

Coaching Autism Traits in Tech

Dennie Declercq // 2025




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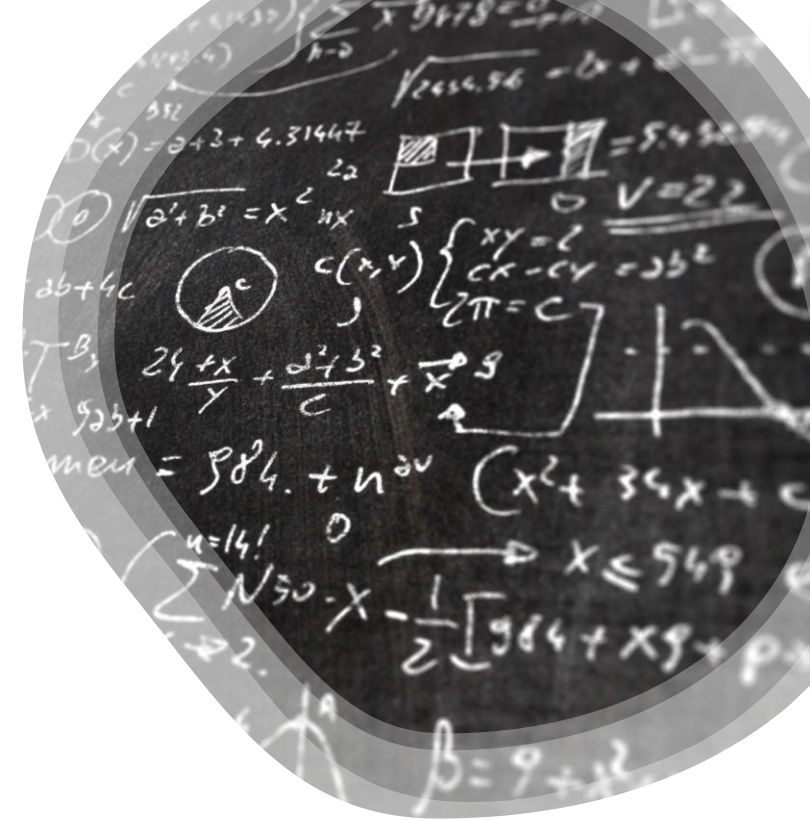
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Content

- (Intro)
 - Autism
 - Coaching
 - The Iceberg
 - **Coaching via The Autism Iceberg**
 - (Outro)
- 



Autism



Theory of Mind

- Understanding the WHY
- Seeing which behavior causes which outcome
- Imagine the other

Central Coherence

- Coherence of situations, things, tasks, words
- Seeing the global picture



Context Blindness

- Everything people do: Broader Context
- Employer (Business Responsibilities, Customer Needs & Private Life)
- Employee/co-worker(Tasks & Requirements & Private Life)
- Autistic Individuals are known as Blind for this broader Context



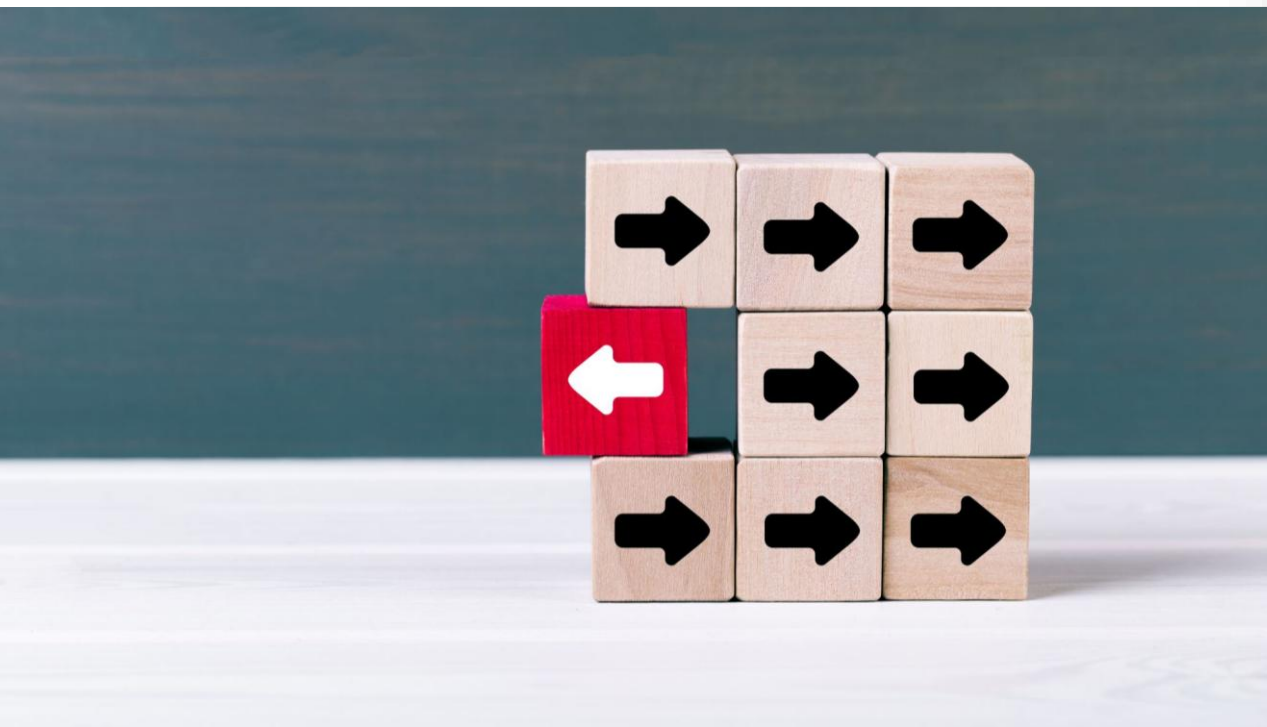
Missing Theory of Mind, Missing
Central Coherence and Context
Blindness is Leading to..
Difficulties with

Executive Functioning (& Rigidity)

- PLANNING: Everything that you need in daily living or in a working environment.
- CHANGING THE PLAN
- Examples:
 - **Planning** a timeslot
 - **Deciding** which task to pick.
 - **Planning** which sessions, you want to see



Communication



- Different question-asking behavior
- Unexpected mental blocks (aka shutdown)
- Different way of starting/ ending conversations
- Unwanted interruptions in communication

Stimuli-Response System/ Sensory Deficiencies

Difficulties when energy is
in **disbalance**

Disbalances in **Sensory
System**

Disbalance is **hyper** or
hypo

**Auditory (sound, noise &
conversations)**

Visual (seeing, visual distractions)

Tactile (clothes, hard chair, touches)

Taste (food, drinks, presents)

Smell (others food & drink)

Vestibular (balance)

Proprioception (muscles & joints)

Interoception (organs ex: stomach &
bladder)

Thermoception (temperature)

Nociception (pain)



Coaching

Position

- Coach **NEXT TO** person to be coached
- Coach **NOT ABOVE** person to be coached
- Coach has strengths, person to be coached has strengths
- Coach has weaknesses, person to be coached has weaknesses



Not Curing

- Person to be coached doesn't have to be:
 - Cured
 - Cared
 - Removed from all responsibilities
- Person to be coached has a choice:
 - Topic of being coached on
 - Intensity of coaching
 - Exclusion of topics



Quality of Life

- Schalock
- Eight Dimensions of Quality of Life

- Emotional well-being
- Personal relationships
- Material well-being
- Personal development
- Physical well-being
- Self-determination
- Social integration
- Rights and legal protection

