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- **Please Mute Your Phones**
- **Please do not place the call on hold – we can all hear your hold music**



ABC's of Autism Spectrum Disorder for Vocational Focused Associates

Facilitated by Douglas Thorpe, DBH



- Doctor of Behavioral Health (2018), MS Science of Health Care Delivery (2015), BS Clinical Nutrition (2014), all from Arizona State University. Registered Dietetic Technician.
- Post doctoral scholar in Applied Behavior Analysis
- Two years of clinical experience conducting assessments and developing treatment plans for: disordered eating behaviors (both ASD and non-ASD), aggressive behaviors (self and other harm), and social functional behaviors.
- Teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in biochemistry, health care ethics and law, psychology, biopsychosocial assessment and diagnosis, neuropsychopathology, and social determinants of health.



Learning Objectives

1. Identify the typical types of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
2. What conditions are considered ASD?
3. What are the common symptoms and treatment options for ASD?
4. Review of the strategies for assisting ASD members achieving successful employment outcomes.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

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- ASD is a spectrum of behaviors that impair social and emotional interactions. It is not a “mental illness” in the colloquial sense. The disorder relates only to the degree that a person is impaired in their ability to engage in productive and usual social activities of daily living.
- These behaviors include verbal and nonverbal communication such as eye contact, reading and using gestures, facial expressions, sharing, making friends, and difficulty in adjusting behaviors to social contexts.
- Other stereotypical behaviors associated with ASD include repetitive motor movements (hand flapping, flipping objects), lining or sorting objects, echolalia, or using idiosyncratic phrases.
- Inflexibility for change in routine, need for sameness, ritualized patterns of speech or behavior.

- Limited, fixated interests that are atypical in intensity or focus (preferring specific plate, fork, toy, comb).
- Hyper or hypo reactivity to sensory inputs.
- Signs and symptoms must be present during developmental period.
- Signs and symptoms must cause clinically significant impairment in social, Occupational, vocational, or other socially important areas of functioning.
- Includes the legacy diagnoses of Autism, Asperger's Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder.
- May occur with intellectual, language, or other disorders.

- Topography (what it looks like) and Function

- Three Term Contingency A – B - C
 - Antecedent – the environment and what happens *before* a behavior
 - Behavior – Frequency, Intensity, Duration and connected to both A (current behavior) and C (future behavior)
 - Consequence – the environment and what happens *after* a behavior

- There are four functions of behavior - regardless of the topography of the behavior, the behavior serves:
 - Attention
 - Escape / Avoidance
 - Tangibles
 - Sensory Stimulation

- There are a variety of evidence based and pseudoscience / not evidence based protocols for ASD
- Behavioral
 - Applied Behavior Analysis (Evidence based)
 - Speech Language Therapy / Occupational Therapy (Evidence based)
 - TEACCH (Evidence based)
 - Relationship Development Intervention (No published evidence)
- Treating Associated Medical Conditions
 - Gastrointestinal and feeding / malnutrition
 - ADD/ADHD
 - Anxiety, Depression
 - OCD

- Medication
 - Prescribed for underlying medical conditions
 - Targeting behavior may not be ethical
- Pseudoscience
 - Gluten Free Casein Free
 - Nutritional Supplements
 - Homeopathy, naturopathy
 - Why? No “cure” for ASD

- ASD treatment plans ethically must only target behavior that has social validity

- Examples:

Loud playing and screaming inside that annoys parents – Not socially valid. Functions?

Kicking other students on the playground annoying them – Socially valid. Functions?

Hand flapping that embarrasses parents in public and causes classmates to laugh – Depends on additional context. Functions?



QUESTIONS?

Dthorpe@Care1stAZ.com

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