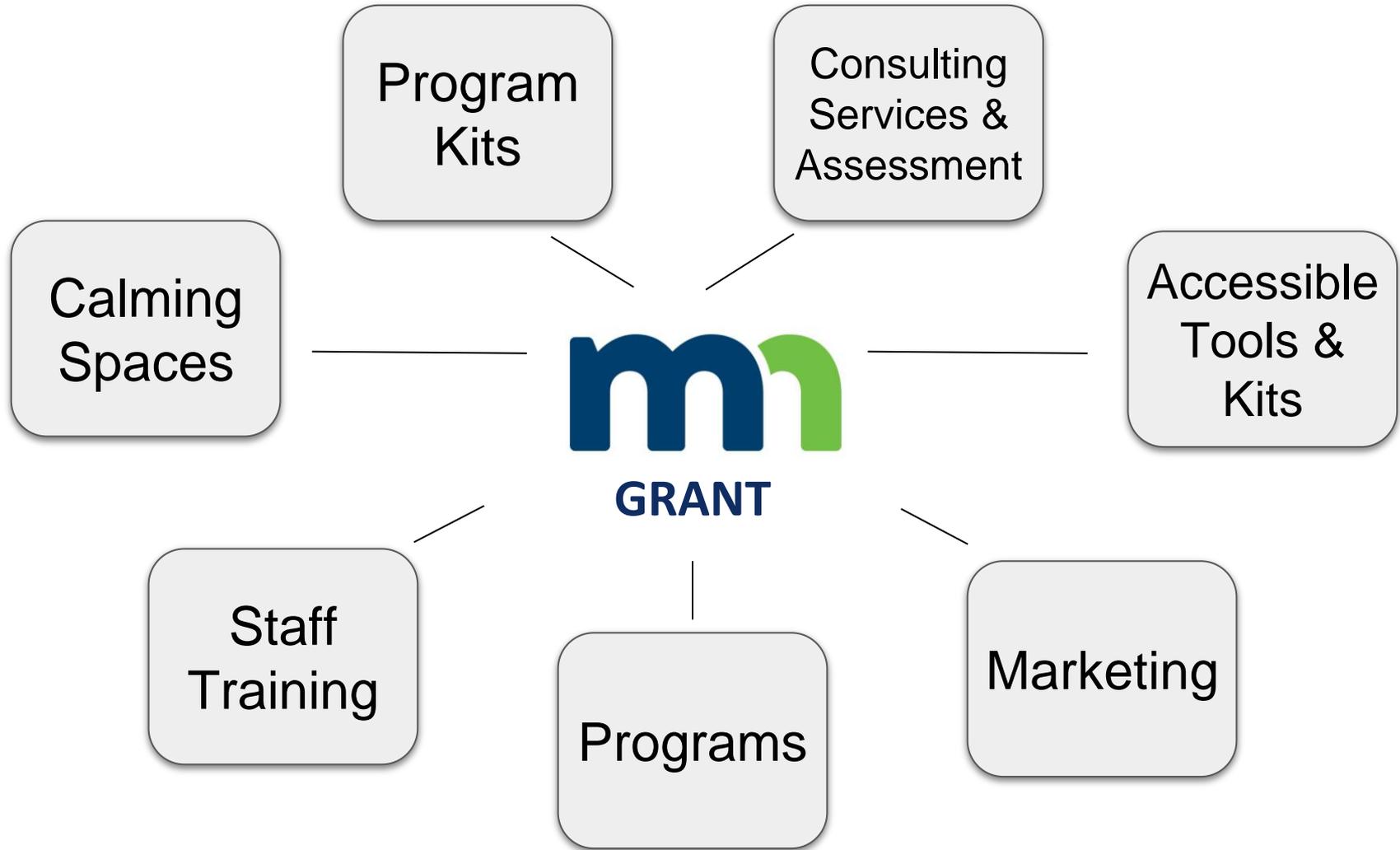
HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

