



Treatment of Elopement: Safety Tips and Considerations in Programming

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About Me



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Funding & Conflicts of Interest



Autism Speaks Treatment Grant
(#11416).

National Institute of Health, Eunice Kennedy
Shriver National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development: R03 HD082436

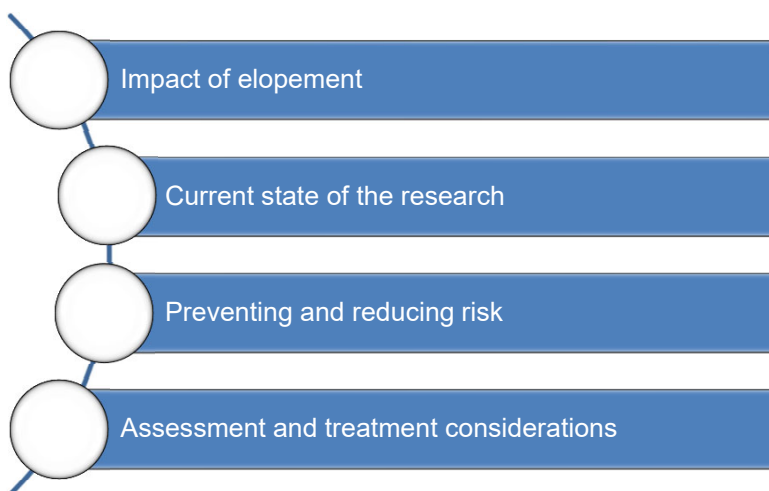


Clinical Appointment at
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Today's Plan



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What is elopement?



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Elopement Prevalence in ASD

35% with
ASD+ID/DD eloped
in the past year
(Kiely et al., 2016)

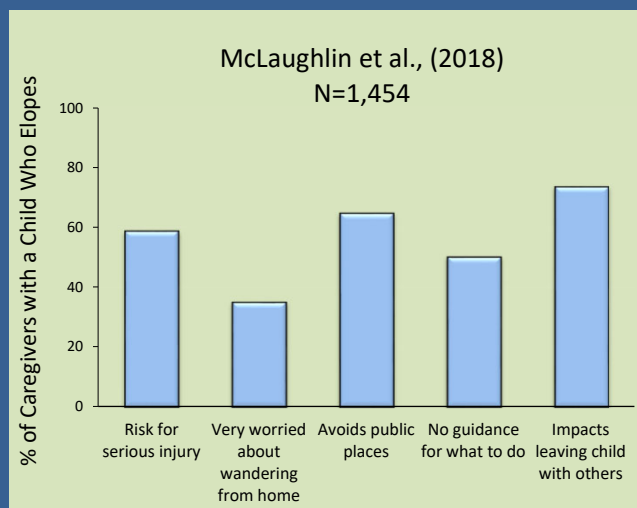
49% with ASD have
eloped after the
age of 4 (Anderson
et al., 2012)

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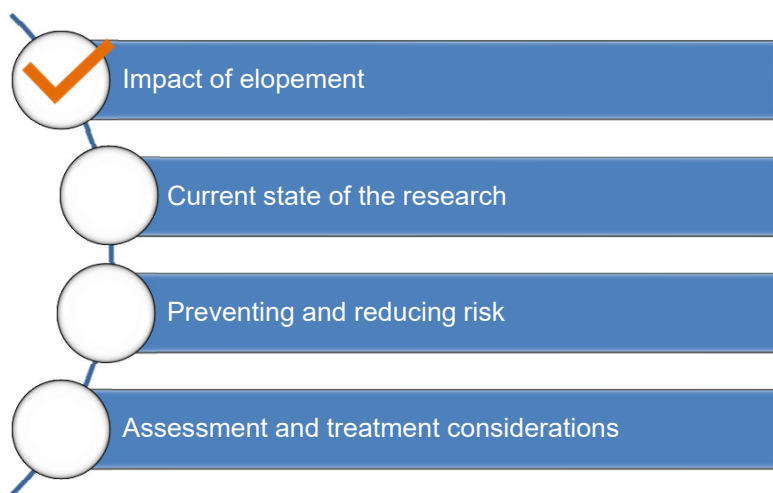
Impact of Elopement



