WHETHER IT’S STUDYING FOR A BIG TEST, SPEAKING IN FRONT OF A LARGE CROWD OR PREPARING FOR AN IMPORTANT WORK MEETING, WE ALL GET STRESSED. AND WHEN WE GET STRESSED, WE SWEAT. NOW, RESEARCHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ARE USING SWEAT MONITORS TO TRACK THE STRESS LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS SEVERELY AFFECTED BY AUTISM.

ASSISTANT RESEARCH PROFESSOR BRADLEY FERGUSON USED WRIST AND ANKLE MONITORS TO MEASURE THE SWEAT LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE SEVERELY AFFECTED BY AUTISM. THE MONITORS WERE ABLE TO TRACK WHEN THEIR STRESS LEVELS WERE RISING.

“What we found is that 60 percent of the time, their sweat levels started to rise prior to them having the problem behavior.”

FERGUSON EXPLAINED THAT THIS TECHNOLOGY CAN BE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS.

“This technology is really important because with these children who are severely affected by autism, they’re oftentimes nonverbal, so they’re not able to communicate when they’re feeling stressed out, so this device or a similar type device is kind of like a proxy that enables them to speak to us not verbally, but through their body signals.”

BY MONITORING A CHILD’S STRESS LEVELS, PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS CAN INTERVENE AND PREVENT PROBLEM BEHAVIORS FROM HAPPENING. THEY CAN GIVE THE CHILD A BREAK IN A QUIET PLACE OR A COMFORTING ITEM TO HELP THEM CALM DOWN.

WITH THIS TECHNOLOGY, MONITORING SOMETHING AS ORDINARY AS SWEAT CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN HELPING THOSE AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND THEIR CAREGIVERS.

I’M BRIAN CONSIGLIO WITH A MIZZOU SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE.