

# DE-STRESS SIGNAL – HOW A SIMPLE MESSAGING APP BUILT AN ONLINE COMMUNITY OF FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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**INTRODUCTION:** Families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, more isolated during the Covid-19 pandemic, face high levels of stress and benefit greatly from parent support groups (PSG)

**OBJECTIVES:** To create an online PSG to enable parents to communicate, reduce isolation and increase support

**METHODS:** 1) Creation of online PSG group on Signal app 2) Analysis of posts for themes 3) Parental feedback survey

## RESULTS



**300%** increase in group size between April-Sept 2021: 50 to 161 members

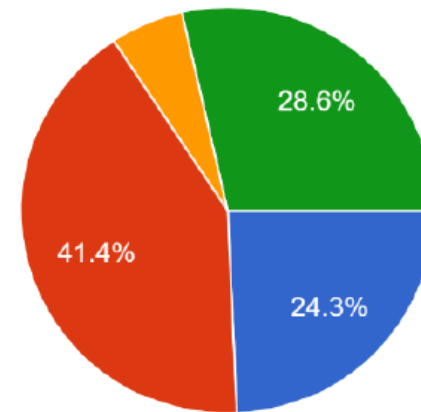
### Themes of Interaction

- ❖ Resources information
- ❖ Problems & solutions
- ❖ Success stories

## Results of Parental Feedback Survey

43% Response rate **70/161**. 73% Respondents were **mothers**. 53% **Daily** access

### The online PSG was most useful for.....



- Finding help for the child
- Inspiration
- Information
- Sharing personal stories

**CONCLUSIONS:** Supportive online connections are easy to create, despite the ongoing pandemic. Organizations working with families of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities can use this approach