

# Strengthening Educator Self-Efficacy through an Autism ECHO Tele-Mentoring Model

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There are many barriers to implementing evidence-based practices in schools, (e.g. resources, training). Educators consistently report a specific lack of training for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Rural educators may be especially isolated from training opportunities and access to specialty knowledge. The Rochester Regional Center for ASD facilitated a tele-mentoring program utilizing the Project ECHO model to increase capacity for supporting students with ASD in resource-scarce educational contexts. Conducted as a pilot program, this project aimed to provide no-cost access to collaborative learning that enables schools to be part of a knowledge-sharing network.

## 1 "Hub"

## 20 "Spokes"

## 9 Schools

## 5 Counties



- 2 psychologists certified as behavior analysts
- 1 social worker
- 2 parents/caregivers



- Classroom teachers
- Administrators
- Behavior specialists
- Social workers
- Paraprofessionals



- Chemung
- Livingston
- Monroe
- Steuben
- Yates



**Intervention:** Using ECHO's "hub-and-spoke" design, a multi-disciplinary team of experts (the "hub") used videoconferencing to conduct 8, 1-hour sessions on a bi-weekly schedule with educators (the "spokes") in their respective school districts. Each session consisted of a didactic presentation on an ASD related topic and a participant presented case of a student with ASD in their setting. Shared discussion in an ECHO model format was facilitated by the hub team to encourage mentorship among the educator's peers and the team of experts.

## Clinic Agenda:

- Introductions & announcements (10 minutes)
- Didactic presentation (20 minutes)
- Case presentation (30 minutes)
  - **Spoke** members case questions
  - **Hub** panel case questions
  - **Spoke** members feedback/recommendations
  - **Hub** panel feedback/recommendations
  - Remaining questions and summary

## Didactic Presentation Topics:

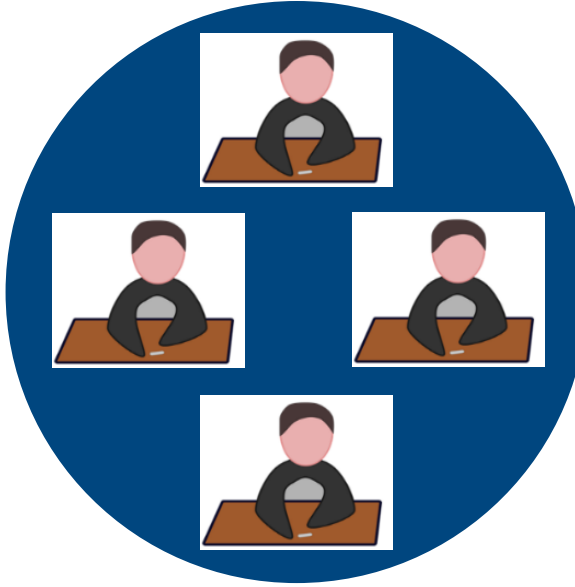
- Introduction to ECHO and ASD
- Anxiety in ASD
- Strategies for Increasing Tolerance for Waiting
- Behavioral Assessment and Intervention for Self-Injurious Behavior
- Toilet Training Children with ASD
- Caregiver Experiences
- Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder
- ASD and Puberty



Hub Team of Specialists



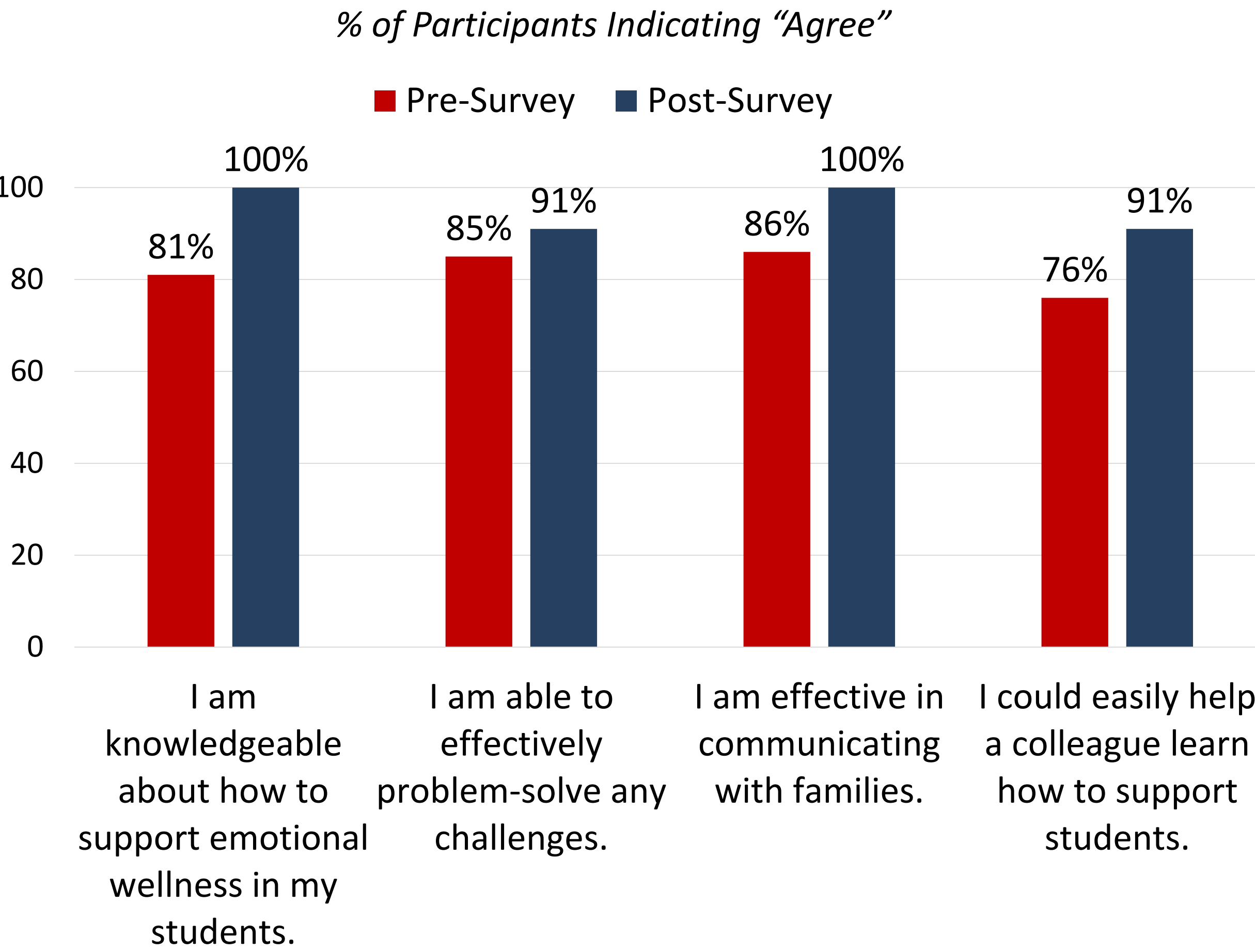
Educator Spokes



Student Reach

**Outcomes:** The ECHO Autism for Educators program offers a mentorship model that allows educators to acquire new skills and competencies in the education and management of students with ASD in their own educational setting. Additionally, the professional network among ECHO peers promotes increased efficiency and expands access to local, region, and state educational supports. Pre- and post-measures of perceived efficacy of the ECHO clinics for increasing knowledge related to supporting students with ASD indicate an increase in confidence and competence of educators who participated in the program.

## ECHO Clinic Perceived Efficacy



## Post-ECHO Clinic Evaluation

% of Participants Indicating "Agree"