| TOPIC | WHERE TO FIND IT |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Abuse | 362.76 362.829 616.8583 |
| Acne | 616.53 646.72 |
| Addiction/Alcoholism | 362.29 362.292 616.86 |
| AIDS/HIV | 362.196 614.599 616.979 |
| Anxiety | 616.8522 |
| Birth control | 613.042 613.9 |
| Body change/puberty | 613.042 |
| Body image | 158.108 613.042 |
| Bullying/cyberbullying | 302.3-302.343 |
| Cutting/self-mutilation | 616.8582 |
| Depression | 616.852 616.8527 |
| Divorce | 306.89 |
| Eating disorders | 616.8526 |
| Health/hygiene | 613.042 |
| Homelessness | 362.509 |
| Immigration laws | 342.082 |
| Incest | 364.153 |
| Knowing your rights | 323 |
| LGBTQIA+ | 306.76-306.768 |
| Miscarriage | 618.392 |
| Parents in prison | 362.829 |
| Pregnancy | 618.2-618.24 |
| Rape/date rape | 364.153 616.8583 |
| Relationships/dating | 306.7 306.73 |
| Sex/sexuality | 613.907 613.96 |
| Sex trafficking | 364.153 306.362 |
| STDs | 616.951362.28 |
| Suicide | 362.28 |



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**DISABILITY SERVICES
INNOVATIONS GRANT**







