



CELEBRATING

THE
INGESTONES

SMALL PIVOTS THAT TRANSFORM PEDIATRIC PRACTICE

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OBJECTIVES

- Define the concept of “inchstones” and explain the benefits of adopting strengths-based, neurodiversity-affirming approaches, and analyze how deficit-focused language influences perception.
- Demonstrate ways that intentional shifts in language and perspective can create meaningful pivot points that strengthen collaborative engagement for disabled children and their families.
- Equip attendees with practical strategies to reinforce and document small wins within daily treatment sessions and client interactions.

MY STORY

I grew up believing progress meant reaching milestones. Raising an autistic child, I internalized every delay and every “not yet”. I then stopped focusing on what he wasn’t doing and begun to celebrate what he was doing. This taught me real breakthroughs happen in the small moments.

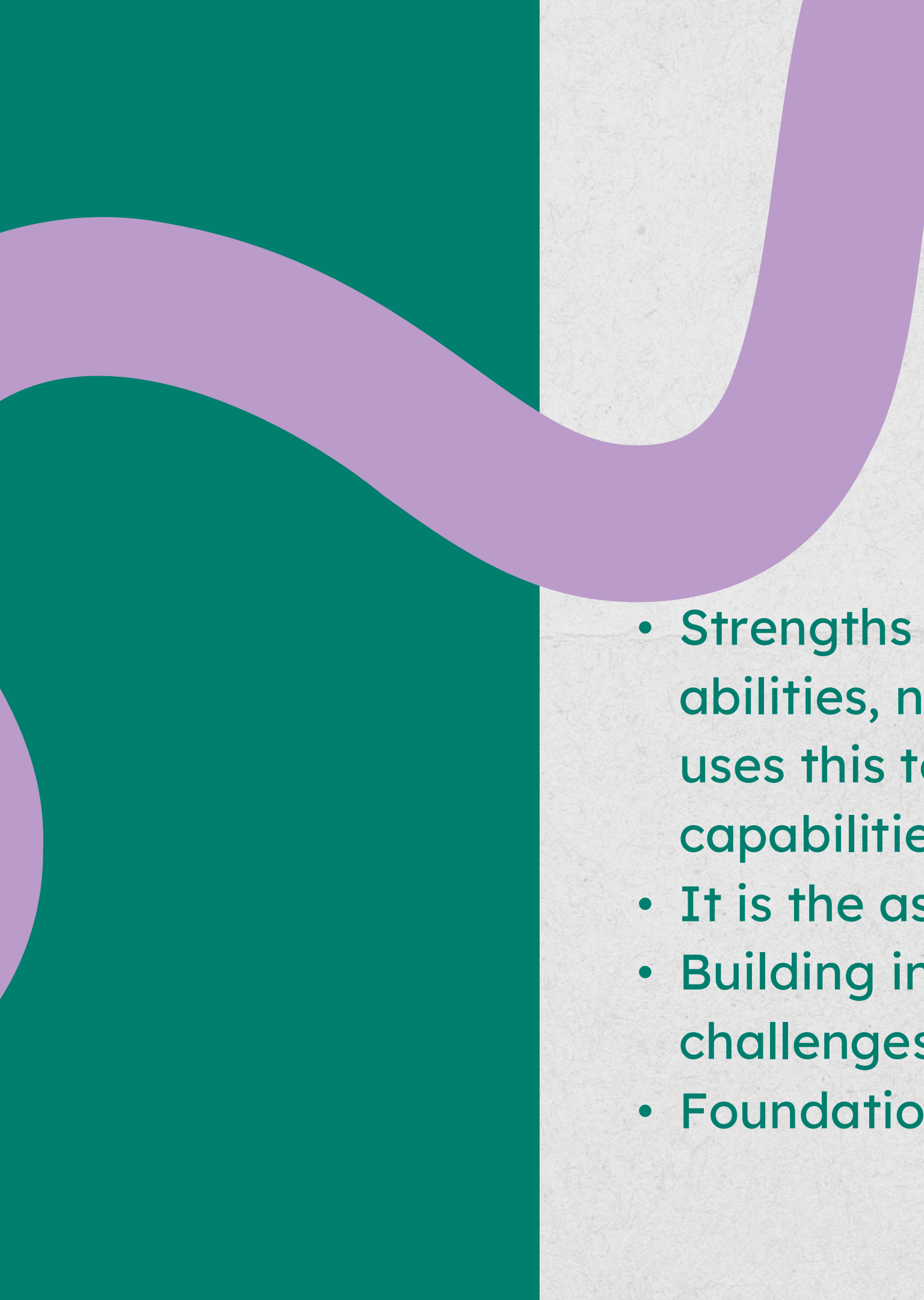
I’m here to advocate for a mindset shift: these are powerful victories that can be the start of a ripple effect to drastic change