Asking Questions

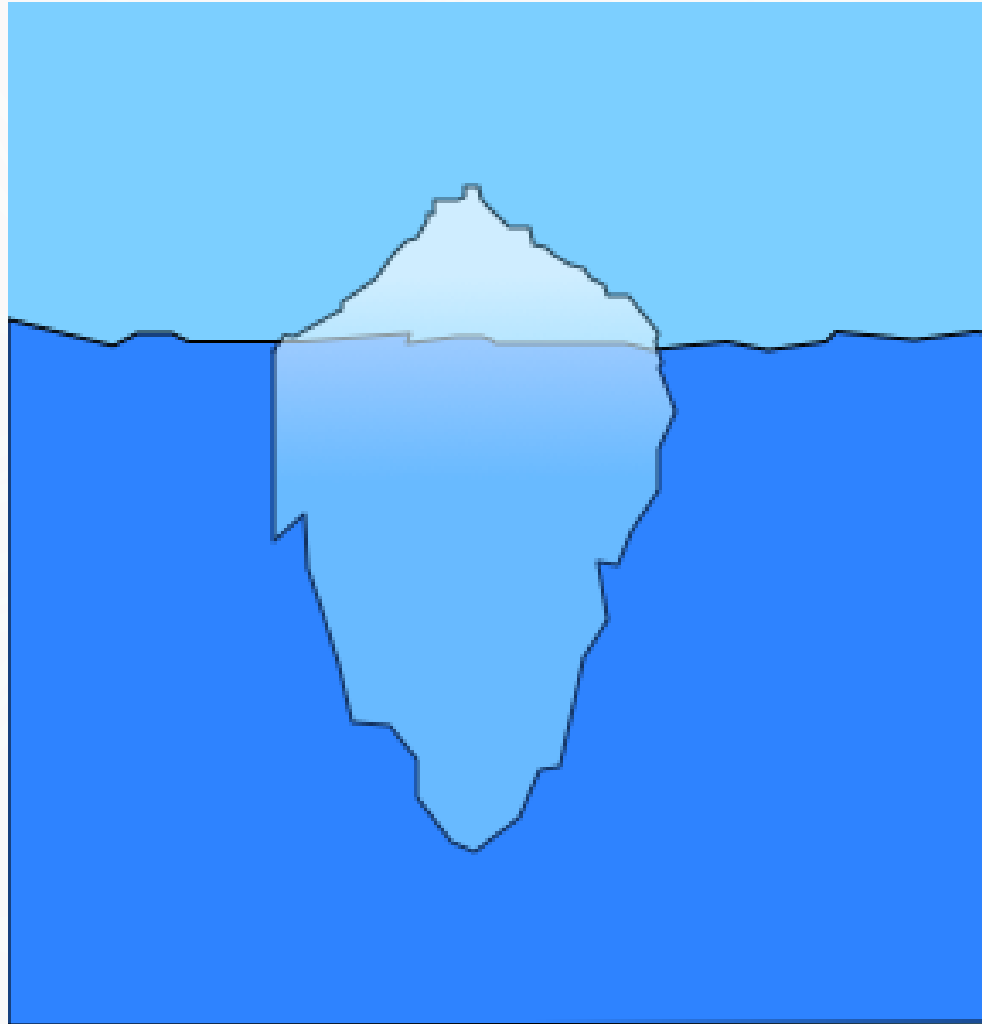
- Coaching methodology
- Self reflection
- Deep questions
- Asking for reasoning
- Ask for formulation and reformulation

- “Why is task Y difficult?”
- “Which similar task is less difficult?”
- “What’s the difference for you between both tasks?”
- “What would you do different?”
- “Why will Y have a different impact?”