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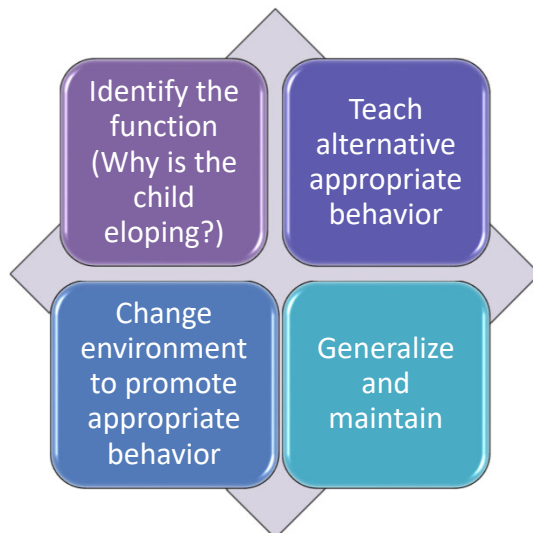
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Function Based Elopement Treatments

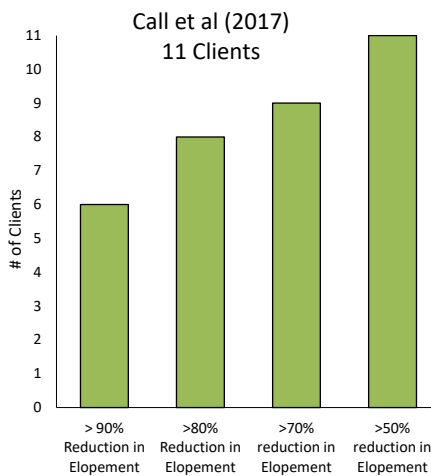
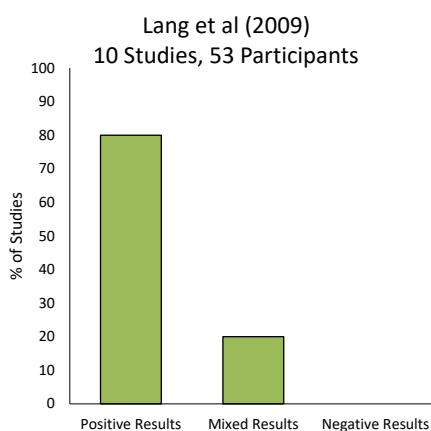


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Function-Based Treatments Work



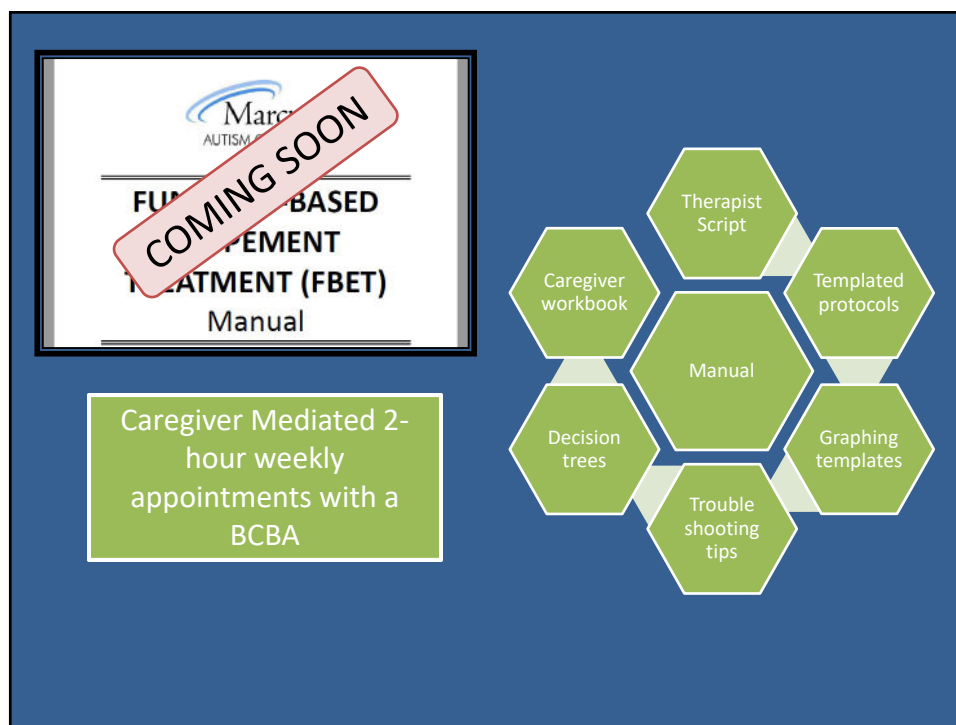
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Limitations in the Literature

