

Supporting Youth with Anxiety and Depression

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Disclosures

- Molly Cevasco has no financial relationships relevant to this presentation to disclose.
- All planners have no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

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Objectives

Participants will:

- Review IDD-specific information about mood and anxiety prevalence.
- Identify common symptom presentations in the IDD population.
- Learn about evidence-based treatment approaches for mood and anxiety concerns from a systems perspective.

Prevalence of Mood and Anxiety Concerns

- In individuals with ASD, 40% of children meet diagnostic criteria for at least one anxiety disorder (van Steensel et al. 2012), while another 30-40% have subclinical anxiety levels that impact daily functioning (Strang et al. 2012; Vasa et al. 2013).
- Depression is also extremely common in individuals with IDD (Leyfer et al. 2006; Menezes, Robinson, Sanchez, & Cook, 2018).
- Individuals with ASD experience higher rates of depression and anxiety than neurotypical children, with discrepancies increasing with age (van Steensel & Heeman, 2017).
- Impact of IQ on prevalence of anxiety is unclear (see van Steensel & Heeman, 2017 for a good review of the topic).

Diagnostic Considerations

- Increased intolerance of uncertainty (Boulter et al. 2014; Hwang et al. 2020).
- Withdrawal may not be an effective symptom to consider when diagnosing depression (Greenlee et al. 2016).
- Areas impacted may present differently (Family Life -> Child Outside Home -> Child Inside Home) (Adams & Emerson, 2020).
 - Increased need for consideration of parental accommodation.
- Increase in repetitive behaviors.
- Collaboration with medical providers is especially important for the IDD population when identifying symptoms.

Treatment Considerations (1 of 2)

- Increased need for emotion identification skill development (we can't address things we can't name).
 - Avoid using cartoons, animals, etc. for emotion naming – consider using photos of your client (with permission).
 - Large-scale drawings with somatic symptoms identified.
- Visuals are vital!
- Books are often a great resource
 - All My Stripes, Breathe (Respira), A Box of Butterflies, The Panicosaurus
- Manipulatives can help to practice relaxation.

Treatment Considerations (2 of 2)

- Functional Behavior Assessment & Chain Analysis can be helpful in clarifying presentation and increasing client awareness.
- Development of social skills can be a significant contributor to symptom improvement.
- Use of positive behavioral strategies to improve symptoms.
- Encourage parent/caregiver tracking of mood/anxiety management strategies to increase skill development.
- Be aware of how treatment may impact your own sense of confidence and competence.

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Questions

THANK YOU!

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