Goalsetting

- Timeboxed
- Short timebox
- Within possibilities
- “The Edge” of possibilities
- Rewards
- (Personal) Growth





The Iceberg Theory

Above the surface

Behavior

Performance

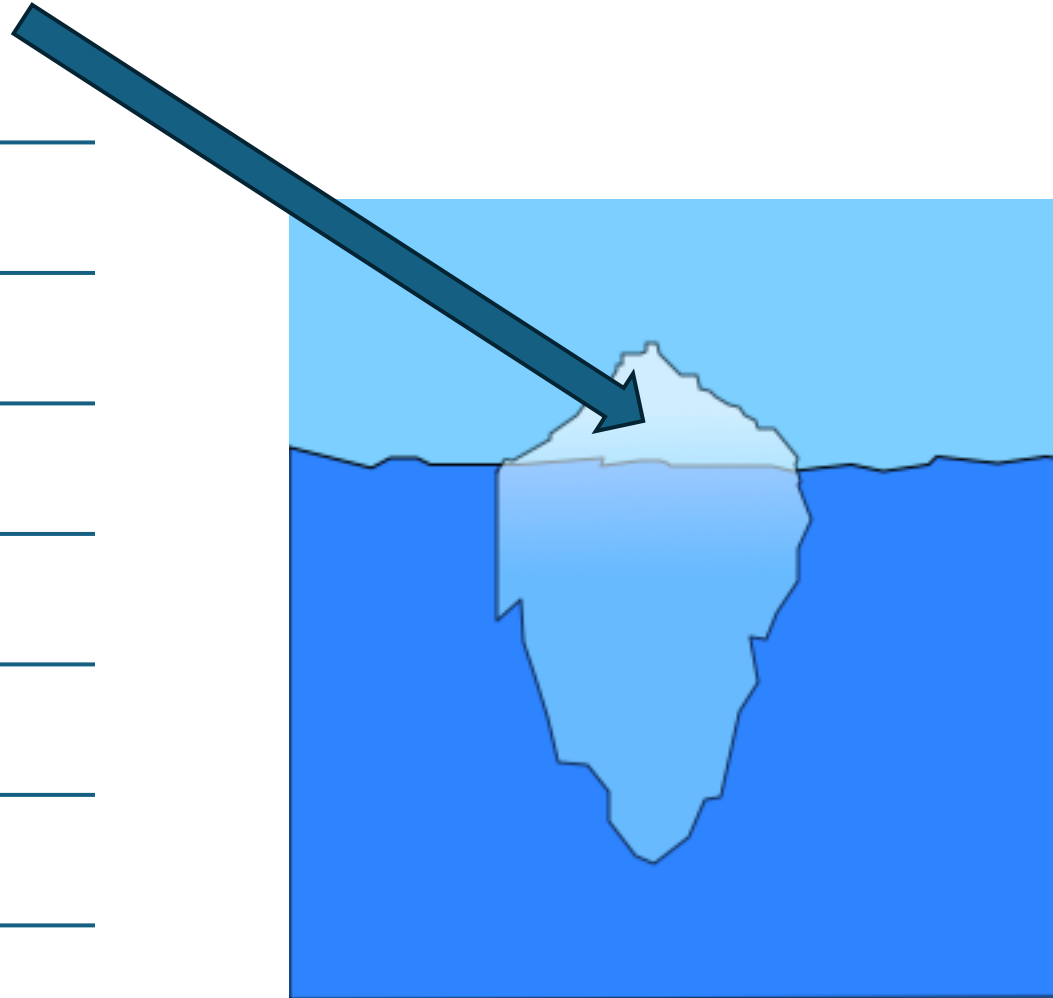
Speed

Agility

Prestation

(Sickness) leave

Communication



Beneath the surface

Tension

Stress

‘Mental Backpack’