Limitation	Solution: Manualized Intervention
Individualization	Create structured decision trees
Trained individuals	Enough detail to be followed with BCBA-level training
Specialized settings	Implemented in the home and community
Dissemination	Randomized clinical trial with a control group

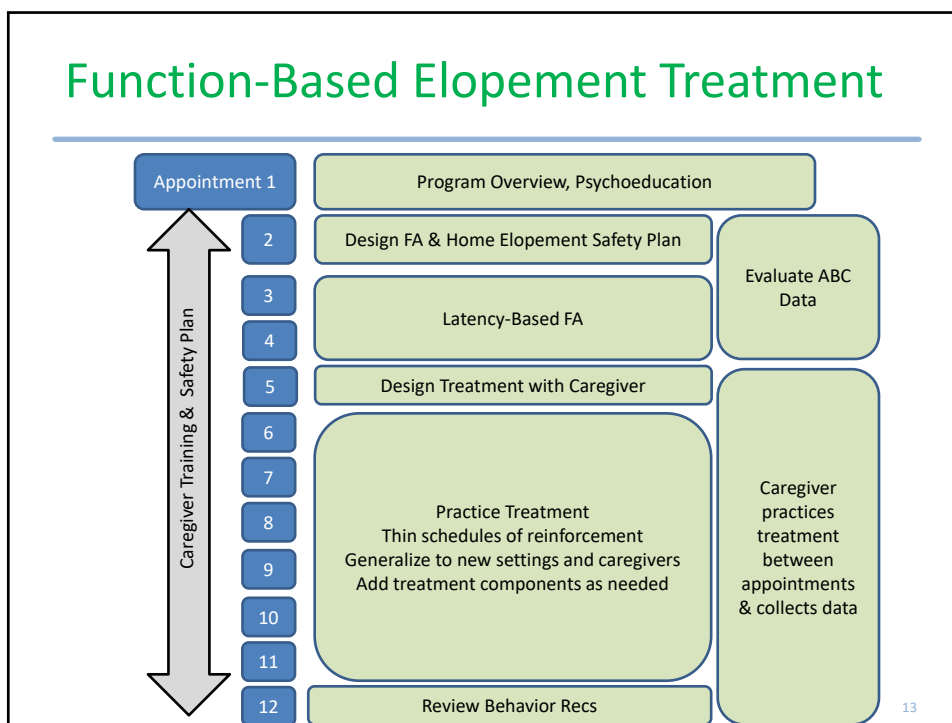
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Function-Based Elopement Treatment



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Randomized Controlled Trial > J Autism Dev Disord. 2021 Aug;51(8):2866-2875.

doi: 10.1007/s10803-020-04753-4. Epub 2020 Oct 30.

A Feasibility Randomized Clinical Trial of a Structured Function-Based Intervention for Elopement in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Mindy Scheithauer^{1 2}, Nathan A Call^{3 4}, Joanna Lomas Mevers^{3 4}, Courtney E McCracken^{3 5}, Lawrence Scahill³

