



**No Stone Unturned:  
How do families make  
treatment decisions?**

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**Factors Affecting Treatment Choices by  
Caregivers of Children with Autism**

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## Rational Action Theory

- Rational action theory
  - Individuals are rational actors (i.e., act in a manner that maximizes self-interest)
  
  - All things being equal, caregivers of children with ASD will select treatments that are:
    - ♦ Empirically supported
    - ♦ Produce immediate effects
    - ♦ Are affordable
    - ♦ Are highly available

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## Participants

- Convenience sample
- 11 Caregivers of children with ASD diagnoses
  - Maintain custody at least 50% of the time for at least 1 year
  - Had an ASD diagnosis for at least 1 year

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## Treatments

- Updated the list of treatments used in Green et al. (2006)
  - 206 treatments identified:

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## Treatments

- Updated the list of treatments used in Green et al. (2005)
  - 206 treatments identified
- Caregivers responded on a 5 point Likert-type scale
  - How knowledgeable they were about each treatment
  - How effective each treatment is
  - How much risk is involved in using each treatment

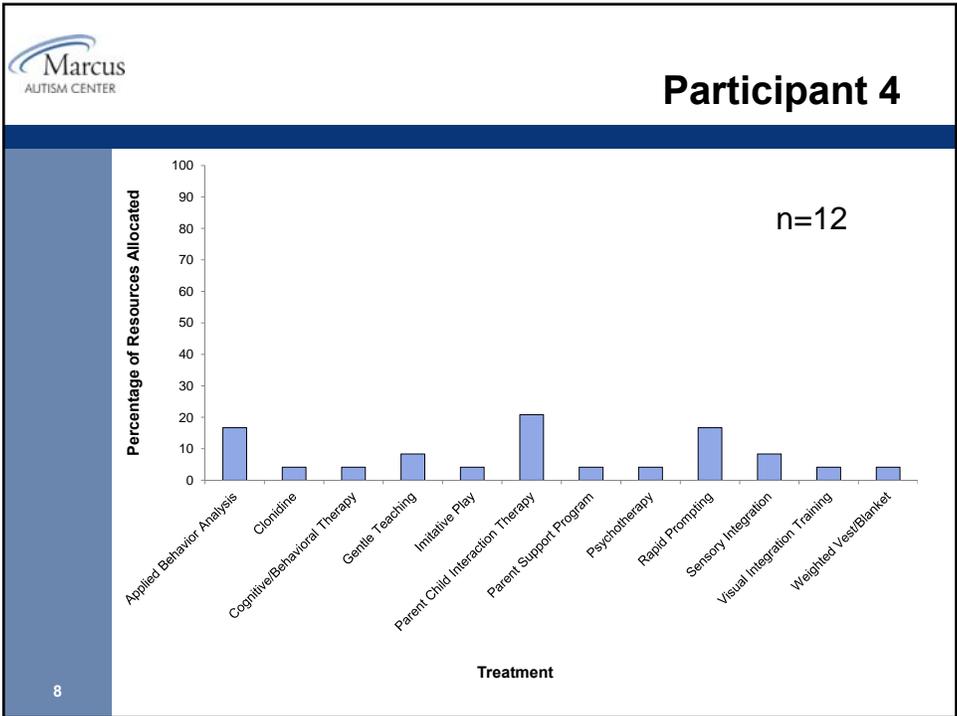
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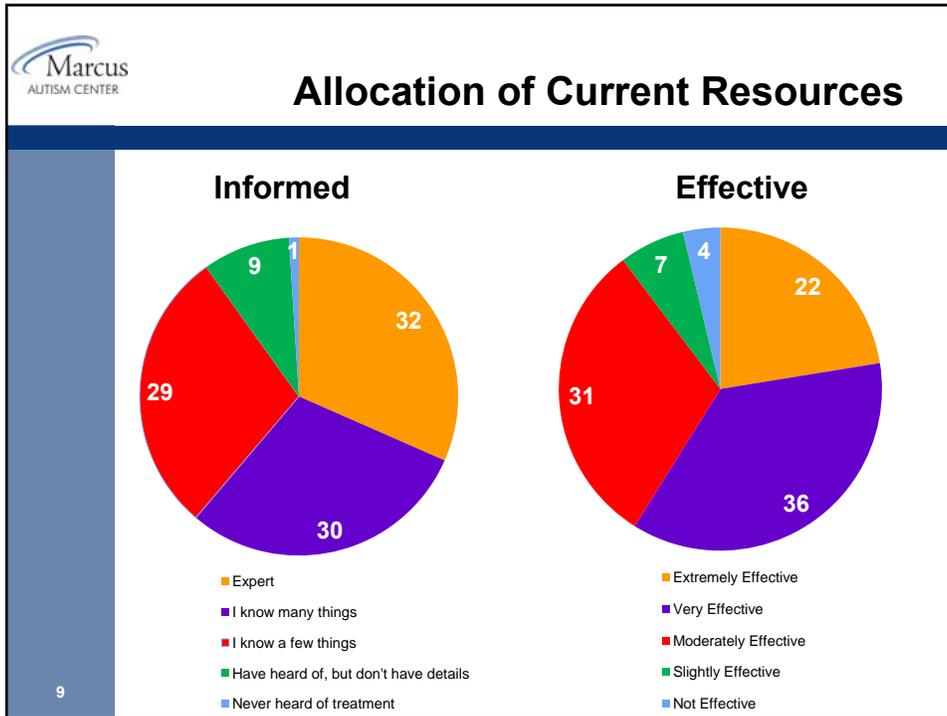
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## Part 1: Current Use of Treatments