WHY THIS MATTERS

- Everyone here has the ability to celebrate the successes of their clients/patients/students
- Important to be mindful of challenges/difficulties but it should not dominate the conversation
- Builds momentum, confidence, and engagement
- Shifts the trajectory of care towards empowerment



WHAT IS AN INCHSTONE

- Strengths based lens on a smaller scale. It is focusing on abilities, not limitations. Understanding lived experience and uses this to build practices that provide balance between capabilities and challenges.
- It is the assumption that children are capable & competent
- Building interventions around the strengths to make the challenges more manageable
- Foundational in OT's principals of holistic, client-centered care



WHAT IS AN INGESTONE

- Examples: bringing hands together to midline, touching a new food, taking a deep breathe to attempt to regulate
- Reinforce the small wins and model them. “You’ve done such a wonderful job at ____” “You should be so proud of yourself for ____”
- Positive illness identity perception significantly correlates with better psychological QoL and better environmental QoL.
- Parents displayed improved affect and increased affection.



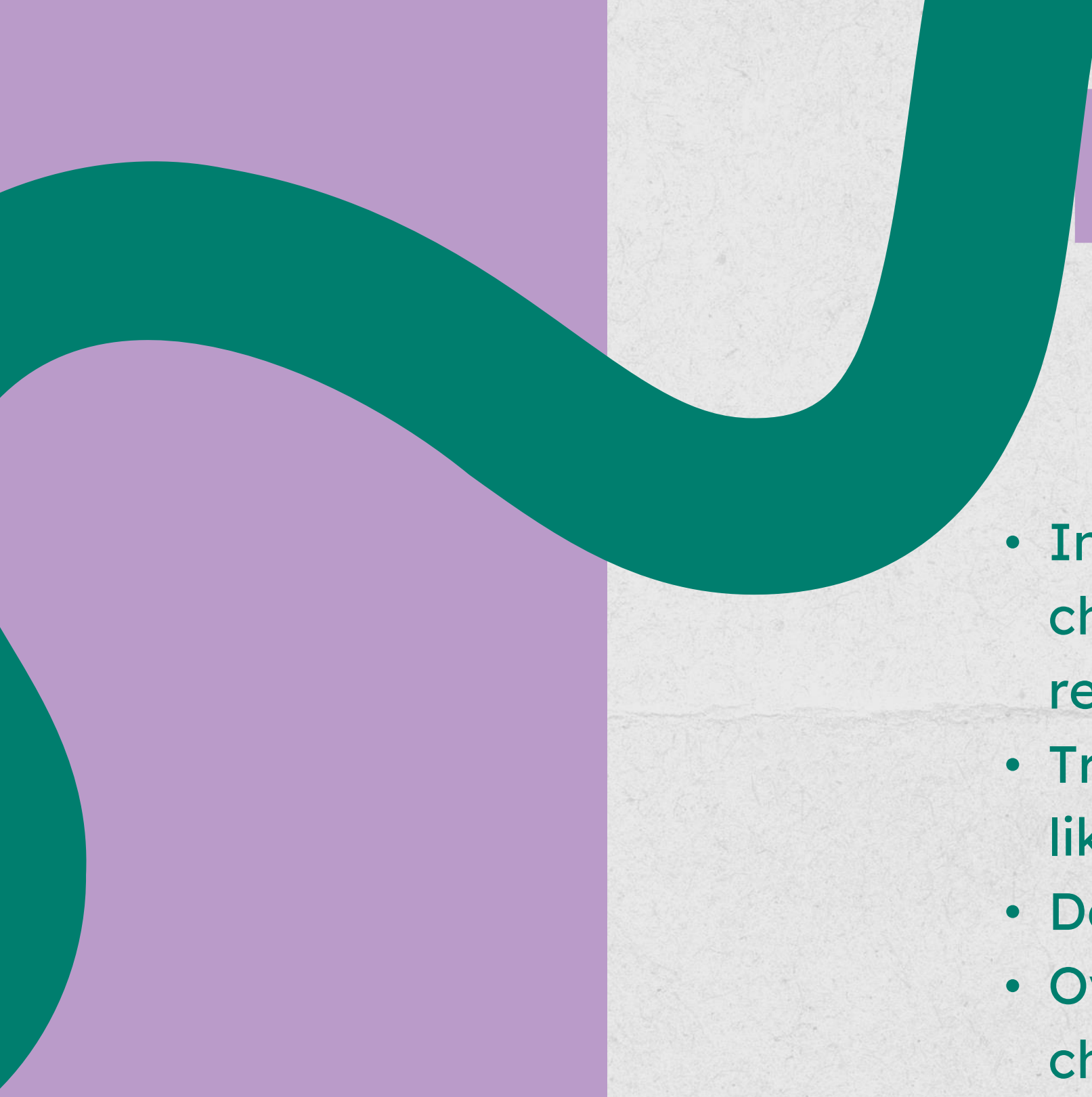
WHAT IS AN INCHSTONE

- The Snowball Effect
- Celebrating the inchstones is like rolling a snowball down a hill. Every small success adds momentum, increases confidence, and higher engagement until the client is moving with power you didn't have to push.



DOWNFALLS OF DEFICIT BASED

- In contrast- focusing on what the child cannot do. Emphasis on impairments, delays.
- Many systems default to deficits, rooted in ableism.