Program
Kits

Consulting
Services &
Assessment

Accessible
Tools &
Kits

Calming
Spaces

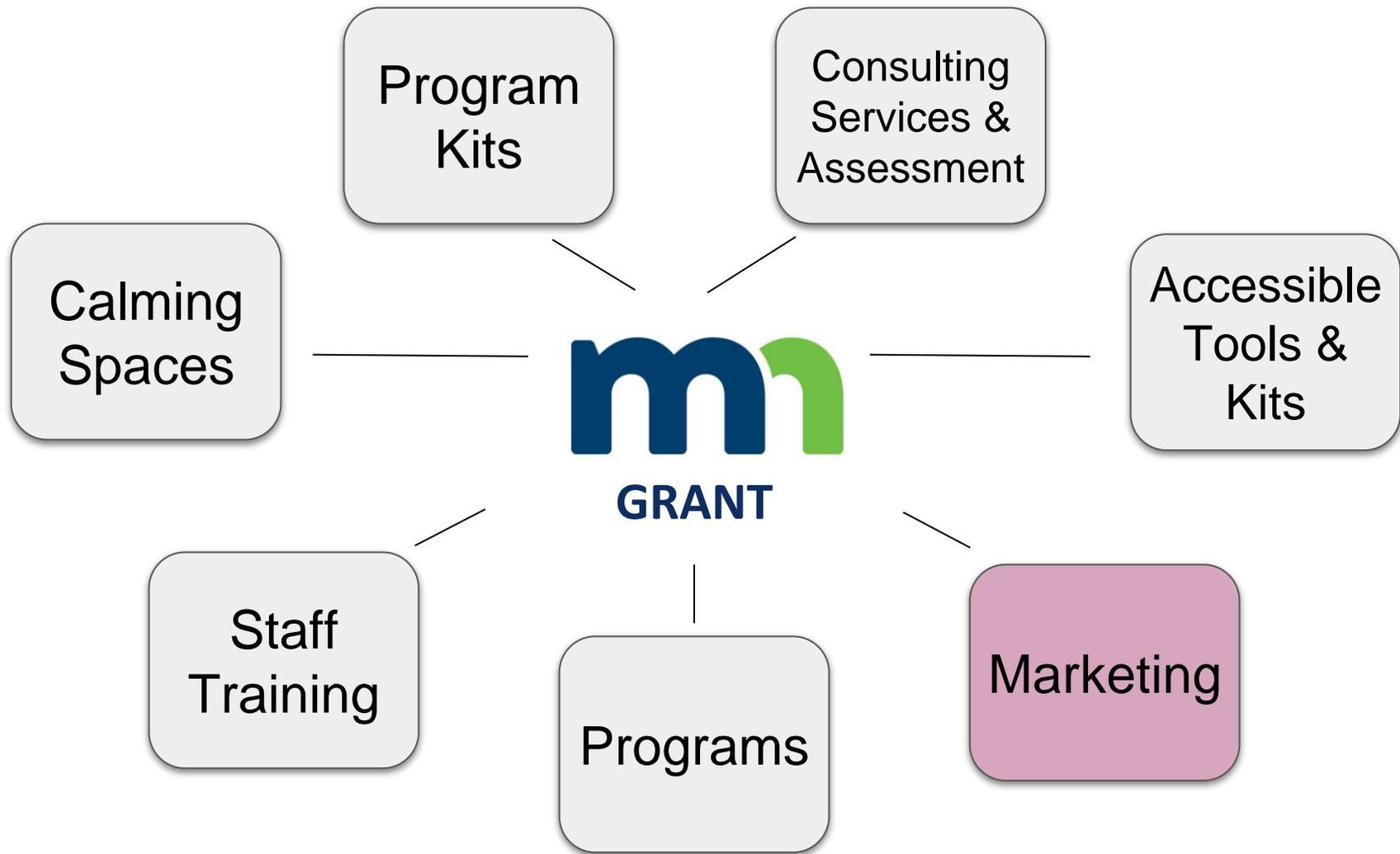


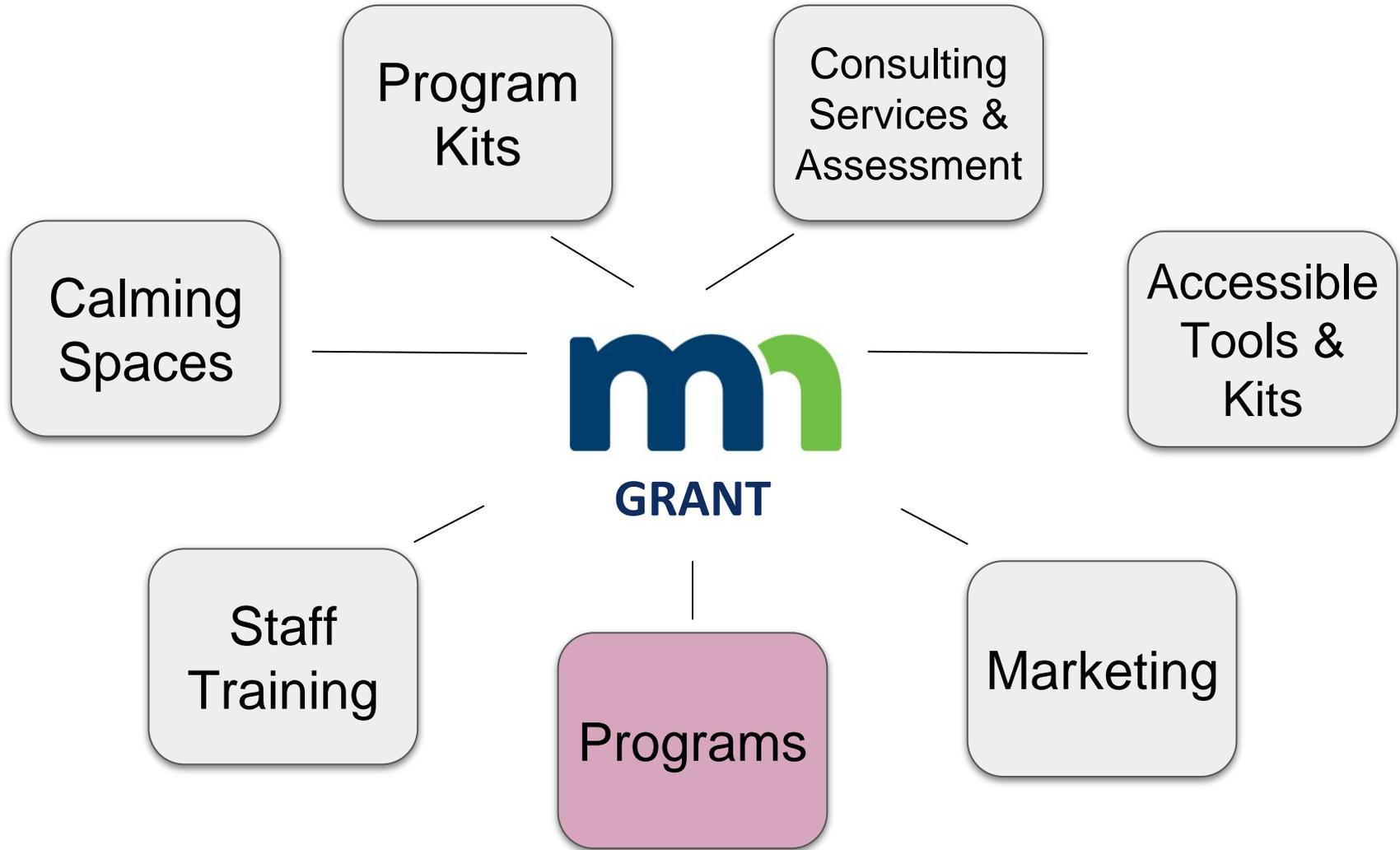
GRANT

Staff
Training

