

The MoZA^{CS} Project

Levels of Engagement for Autistic Individuals at Zoos and Aquariums

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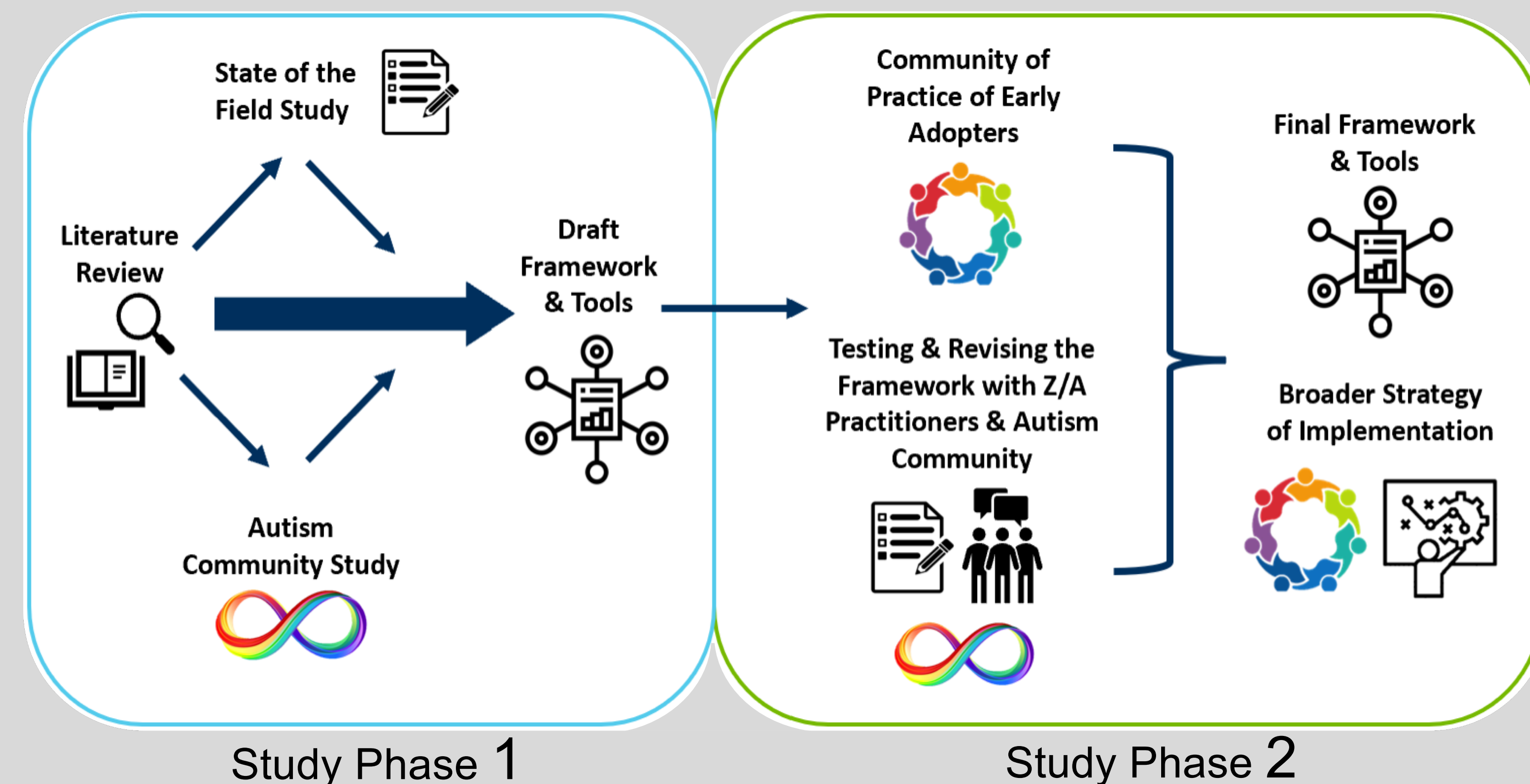
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PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Oregon State University **STEM Research Center**, in collaboration with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (**AZA**) and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (**TRIAD**) at Vanderbilt University Medical Center to support the **Modeling Zoos and Aquariums as Inclusive Communities of Science (MoZAICS)** project. MoZAICS focuses on:

- **Developing an evidence-based toolkit** of inclusive practices for zoos and aquariums to **support science learning for autistic individuals** across the full zoo/aquarium experience including the general visit, programs, exhibits, internships, volunteering and employment opportunities.
- The project will also support the building of a **community of practice** of zoo/aquarium practitioners dedicated to the comprehensive inclusion of autistic individuals; working toward an overall strategy of inclusion across the AZA community.



EXERCISE: In a perfect world, every zoo and aquarium would be fully accessible and inclusive. We'd see it reflected in...