- A child joining in the ETR or IEP meeting and discussing what cannot be done, at an outpatient clinic administering the COPM and asking how satisfied you are with your child's performance, in front of the child.
- Becomes adverse for the child to talk about their needs.
- More negative illness identity perception significantly correlates with lower social QoL.



DOWNFALLS OF DEFICIT BASED

- Increases frustration, avoidance, damages rapport with child and caregiver, can create caregiver hopelessness, reinforces stigma around disability
- Trauma informed care is important. Deficit focus can feel like judgment
- Deficit based = missed opportunities.
- Overlooking emerging skills, misinterpret behaviors, miss chances to reinforce positive change

If you only look for what isn't able to be done, you'll miss the precious moments in front of you.



APPLICATION

- Works in peds, adolescents, adults, geriatrics, mental health, physical dysfunction, community-based practice, school-based OT, substance use recovery.
- Human motivation is universal. This builds confidence, encourages engagement, creates hope and forward momentum.
- Perfectly ties with OOTA's theme this year "Pivot Points: Amplify, Adapt, Advance". These small pivots can amplify the effects you have on the client and their families, it's adapting your point of view to be more holistic and client-centered, and it can advance the progress seen when the default is finding and recognizing the inchstones.



APPLICATION

Identifying inchstones:

- Observe tiny shifts in behavior
- Notice attempts, not just successes
- Share the wins with the caregivers
- Teach caregivers how to notice strengths and reinforce carryover