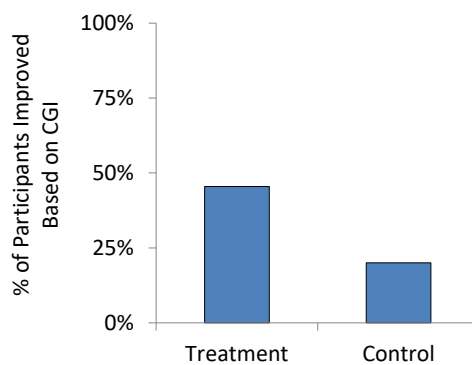


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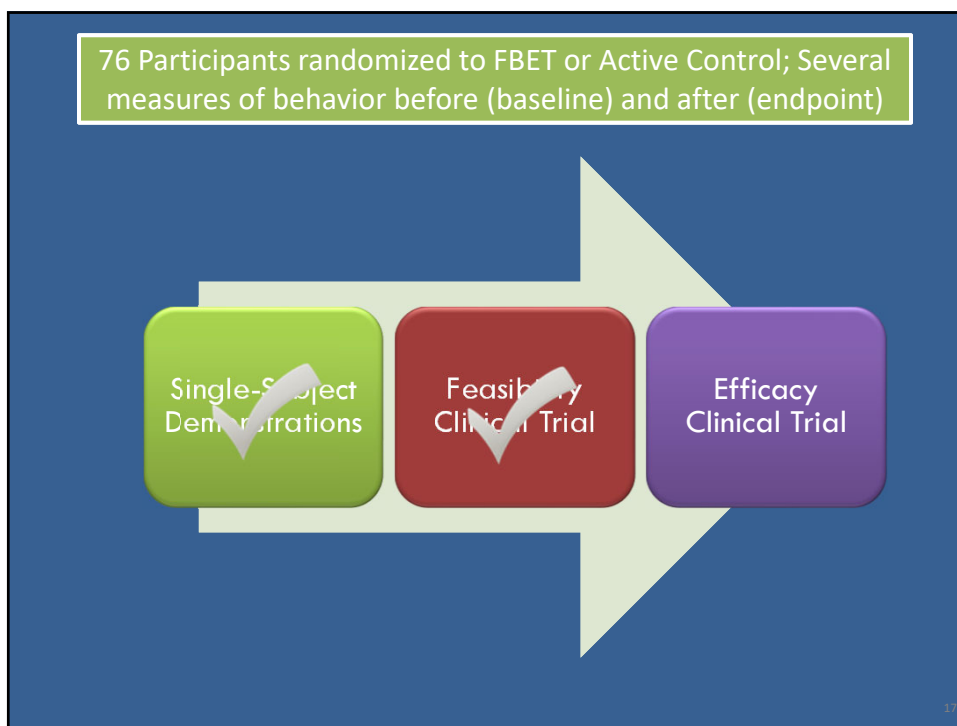
RCT, N=24

R03 HD082436

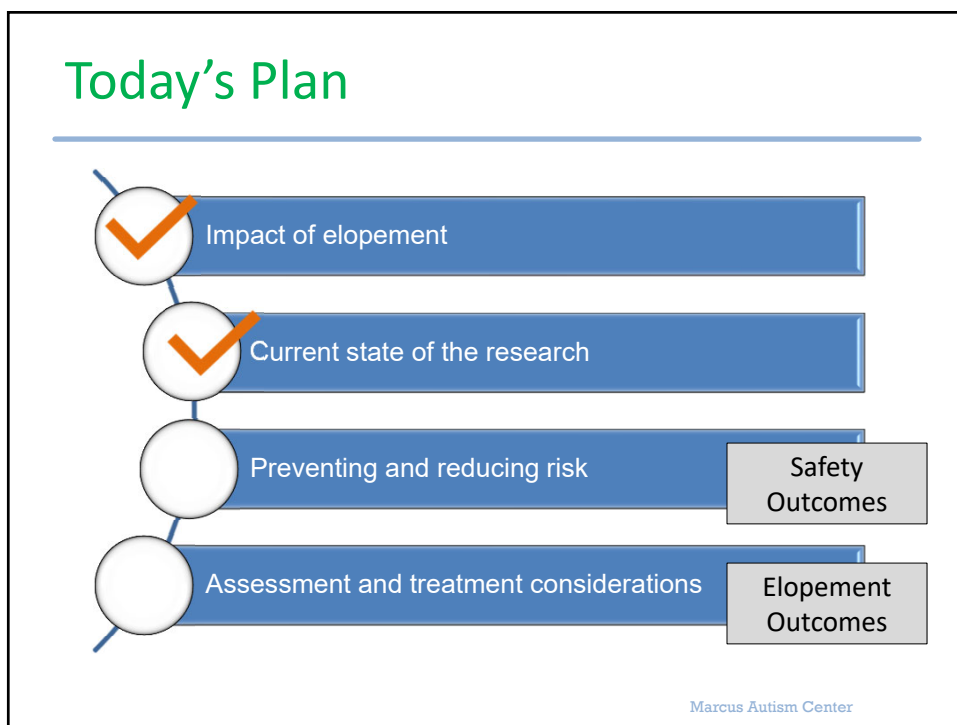
- 91% of appointments completed
- 6.7 (out of 7) acceptability of program
- 92% Therapist integrity