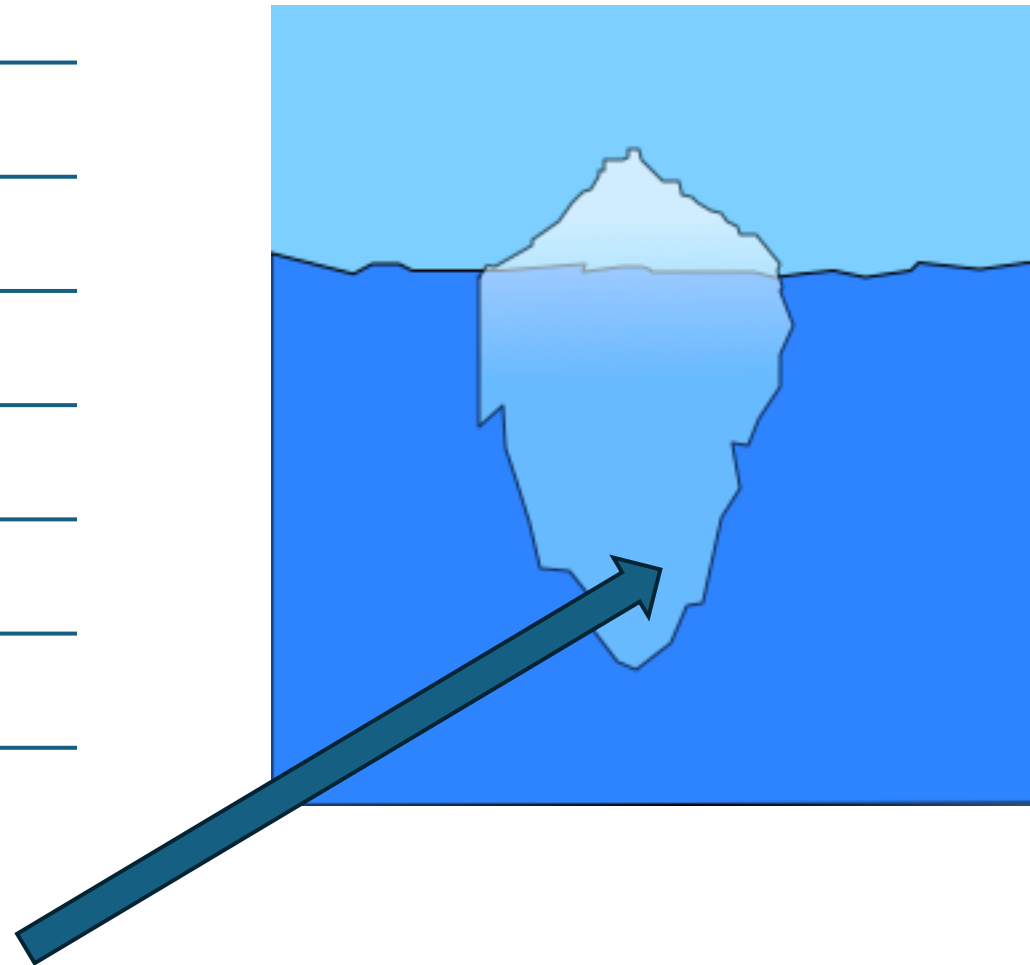
Personal life

Past experiences

Physical Health

