



Autism Spectrum Disorder
Treatment and New State Regulations



UnitedHealthcare Community Plan United Healthcare

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Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Autism Spectrum Disorder
Treatment and New State Regulations
Objectives



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Autism Spectrum Disorder Objectives

- Learn what Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) Means
- Understand the impact on this diagnosis of the DSM 5 published in 2013
- Know the two main symptom categories:
 - Social Communication And Interaction
 - Patterns Of Behavior
- Understand Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) as a treatment for ASD
- Understand the application of ABA as defined in the TMPPM February 2022.

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Pre-Test Questions

- Autism Spectrum Disorder is an umbrella term covering a range of neurodevelopmental conditions
 - True
 - False
- Autism Spectrum Disorder causes a wide range of impairments in social communication.
 - True
 - False
- Autism Spectrum Disorder has associated restricted and repetitive behaviors.
 - True
 - False
- Autism Spectrum Disorder is increasing in frequency. The current estimate is
 - 1 in 125 children
 - 1 in 88 children
 - 1 in 50 children
 - The incidence is decreasing.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder relationships include overlaps between
 - Social Communication Deficits
 - Repetitive Behaviors
 - Hyperactivity
 - Language Disability
 - All of the above

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- An umbrella term covering a range of neurodevelopmental conditions
- Causes a wide range of impairments in social communication
- Has associated restricted and repetitive behaviors
- More than 3 million cases identified per year in US
- A lifelong condition

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**What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?
Symptoms Classified Into Two Categories.**

- **Social Communication And Interaction**
 - **Poor eye contact** and lack of facial expressions
 - **Delayed speech** or does not speak
 - **Does not understand** questions and directions
 - Gets **aggressive or disruptive**
 - **Does not respond** to his or her name
 - **Repeats phrases** or words
 - **Resists cuddling** and holding
- **Patterns Of Behavior**
 - **Repetitive movements** like hand shaking, spinning or rocking
 - **Difficulty** in body movement **coordination**
 - **Sensitive** to light, sound or touch
 - **Self - harming activities** such as head-banging
 - Specific **food preferences** or food pattern

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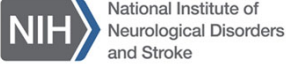
What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- **CAUSES:**
 - There are no known causes,
 - genetics and environmental factors may play a role:
 - **Genetics:** gene mutations (genetic changes) might cause ASD.
 - **Environmental factors:** Potential damage from air pollutants, medication, viral infection, complications during pregnancy
 - **Risk factors include:**
 - Gender- More common among boys
 - Family history

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?



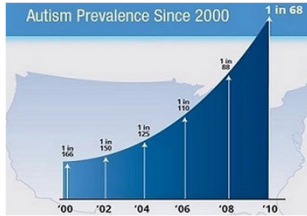
- **Defines Autism Spectrum Disease as:**
 - neurodevelopment disorders that affect
 - communication
 - learning
 - behaviors
 - social interaction
- **“spectrum”** refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of disability in functioning that can occur

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- ASD is increasing in prevalence
- Current incidence is 1:50 Children



March of 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States
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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

•DISORDERS RELATED TO ASD

- Fragile X syndrome** (a genetic cause of intellectual disability)
- Tuberous Sclerosis** causes benign tumors to grow in the brain and other vital organs
- A higher risk of having **epilepsy**
- 20 to 30 percent of children with ASD develop epilepsy
- Bipolar disorder and Schizophrenia** occur more frequently
- Asperger Disorder, Childhood disintegrative disorder, pervasive developmental disorder (NOS)**

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

•Screening Tests Examples

- Ados-2 (Autism diagnostic observation schedule, 2nd ed.)
- M-CHAT Autism Test - M-CHAT Autism Screening Tool
- CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program provides free resources to help families monitor developmental milestones and recognize signs of developmental concerns, including ASD.
- There are other instruments available

- A complete screening by a qualified professional is the best approach to diagnosis (see Slide 31, TMPPM)

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- The impact of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM 5)
 - Published 2013
 - Eliminated and grouped all the previous terminology into a single category
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Created 3 levels of ASD
 - Levels I, II, and III

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

All the previous diagnoses and related conditions are now diagnosed by their **severity of need** within Social Communication and Ritualistic behaviors.