Programs

Marketing





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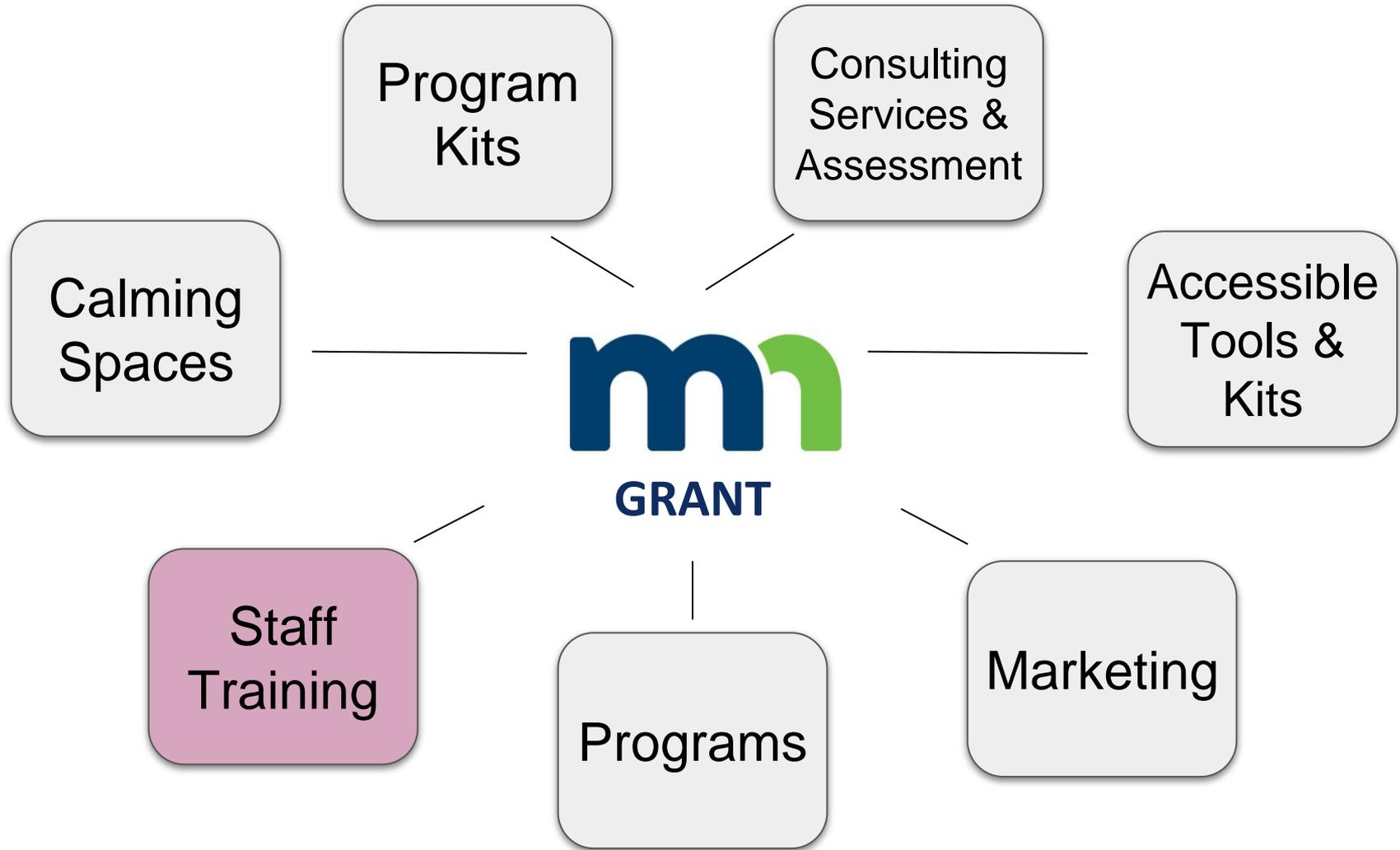
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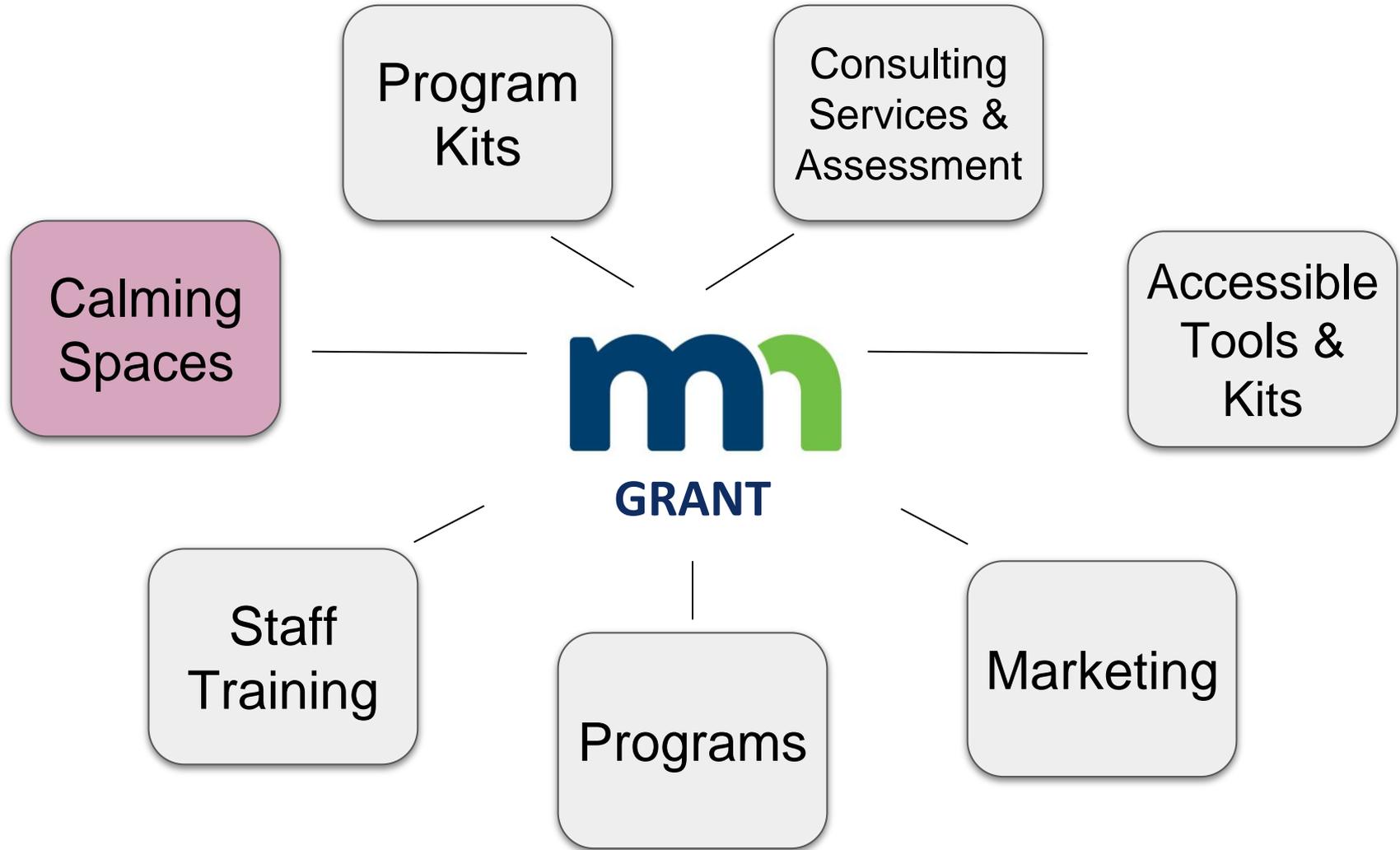