- Participants were asked if they used each treatment
- Once all currently used treatments had been identified, they were asked to allocate tokens that represented the resources they expend on treatment

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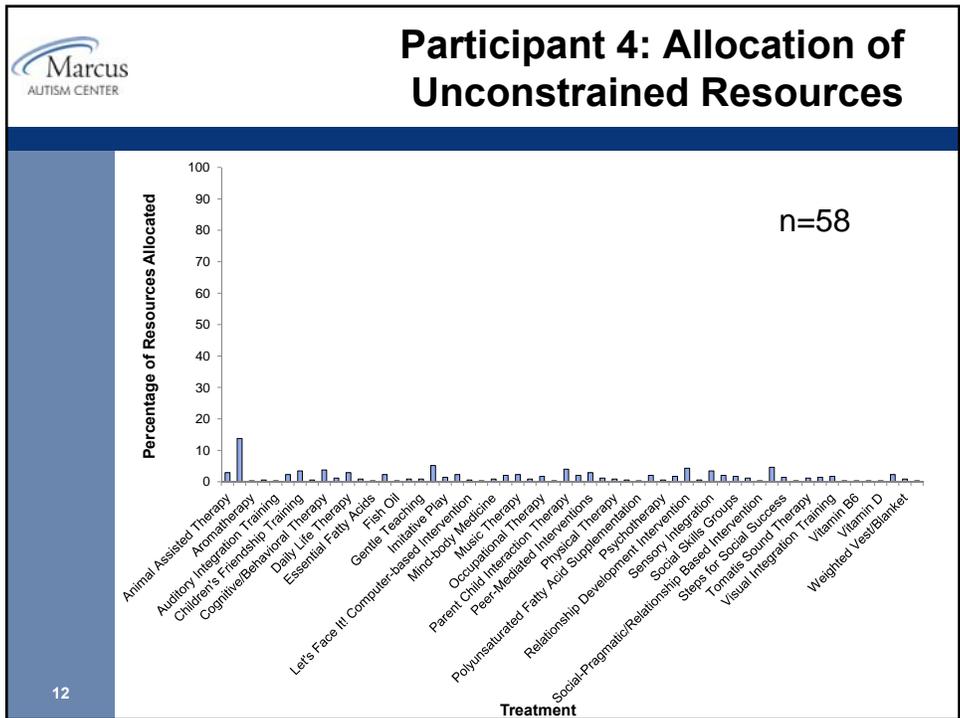
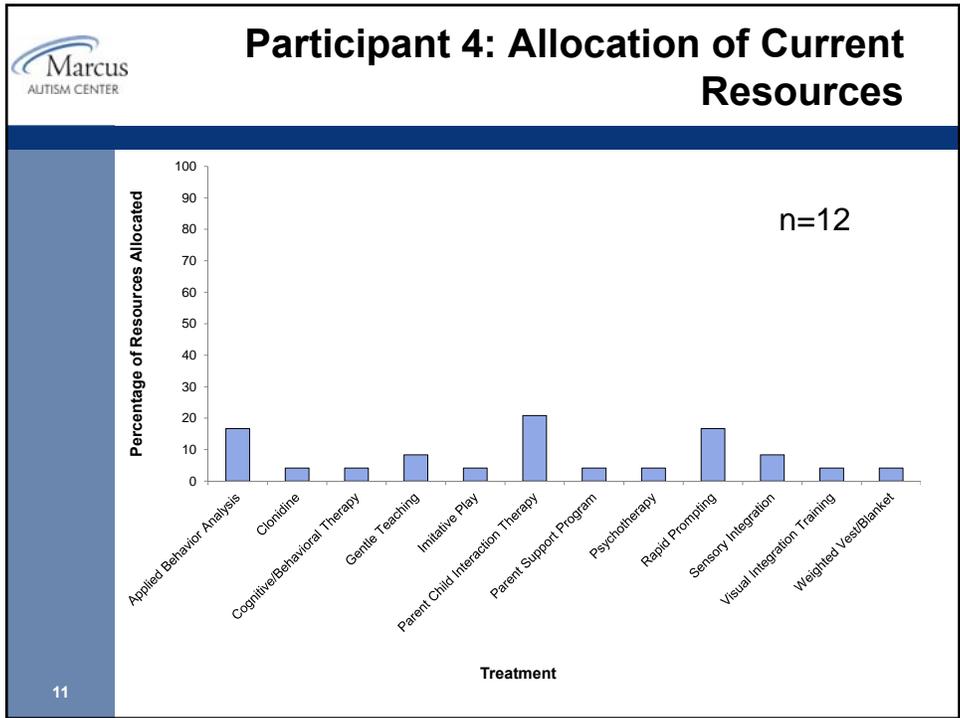