Autism Forms	Support Level	Classical Autism	Asperger's	PDD-NOS	Rett's Syndrome	CDD
Mild Autism	Level 1	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Moderate Autism	Level 2	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Severe Autism	Level 3	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

•Relationship of Aspects of ASD



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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- All these Relational Aspects of ASD are now identified by the requisite **SUPPORT LEVELS**
- ASD DSM 5 **Level I** – Requiring Support:
- ASD DSM 5 **Level II** – Requiring Substantial Support
- ASD DSM 5 **Level III** – Requiring VERY Substantial Support

DSM 5

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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?
Autism Spectrum Disorder DSM 5
Level I – Requiring Support

<p>•Social Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without support in place, there is a deficit in communication ability which can cause noticeable difficulties. • Has difficulty initiating social interactions. • Demonstrates clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful responses to the approaches of others. • May appear to have little or no interest in social interactions. 	<p>•Restricted Interests And Repetitive Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rituals and repetitive behaviors cause significant interference and difficulty in their daily lives and general functioning. • This disruption affects more than one area of their lives. • A resistance of any attempt by others to be distracted from their fixated interest. • Children assigned to this level would be at the high end of the spectrum; previously referred to as Asperger's Syndrome.
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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?
Autism Spectrum Disorder DSM 5
Level II – Requiring Substantial Support

<p>•Social Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked deficits in verbal and non-verbal communication skills. • Social impairment even with support in place. • Limited initiation in social interaction. • Reduced or abnormal response to the social approaches of others. 	<p>•Restricted Interests And Repetitive Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted Interests and Repetitive Behaviors that are very frequent and are obvious to the casual observer. • The child or adult becomes very distressed and frustrated if there is an attempt to distract them from their interests and repetitive behaviours • It is extremely difficult to divert their interest if at all.
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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?
Autism Spectrum Disorder DSM 5
Level III – Requiring VERY Substantial Support

- **Social Communication**
 - Severe deficits in verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Language may be absent.
 - Their deficits cause severe impairment for any functioning.
 - Very limited initiation of social interaction if at all.
 - Minimal response to social approaches of others.
- **Restricted Interests And Repetitive Behaviors**
 - Total preoccupation with fixated rituals and repetitive behaviors that occur all of the time.
 - Very distressed if the rituals are interrupted.
 - They immediately return to their interest and/or rituals if interrupted.

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ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations

- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the only proven intervention deemed effective to treat Autism**
- ABA focuses on
 - the observable relationship of behavior to the environment.
 - the methods of ABA can be used to change behavior.
 - there are a variety of other strategies available; none have research proven efficacy.

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ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- ABA is scientifically based on a Long history of Behavior Research.
- **Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936)**
 - discovered the conditioning reflex during his study with dogs
 - he established classical conditioning as a learning method
 - Ring a bell and the dog salivates

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- John B. Watson (1878-1958)**
- John B. Watson extended Pavlov’s theory to apply to human behavior

www.verywellmind.com/john-b-watson-biography; Downloaded from the Web 1/10/22

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**ASD Treatment
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- B.F. Skinner (1904-1990)**
- introduced the concept of **operant conditioning**
- assumes that all behavior is learned
- Rats could be taught to discriminate signals (colored lights) related to food presence or absence

<https://psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/b-f-skinner>; Downloaded from the Web 1/25/22

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**ASD Treatment
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

- Dr. Ole Ivar Lovaas (1927-2010)**
- 1960s he pioneered Applied Behavioral Analytic Interventions
- decrease severe challenging behaviors**
- intervention for preschoolers with autism
- children who received early intensive ABA made dramatic gains in development

<https://thelovaascenter.com>; Downloaded from the Web 1/23/22

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ABA is **Applied**, meaning it **targets behaviors** that are socially significant.