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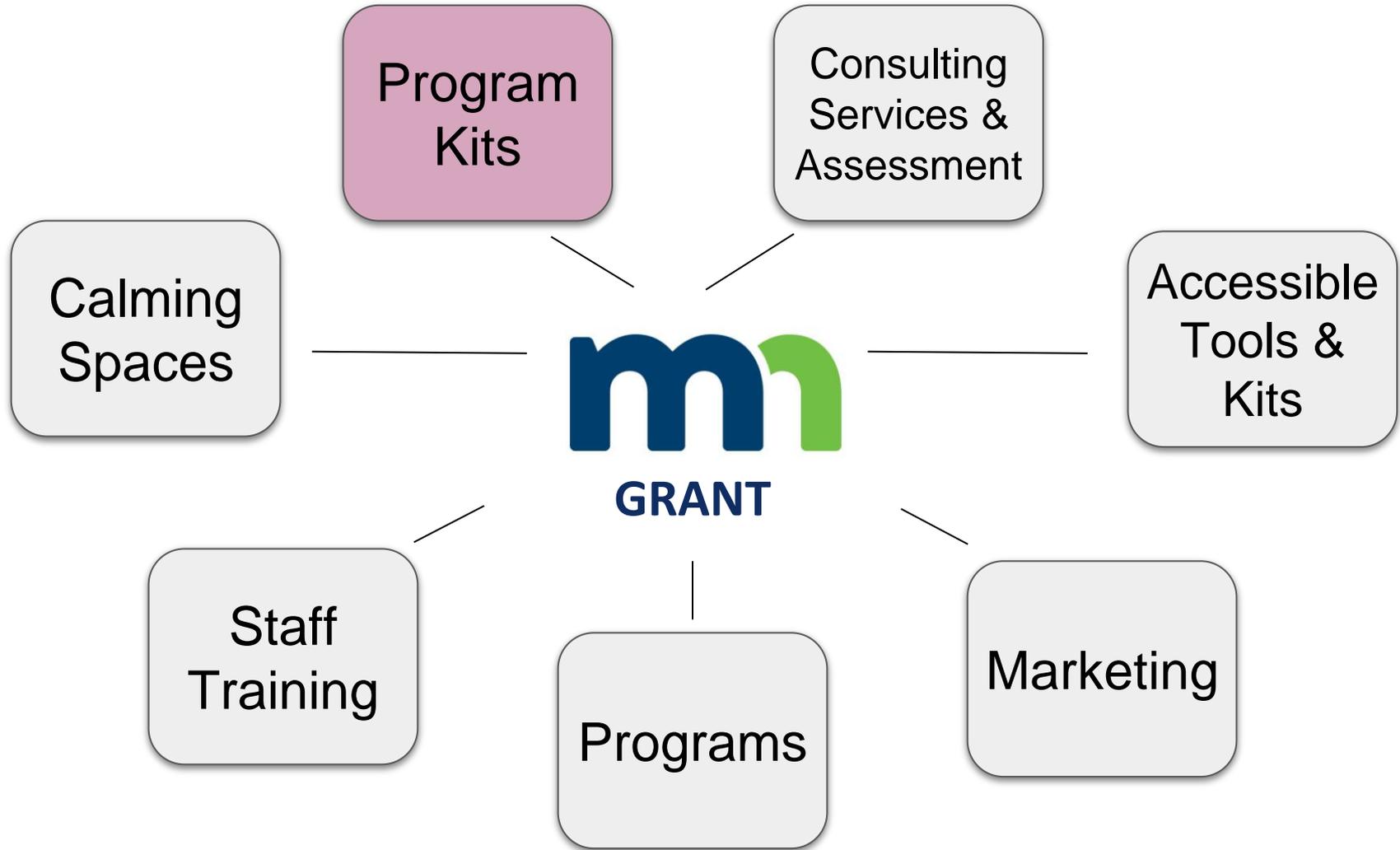
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Grant Programs & Trainings