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Prevention Strategies



Physical
Prevention



Reducing Danger



Response
Readiness

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Physical Prevention

- Goal is to prevent or slow down elopement
- Home techniques
 - Locks
 - Alarms



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Examples – not tested or endorsed

6 Pack

EUDEMON 6 Pack B Knob Covers Door K
★★★★★ ~ 575
\$12⁹⁹

p by Kidco - ~ 41

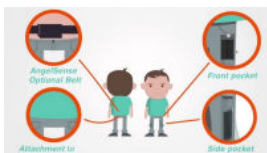
2 Pcs

Sponsored ⓘ
SAYAYO Hook Latch Cabin Hook, 2 PCS Barn Door Lock Stainless Steel Eye Latch for Cabinet, Window, Shed Door, Fence Gate
\$11⁹⁹

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Physical Prevention

- Outside of the home
 - Increased supervision – recruit the help of others
- GPS trackers
 - Allows you to monitor your child's location
 - Alarms if your child goes outside a certain perimeter



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Child Getting Lost

- Reporting name, phone number, and address when asked
 - Vocal responding
 - Pointing to the information attached to the child

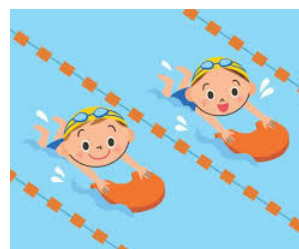


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Physical Risks

- Drowning: swim lessons
 - Autism Speaks: Swim and Water Safety Providers
- Traffic incidents: safely crossing roads



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Teaching



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Importance of Response Readiness

- Having a child go missing will be incredibly stressful
- Scary to think about, but scarier if it happens and you have not thought about it



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Elopement Emergency Form

Identifying Information:
 Child's Name (First/M.I./Last) _____
 Responds to Name (if other than given name): _____
 Address (Street/City/State/Zip): _____
 [Attach current photograph here]
 Date of Birth: _____
 Age: _____ Male ☐ Female ☐
Physical Description:
 Height: _____ Weight: _____
 Eye color: _____ Hair color: _____
 Birthmarks, scars, or other identifying marks: _____
 Diagnosis: _____
Other Relevant Conditions (check all that apply):
☐ Vision impairment
☐ Hearing impairment
☐ Speech impairment
☐ Intellectual impairment
☐ No Sense of Danger
☐ Seizure disorder
 Other: _____
 Medications the child takes: _____
Caregiver Contact Information
 Who should be contacted to provide or gather information about this child?:
 Name (First/M.I./Last) _____
 Relationship to the child: Parent ☐ Grandparent ☐ Other Family Member ☐ Teacher ☐
 Other (specify relationship): _____
 Address: (Street/City/State/Zip) _____
 Phone 1: (_____) _____ - _____ Home ☐ Mobile ☐ Work ☐

Photo

Respond to name?

Response to a stranger?

Likes/interests

Things to avoid

Who should be contacted?

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Elopement Emergency Plan

- Where should the search be prioritized?
- Who will help look?
 - Places the child is likely to go
 - Places with the highest risk if the child is there
 - What are things that your child likes to do?
 - What places are easiest for the child to get to?