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**ASD Treatment
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ABA is **Behavioral**
-study **observable, measurable events**.

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**ASD Treatment
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ABA is **Analytic**
-it **demonstrates reliable factors** controlling behavior (cause and effect)

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**ASD Treatment
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ABA will help to:

- **Teach new skills**
- **Reduce maladaptive behaviors**

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**ASD Treatment
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?
Procedures based on the **principles of behavior**
Procedures are **systematically applied**
Improve socially meaningful **behavior**;
must be **measurable**
Show that the procedures used are responsible for the change (**cause and effect**)

[TMPM February 2022, Vol. 2; Provider Handbooks/Children's Services Handbook, Section 2.3 Autism Services](#)

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**ASD Treatment
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

- The ABA therapist
 - identifies the relationship between the behavior and the environment
 - need for change
 - designs methods to change that behavior
 - systematically applies these methods to improve behavior.

<https://thevoacenter.com/> Downloaded from the Web 1/23/22

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**ASD Treatment
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

- ABA is very labor intensive
- Requires 1-on-1 interactions with the patient
- Requires daily repetition and reinforcement
- Parental/Caregiver support is very important
- Coordination of care with other education or learning environments is necessary

<https://thejoiascenter.com/> Downloaded from the Web 1/23/22

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**ASD Treatment
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TMPPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.1
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Definition:

- Characterized by
 - restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior and interest
 - repetitive patterns of activities
 - deficits in **social communication**
 - Deficits in **social interaction**
- Onset of symptoms occurs in early childhood.

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**What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?
TMPPM: Symptoms Classified Into Two
Categories.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Social Communication And Interaction •Poor eye contact and lack of facial expressions •Delayed speech or does not speak •Does not understand questions and directions •Gets aggressive or disruptive •Does not respond to his or her name •Repeats phrases or words •Resists cuddling and holding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Patterns Of Behavior •Repetitive movements like hand shaking, spinning or rocking •Difficulty in body movement coordination •Sensitive to light, sound or touch •Self - harming activities such as head-banging •Specific food preferences or food pattern <p>(Slide 6)</p>
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DSM 5

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.1

•Who Can Make the Diagnosis?

- A developmental pediatrician
- A neurologist
- A psychiatrist
- A licensed psychologist
- An interdisciplinary team

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**ASD Treatment
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TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.1

•Who Can Make the Diagnosis?

- An interdisciplinary team
 - Physician
 - physician assistant (PA)
 - nurse practitioner
- In consultation with one or more providers who are qualified child specialists, have expertise in Autism and are in one of the following disciplines:**

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**ASD Treatment
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TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.1

•Who Can Make the Diagnosis?

- In consultation with:
 - Any provider listed above
 - Licensed clinical social worker
 - Licensed professional counselor
 - Licensed psychological associate
 - Licensed specialist in school psychology
 - Occupational therapist (OT)
 - Speech-language pathologist (SLP)

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**ASD Treatment
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TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.1

•Who Can Make the Diagnosis?

Synopsis:
Any medical, or psychological specialist with expertise in Autism
OR
Any professional having expertise in Autism with the support of an interdisciplinary team.

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**ASD Treatment
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TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.2

Health Plans Must provide a “Comprehensive Service Array”

•This may include:

- Applied behavior analysis (ABA)
- Case management/care coordination (with parent permission)
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Nutrition, when provided by a licensed dietitian
- Occupational therapy (OT)
- Outpatient behavioral health services
- Physician services, including medication management
- Physical therapy (PT)
- Speech-language pathology (SLP);

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.3

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

The TMPPM Definition:

ABA refers to the application of current, evidence-based specialized principles of the applied behavior discipline

Intensive behavioral intervention (IBI) is a high-intensity application of ABA therapy.