**Part 2: Unconstrained Choice of Treatments**

- Which treatments would they use if not constrained by cost/availability?
- Participants were asked if they would use each treatment if resources/availability were no object

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## Overall

- Average number of treatments with current resources: 9.7 (range: 1-21)
- Average number of treatments with unconstrained resources: 48.6 (range: 13-77)

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## Allocation of Resources: Informed

**Current**

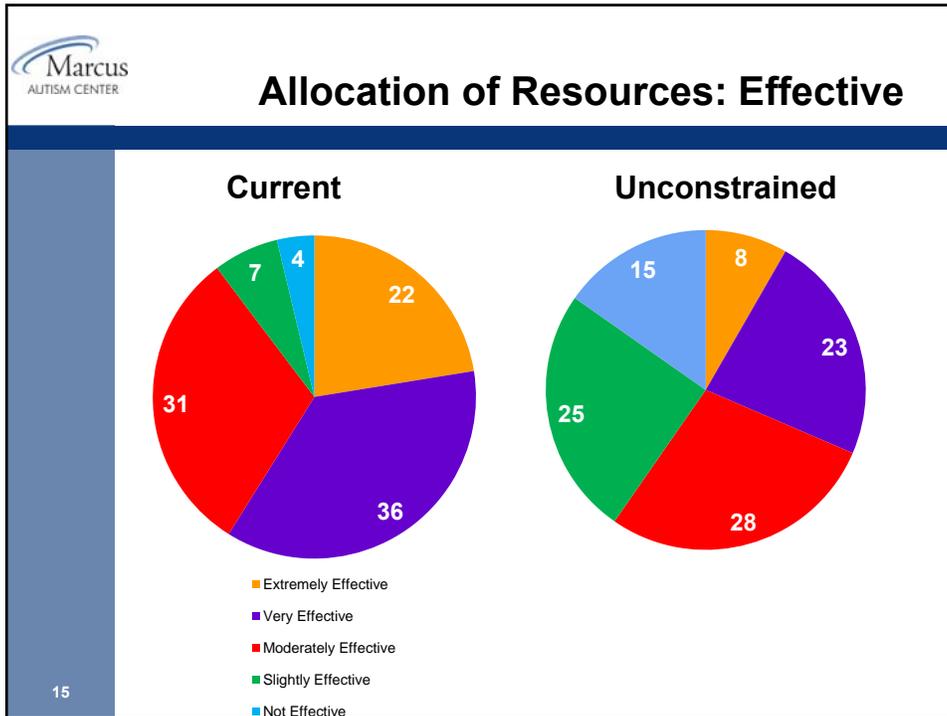
Category	Percentage
Expert	32
I know many things	30
I know a few things	29
Have heard of, but don't have details	9
Never heard of treatment	1

**Unconstrained**

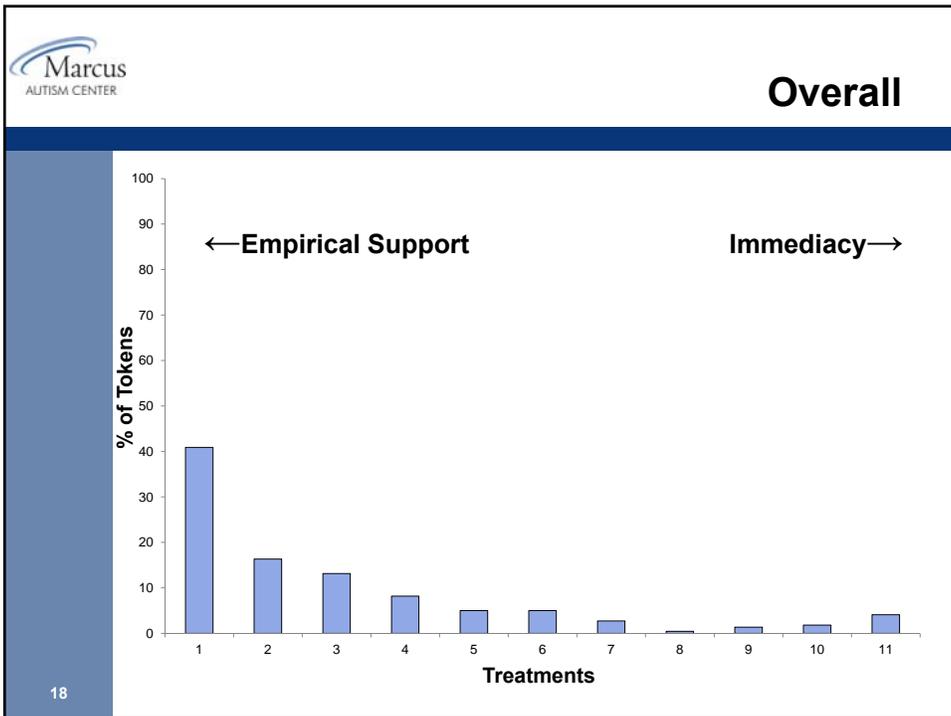
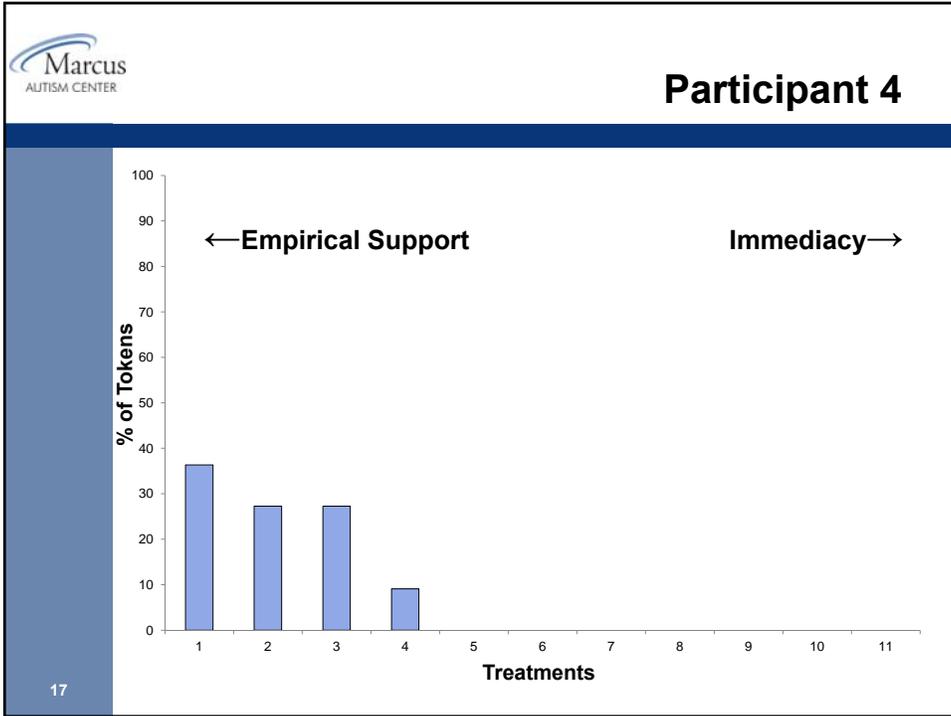
Category	Percentage
Expert	11
I know many things	13
I know a few things	23
Have heard of, but don't have details	18
Never heard of treatment	34

- Expert
- I know many things
- I know a few things
- Have heard of, but don't have details
- Never heard of treatment

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- Part 3: Empirical Support vs. Immediacy**
- How do empirical support and immediacy interact?
  - Eleven note cards (treatments)
  - Each representing a hypothetical treatment
  - Degree of empirical support
    - Range from 0% - 100% of the criteria used by the scientific community to prove effectiveness
  - Immediacy
    - Range from 1 week - 5 years to achieve the caregiver's treatment goals
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 **Future Directions**

- More participants from a broader recruitment pool
- Classification and Regression Trees (CART)
  - Create decision making model

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 **Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC)**

[www.autismcenter.org](http://www.autismcenter.org)