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Resources

- Prevention strategies: Big Red Safety Toolkit

<http://nationalautismassociation.org/docs/BigRedSafetyToolkit.pdf>

family wandering emergency plan

Make sure your family has a plan in case of a wandering emergency. Before an emergency happens, sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event your child is missing.

critical information to remember

MY CHILD'S TRANSMITTER TRACKING NUMBER (if applicable) _____

MY CHILD'S OFFICIAL DIAGNOSIS _____

MY CHILD'S IDENTIFYING MARKS, BEHAVIORS, MEDICATIONS & MEDICAL NEEDS _____

emergency steps:

☒ **ALWAYS CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS MISSING FROM YOUR HOME.**

☒ **IF YOUR CHILD IS ATTRACTED TO WATER, SEARCH NEARBY WATER SOURCES FIRST.**

☒ Clearly state your child's name for the 911 operator.

☒ State that they have a cognitive impairment, provide the diagnosis, state they are endangered and have no sense of danger.

☒ Provide your child's radio frequency tracking number (if applicable).

☒ Provide your child's date of birth, height, weight, and other unique identifiers (eyeglasses, braces, hand-flapping, etc.).

☒ If your child is attracted to water, tell them to **immediately** dispatch personnel to nearby water sources (lakes, ponds, pools).

☒ Tell them when you noticed that your child was missing and what clothing he or she was wearing.

☒ Request an AMBER Alert be issued, or Endangered Missing Advisory.

☒ Request that your child's name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File.

Search known ones your child would likely be or associated to. If you have an emergency point person assigned to contact neighbors, pick up your other children from school, watch your children, etc., alert them while searching known areas your child would likely be. If you have other small children, never leave them unsupervised.

TIP: create an emergency point person who can contact neighbors, fax your alert form to local law enforcement, and assist in making arrangements for your other children.

Should your child go missing, make sure this contact has a cell phone, knows what your child is wearing, any identifying features, where your child was last seen, how long your child may have been gone, any medical needs or allergies your child may have, your child's likes and dislikes and main attractions. Ideally, the emergency contact will be a relative or close friend. Provide your emergency contact with a copy of this plan and ask them to keep it in a safe, accessible place.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME: _____

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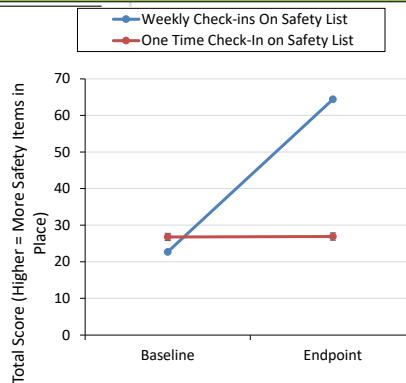
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Elopement Checklist

I have the following in place for this child:

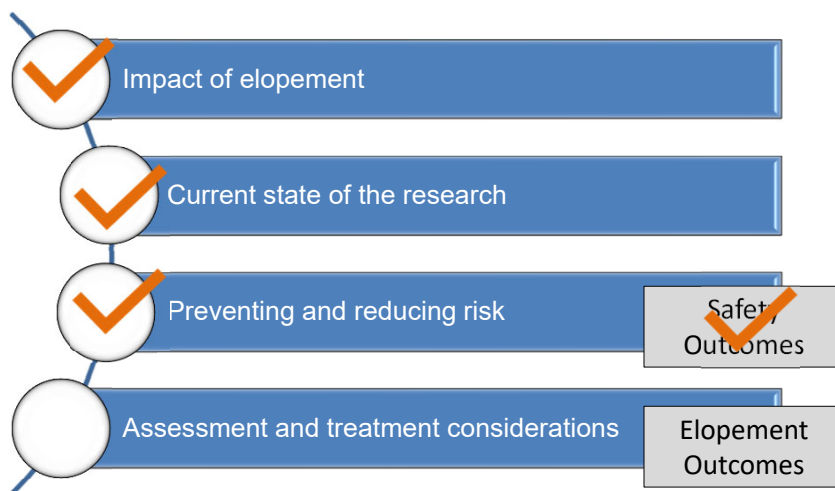
- ☐ Home has locks with keys on all doors that exit the home and keys are stored in a location that is inaccessible to the child.
- ☐ Home is equipped with alarms on all doors and windows.
- ☐ Stop sign prompts have been added to all doors and windows and child has been taught to follow stop sign prompts
- ☐ Child knows how to swim.
- ☐ Child reports their name, phone number, and address.
- ☐ Child wears his/her personal contact information via bracelet, temporary tattoo, shoe ID tag, or tracking d
- ☐ Child independently crosses the street safely (at a crosswalk looking both ways).