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?
 Procedures based on the principles of behavior
 Procedures are systematically applied
 Improve socially meaningful behavior;
 measurable
 Show that the procedures used are responsible
 for the change.
 (Same as Slide 28)

TMPPM February 2022, Vol. 2; Provider Handbooks/Children's Services Handbook, Section 2.3 Autism Services

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.3
 Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
 The TMPPM Definition:
One very important point:
 Physical restraint is not appropriate during any
 service provided to Medicaid children or youth
 under the Autism Services benefit except in
 emergency instances of threat of physical harm to
 the child or youth or others around them.

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

TMPM February 2022 Sec. 2.3.4
 Parent or Caregiver Involvement

- Parent or caregivers ideally
 - Must be able to **participate in ABA therapy**
 - Implement ABA** techniques in the **home**
 Implement ABA in the **community environment**
 - Follow instructions provided by the LBA or
 licensed assistant behavior analyst (LaBA)

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

Who can provide ABA?
Section 2.3.6 ABA Provider Requirements
2.3.6.1 Licensed Behavior Analysts (LBA)

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
 - Master Degree or higher
 - BCBA (LBA - TMPPM)
 - LBAs serve as direct supervisors of the LaBAs and BTs and must ensure the quality of the ABA services provided

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?
Who can provide ABA?
Section 2.3.6.2 Licensed Assistant Behavior Analysts (LaBA)

- Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst
 - BCaBA (LaBA - TMPPM)
 - Bachelors Degree or higher.
 - State licensed

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?
Who can provide ABA?
Section 2.3.6.3 Behavior Technicians (BT)

A high school graduate-level paraprofessional who delivers ABA services under the supervision of an LBA and/or an LaBA.

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

Documentation Requirements
 The ABA documentation requirements are consistent with other sections of the TMPPM.
 Specific assessments and maintenance of records is required
 A 90-day extension may be requested after the initial approval
 Reevaluations may be done as soon as 60 days

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

Section 2.3.7.14 Frequency and Duration Guidelines for ABA Services
High frequency IBI (greater than 20 hours/week)
Moderate frequency (6 to 20 hours/week)
Targeted/focused frequency (5 hours or less/week or 20 hours or less/month)
Maintenance/consultative level (2-4 hours per week or less)
 Each section (frequency) has specific criteria

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**ASD Treatment
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Section 2.3.7.15 Discharge or Discontinuation Criteria
 Section 2.3.8 Exclusions

Each of these sections has specific criteria
 In each of the sections there are references to medical necessity, duration of approvals, reimbursement criteria, and documentation requirements.

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**ASD Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

There are **other therapies** available in addition to ABA that may augment or support ABA treatment.

The use of **medications** is available and is beyond the scope of this presentation

Cognitive behavioral therapy (**CBT**) may also be used to augment the effectiveness of ABA

Supportive care for the caregivers and other family members is also available.

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**ASD and Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

Take Away:

- Autism is an umbrella term covering a range of neurodevelopmental conditions
- Autism Causes a wide range of impairments in 2 main categories (DSM 5)
 - Social Communication and Interaction
 - Patterns Of Behavior

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**ASD and Treatment
New State of Texas Regulations**

Take Away:

- Applied Behavior Analysis (**ABA**) is:
 - Procedures based on the scientific principles of behavior
 - Procedures that are **systematically applied**
 - Improve socially meaningful behavior**; measurable
 - Show that the procedures used are responsible for the change (**cause and effect**).

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Post-Test Questions

1. Autism Spectrum Disorder is an umbrella term covering a range of neurodevelopmental conditions.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
2. 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder causes a wide range of impairments in social communication.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
3. 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder has associated restricted and repetitive behaviors.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
4. 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder is increasing in frequency. The current estimate is
 - a. 1 in 125 children
 - b. 1 in 88 children
 - c. **1 in 50 children**
 - d. The incidence is decreasing.
5. 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder relationships include overlaps between
 - a. Social Communication Deficits
 - b. Repetitive Behaviors
 - c. Hyperactivity
 - d. Language Disability
 - e. **All of the above**

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QUESTIONS?



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