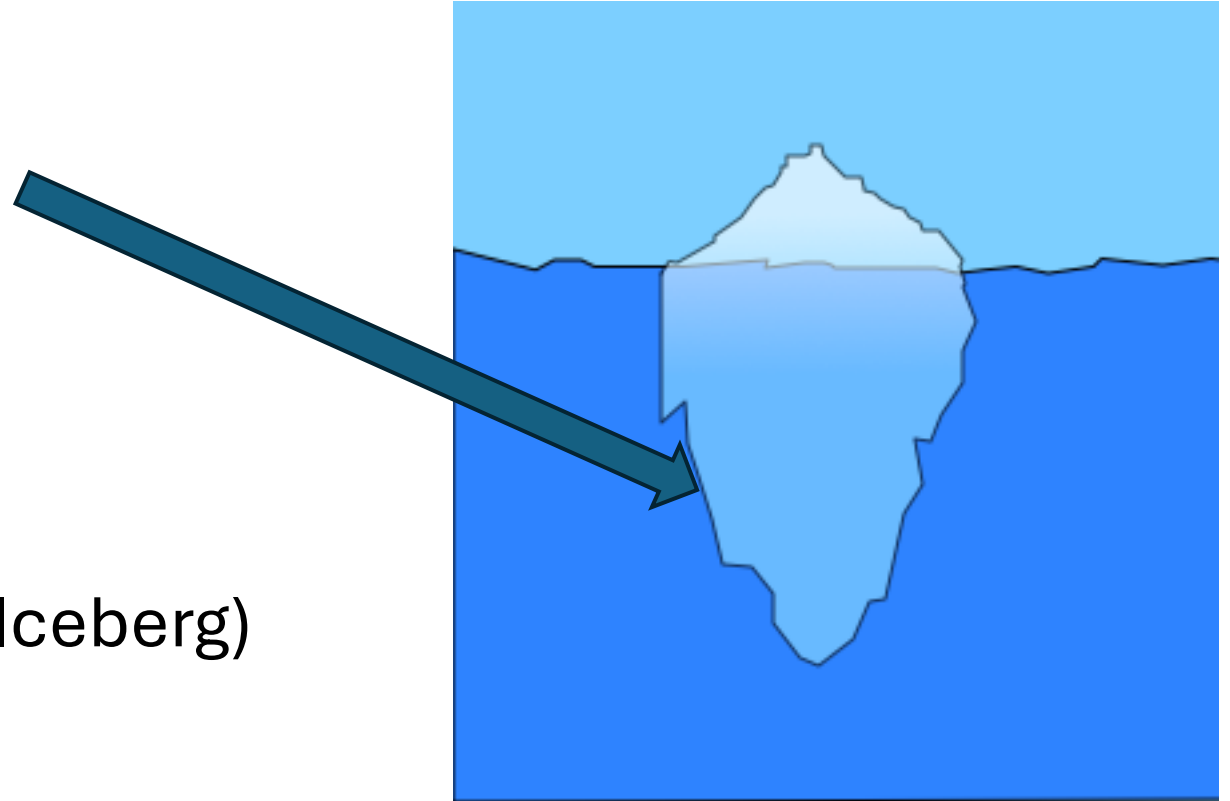
Mental Health

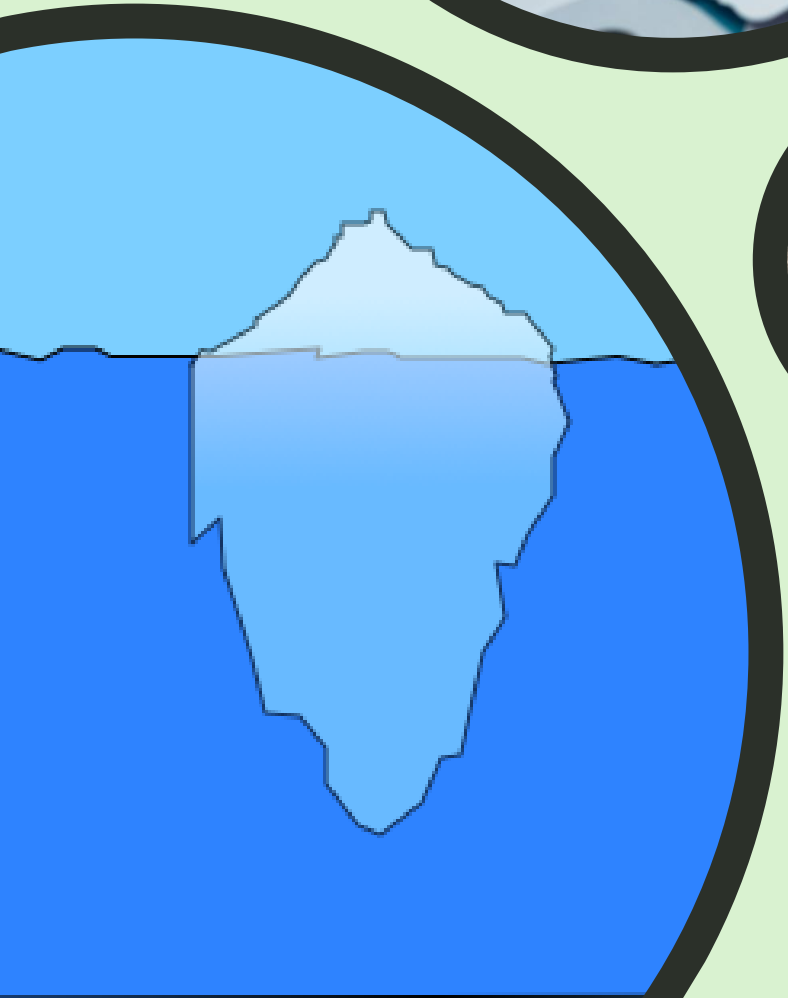
Burden (from competition)



Figuring out the Beneath

- Provide safety feeling
- Build up trust
- Ask questions
 - GOAL: Get to the Beneath
- Change the Beneath
- Get wanted result (Top of the Iceberg)





Coaching Via The Autism Iceberg



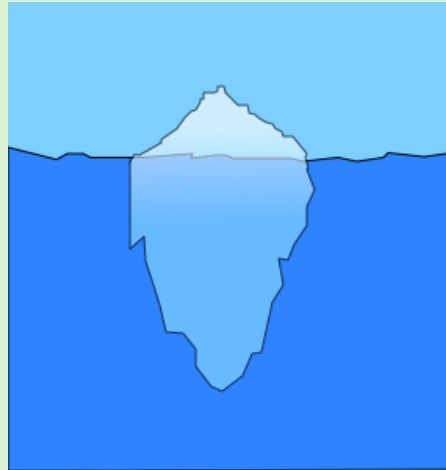
Goal: Finding wins for ALL based on the Autism Iceberg

- Changing the beneath of the autistic coworker
- Positive impact autistic individual
- Coworkers
- Productivity
- Business Profit

Executive Functioning: Learning New Methodology

Top

- Rigid
- Don't want to learn
- Don't want to adapt
- Fanatic
- Progress is under average



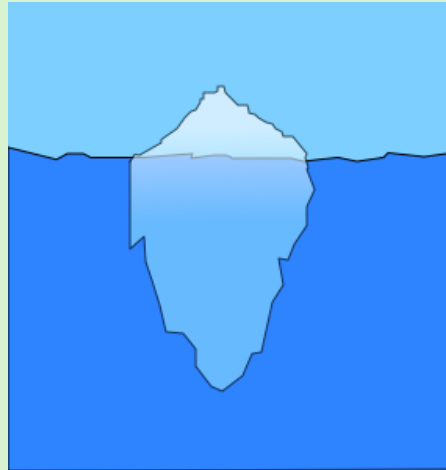
Beneath

- β Learning new technology asks a lot of brain power
- β Anxiety for past failure
- β Knock hard to achieve something in current methodology

Communication: Team Meetings

Top

- Asking too many questions
- Being silent all the time
- Can't answer questions
- Wants to sit on specific place



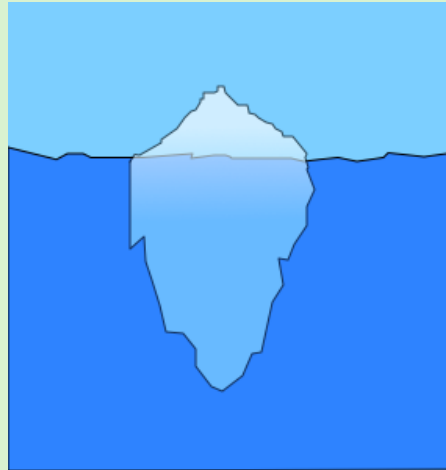
Beneath

- β Individual is an impostor
- β Introversion
- β Anxiety
(being bullied/
rejected in the past)

Stimuli & Sensory: Desk Location

Top

- Person wants to sit close to toilet
- Person don't want to sit close to the window
- Person don't want to sit close to coffee machine
- Flex desk are a problem



Beneath

- β Bladder hypersensitivity
- β Hypersensitivity to light
- β Hypersensitivity for audio



Thanks!

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