Safety Checklist



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Latency-based Functional Analysis

- Attention
 - Start of session: “I’m busy, I need you to play by yourself”
 - Target behavior = attention
 - No preferred items or instructions/aversive situation
- Tangible
 - Start of session: “It is time to leave the park”
 - Target behavior = return to the park
 - No attention or instructions/aversive situation
- Escape
 - Start of session: “It is time to do your homework”
 - Target behavior = remove homework
 - No attention or access to preferred items

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Latency-based Functional Analysis

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May need to physically stop the child for safety

Bringing the child back to the starting point after elopement

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Elopement Complications

- Attention
 - Start of session: “I’m busy, I need you to play by yourself”
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 - Target behavior = remove homework
 - No attention or access to preferred items

The situation the child is “escaping” might be inseparable from the setting where elopement occurs

If you attempt to stop the child from physically leaving the setting, you are then providing attention

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Elopement Complications

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- Escape
 - Start of session: “It is time to do your homework”
 - Target behavior = remove homework
 - No attention or access to preferred items

Tangible item may not be easily controlled by an adult

Examples: Elopement to a playground or to look at an elevator

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Solution: Matching test and controls

Condition	Setting	Start of Session	Elopement = _____
Attention Test	Front yard	Divert Attention	Attention
Attention Control	Front yard	Constant Attention	--

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FA: Matching test and controls

Condition	Setting	Start of Session	Elopement = _____
Attention Test	Front yard	Divert Attention	Attention
Attention Control	Front yard	Constant Attention	--
Tangible Test	Picnic area	"Time to play in this picnic table area"	Access to playground
Tangible Control	Playing on playground	"Time to play in playground area"	--

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FA: Matching test and controls

Condition	Setting	Start of Session	Elopement = _____
Attention Test	Front yard	Divert Attention	Attention
Attention Control	Front yard	Constant Attention	--
Tangible Test	Picnic area	"Time to play in this picnic table area"	Access to playground
Tangible Control	Playing on playground	"Time to play in playground area"	--
Escape Test	Inside a restaurant	"We need to sit to wait for our food"	Access to sitting outside
Escape Control	Bench outside a restaurant	"We need to sit outside to wait"	--

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Clear Rules and Reminders

- Review setting rules before leaving home
 - “What do we do when we get to the road?”
- Set clear boundaries



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Social Stories

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ELOPEMENT
WHEN I FEEL LIKE I NEED TO GET AWAY

Social Skills Story: Elopement/
Running Away Editable (Printable
PDF)

★★★★★ (31 reviews)

\$3.97 USD

1 Add to cart

WOMAN



TIPS TO PREVENT ELOPEMENT
A SOCIAL STORY

Tips to Prevent Elopement - A Social Story
From Autism Behavior Services, Inc.

Tips to Prevent Elopement

When a person leaves a safe place for an area that's unfamiliar or unsafe this is called eloping. This social story simply breaks this idea down and shows how you can plan and possibly prevent eloping from happening.

Download

Watch video

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Sensory Sensitivities



Can we minimize the aversiveness of the situation?



Can we avoid the situation altogether?
– If not can we do things in smaller doses

