

Navigating Autism: A Roadmap for Caregivers

●● Module 1: Understanding Autism - The Basics

Objective: Help parents grasp what autism is and what the diagnosis means.

- Understanding Autism: What Every Parent Needs to Know
- What is Autism? - Definition, spectrum concept, key characteristics
- Myths vs. Facts - Debunking common misconceptions
- Early Signs & Diagnosis Process - Red flags, evaluation steps
- Emotional Impact - Validating parents' feelings (shock, grief, hope)

☁ Module 2: Navigating the First Steps After Diagnosis

Objective: Provide actionable steps for accessing therapies, support, and resources.

- Your First Steps After an Autism Diagnosis
- Building Your Support Team - Doctors, therapists, educators
- Therapy Options Overview - ABA, Speech, OT, Play Therapy
- Navigating Insurance & Funding - Tips for coverage, grants
- Creating a Home Support Plan - Simple strategies to start now

💬 Module 3: Communication & Behavior Strategies

Objective: Teach parents how to support communication and manage challenges.

- Helping Your Child Communicate & Thrive
- Understanding Your Child's Communication Style (Verbal vs. Nonverbal)
- Practical Strategies for Reducing Meltdowns
- Visual Supports & Schedules - Examples & templates
- Encouraging Social Interaction - Play ideas, peer engagement

↑ Module 4: Advocating for Your Child (School & Beyond)

Objective: Empower parents to advocate in IEP meetings and community settings.

- Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate
- Understanding IEPs & 504 Plans - Key terms, rights, accommodations
- Working with Schools - How to collaborate (not fight) with teachers
- Legal Rights & Resources - IDEA, ADA, advocacy groups
- Planning for the Future - Transitioning to adulthood

💖 Module 5: Self-Care & Family Balance

Objective: Address parent burnout and maintaining family well-being.

- Taking Care of YOU While Raising an Autistic Child
- Avoiding Parent Burnout - Signs, coping strategies
- Sibling Support - Helping brothers/sisters understand autism
- Finding Community - Support groups, online resources
- Celebrating Small Wins - Mindset shifts for long-term resilience