High-Functioning vs. Low-Functioning Autism

And what about Asperger's Syndrome?



ausm

Minnesota's First Autism Resource™

© 2018 Autism Society of Minnesota

American Sign Language Celebration partnership programs with Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf and Metro Deaf School

Accessible Library Hour partnership program with Fraser and the Autism Society of MN

Creating an Accessible Social Media Presence Webinar

ASL 101 and Deaf Culture Hands-on Workshop

Librarian Partnerships



This Is What a Librarian Looks Like

Accessibility Project Team



Supports innovation in accessibility and inclusion for customers with disabilities at Dakota County Library

Identifies, prioritizes, evaluates and implements accessibility projects and initiatives county-wide

Involves community members to inform priorities and build awareness about library services

Subgroups

- Customer Experience
- Community Engagement and Awareness

Regional Networking Groups



Special Needs and Inclusive
Library Services Group

<https://snailsgroup.blogspot.com/>



Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA)
Inclusive Services Committee

<http://www.melsa.org>

Outcomes

Increased funding

Better trained staff

Informed community members

Increased accessibility of physical spaces

Increased engagement from new users



Outcomes

Stronger community connections

Increased awareness of the Library and services

New opportunities for cross-departmental partnership

Alignment with County priorities

Elevated position of the Library in the community



Increased opportunities for children and teens with disabilities and their families to be visible, participatory members of Dakota County Library and the community



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Dziękuję

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Obrigado

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Merci

Danke

Terima

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Grazie

Thank you

Gracias

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Спасибо

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