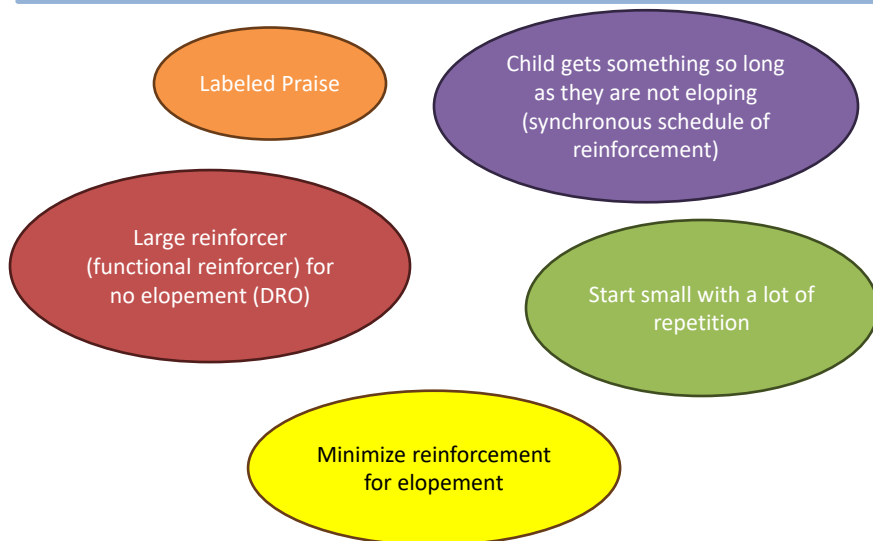


Consider relationship with fears/anxiety

Strength-Based Approach

- Explanations in modalities that capitalize on strengths
- Considering special interests as “distractions” or rewards
- Always involve the child in treatment planning

Treatment Plan Components



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Example: Elopement in Store Maintained by Access to the Toy Aisle



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Example: Elopement when leaving school to get to playground

Labeled Praise
for walking
towards car

Child gets a small snack at
several points in route to
the car

If no elopement when getting
to car child gets:
To play on the playground
when they get home
Another preferred activity in
the car

Start with walking out
of car 2 steps, then
back to car.

Try to block or remove
from playground after
elopement (if safe)

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Example: Elopement from area that is attention maintained

Labeled Praise
for staying in
area

Child gets a preferred
activity (e.g., item, music)
when in area

If no elopement for X min,
child gets:
A lot of attention!

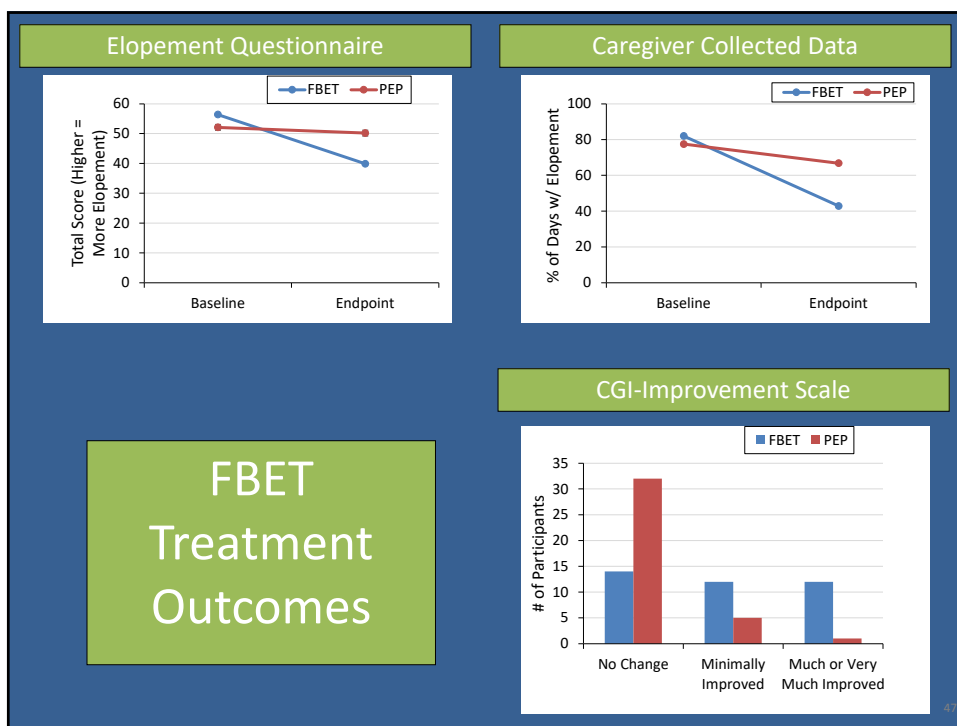
Start with a few min;
repeat several times
during the day

Bring back to area with
minimal attention
following elopement

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Questions & Case Examples

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