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

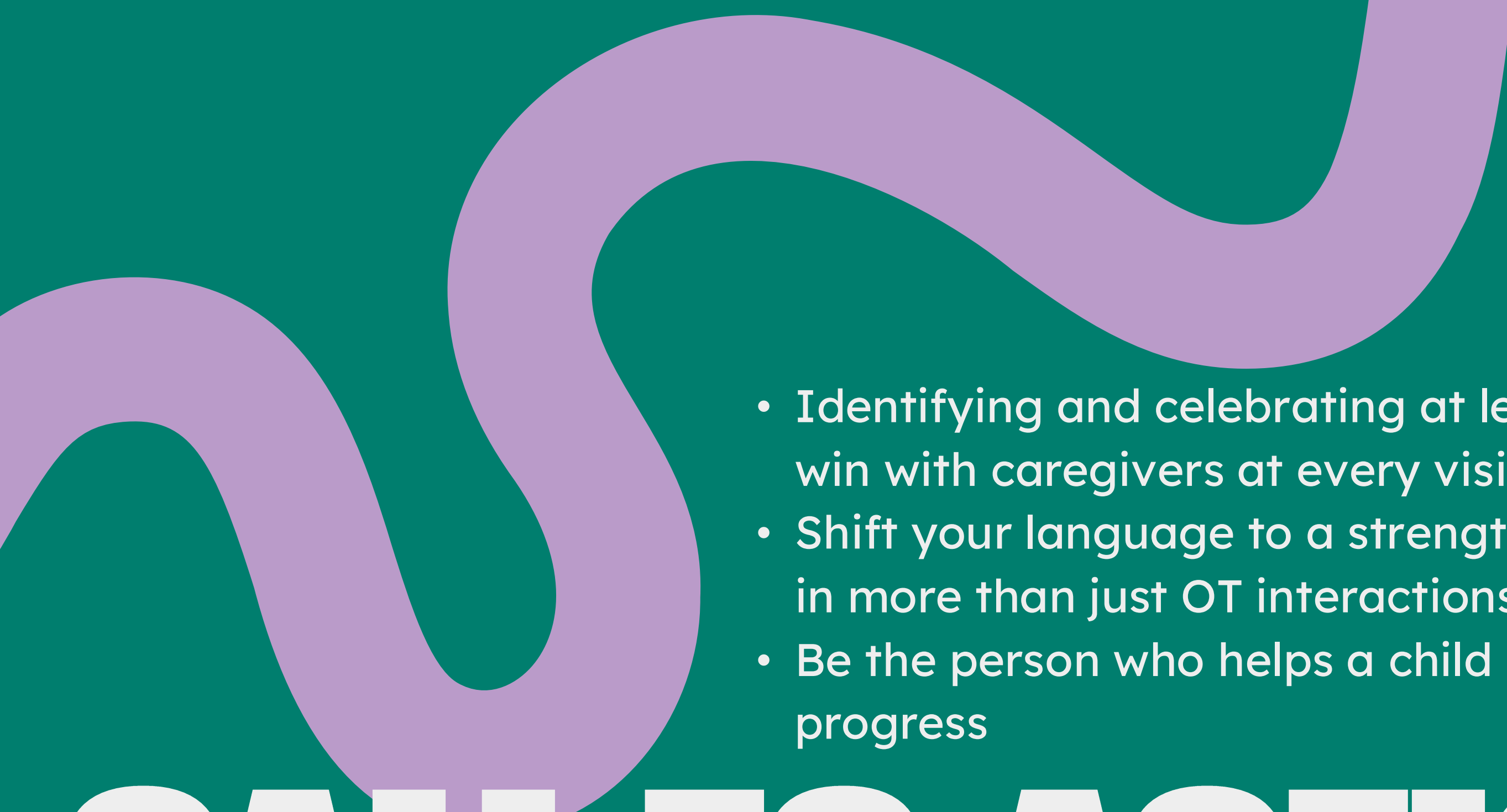
- Client demonstrated emerging ability to..
- Child attempted..
- Student showed increased willingness to..
- Child engaged in ___ longer than previous session

All are indications of early readiness for larger skills

For reimbursement purposes of documentation- can use this language to show progress. Also able to phrase “client has yet to __ due to barriers in __” This wording assumes the ability to make progress while documenting the difficulties.

SUMMARY

- Inchstones are building blocks to long term progress and create that ripple effect
- Challenges become less overwhelming because the client and their caregivers are operating from a place of capability
- Deficit based lens can lessen motivation and engagement

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- Identifying and celebrating at least one micro win with caregivers at every visit
 - Shift your language to a strengths-based lens in more than just OT interactions
 - Be the person who helps a child see their own progress

CALL TO ACTION

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THANK YOU

**EVALUATION: Hot
Topic: Celebrating the
Inchstones: Small
Pivots That
Transform Pediatric
Practice**



*Scan QR code to submit
your evaluation*

Questions, Comments, Discussion is welcome!

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