The bubbles above reflect the themes that arose during our conversations internally and with advisors, when envisioning what a perfectly accessible and inclusive Z/A might look and feel like. The themes cut across arenas such as employment and work culture; organizational change; funding and resources; visitor experiences; evaluation and assessment; and structural issues.

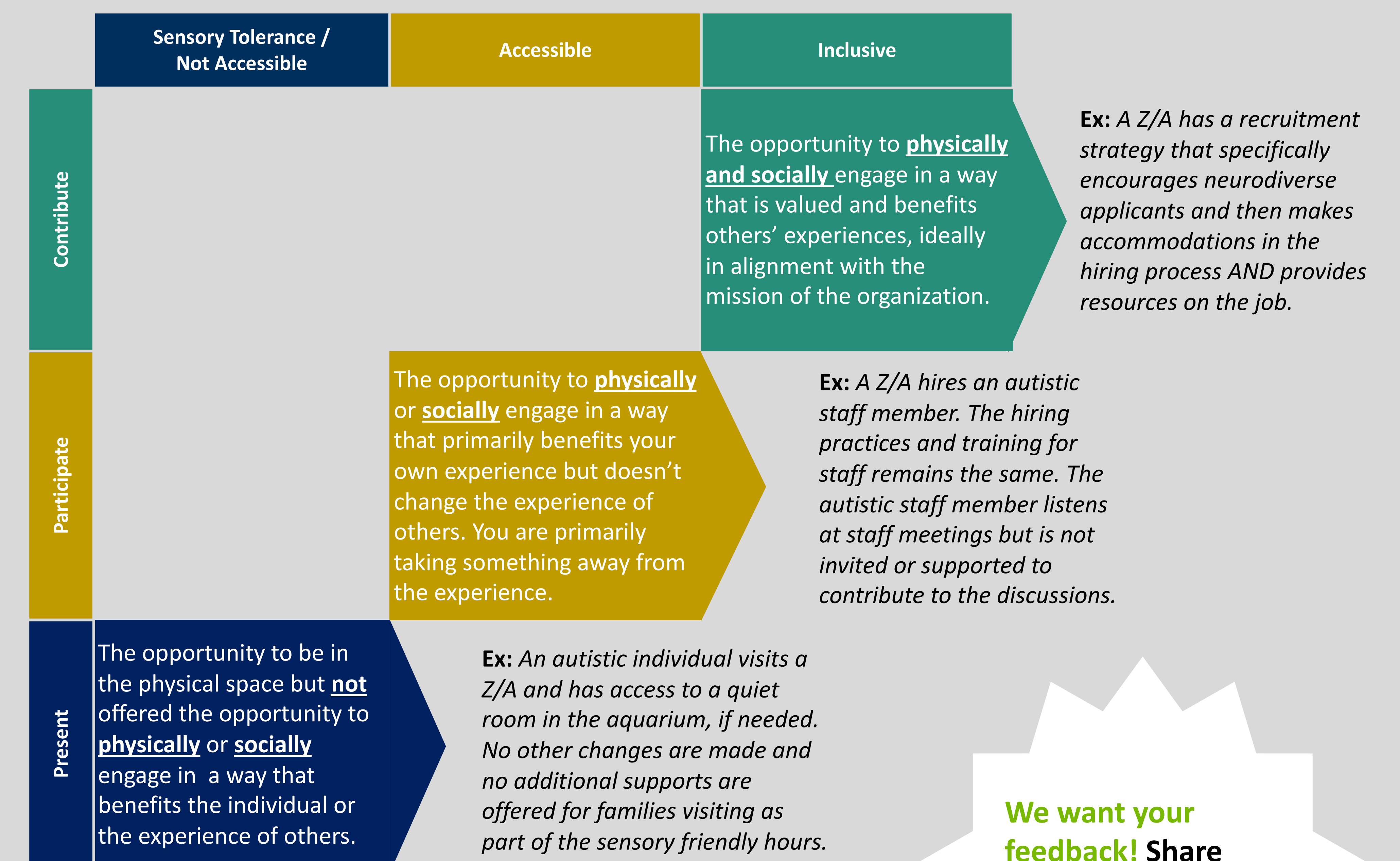
FRAMEWORK: Differences between accessibility and inclusion for autistic individuals at zoos & aquariums

Definitions:

Contribute: The opportunity to physically and socially engage in a way that benefits others experiences, ideally carrying out the mission of the organization.

Participate: Physically or socially engaged in a way that primarily benefits your own experience but doesn't change the experience of others. You are primarily taking something away from the experience.

Present: In the physical space but not offered the opportunity to physically or socially engage in a way that benefits the individual or the experience of others.



Our project team, including a group of self-advocate advisors, drafted this framework to outline our thinking about the differences between access and inclusion. Rows show levels of interaction, columns show points along the path to inclusion, and the intersections reflect the experiences of neurodiverse persons in those circumstances.

We want your feedback! Share your thoughts and reactions to this framework by scanning this QR code, and filling out the form at the link: