10 EVIDENCE-BASED TIPS FOR COUNSELING ADULTS WITH AUTISM

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Rationale

• Importance of early recognition and accurate diagnosis
• Understanding the common comorbid conditions (CCCs)
• Choosing an effective approach, assessment and interventions
1. Presume competence & capability

Splintered skill sets
- Common strengths & limitations
- Procedural versus declarative knowledge

Personal power, agency and a voice
- Person-first language and approach

Clinical interventions:
- Rapport building: Assessing for strengths and interests
- Engaging through Socratic questioning

Bellini, 2008; Bilken & Burke, 2006
2. Understand the support system

Social support

- Family structure and dynamics
- Friends, partners, spouse

Clinical interventions:
Reciprocity in social support

Assist in identifying a “social coach”

Devoldre et al., 2010; Laugeson, 2013
3. Increase optimism

“Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional”

Caregiver pessimism is one of the strongest predictors of problems in adulthood; optimism promotes a person’s ability to:
- identify alternatives to past behaviors,
- increases problem-solving skills,
- decreases helplessness,
- increases coping skills, and
- promotes a positive worldview

**Clinical interventions:**
Thoughts quiz

Self-Talk Journal: tracking, disputation and reframing

Durand, 2011
4. Assess & plan for treatment

Treatment goals to address the core symptoms of ASD

The power of adult self-report & third-party reporting

**Clinical interventions:**
Social Responsiveness Scale 2
- Useful in distinguishing from common comorbid conditions
- Designed to help inform treatment outcomes & progress
- Five subscales: social awareness, social cognition, social communication, social motivation, and restricted interests and repetitive behaviors

Constantino, 2012; Constantino, et al., 2003
5. Treat social motivation

How interested are they in the social landscape?

Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

**Clinical interventions:**
Explore intrinsic & extrinsic social motivations and expectations

Identify common interests and build upon success as a way to foster social interactions or relationship(s)

Chevallier, et al., 2012
6. Treat social awareness

Navigating the social landscape starts with identification

Presentation can range from hyper to hypo sensitivities

**Clinical interventions:**
Utilize direct instruction with concrete rules to aid in identification

Provide opportunities for practice with visual cues (written, photographic or video) for real world application and generalization

Myles, Trautman, Schelvan, 2004
7. *Treat social cognition*

Interpreting and predicting the social landscape

Theory of mind (TOM)

**Clinical interventions:**
Examine social errors and successes through questioning:
1. What was that like for the other person?
2. What did that other person think about you?
3. Does the person want to interact with you again?

Edelson, 2016; Senju et al., 2009
8. **Treat social communication**

Expressing oneself successfully in the social landscape

All social communication involves verbal and non-verbal elements

**Clinical interventions:**
Role-play to demonstrate errors & model effective strategies

Rehearsal in session for practice & corrective feedback

ASHA, 2016; Laugeson, 2013
9. Treat restricted interests & repetitive behaviors

Preoccupation with restricted patterns of interest, adherence to nonfunctional routines and unexpected motor mannerisms

**Clinical interventions:**
Applied behavior analysis

Identifying alternatives

Utilize current interests as a means to further develop and broaden skill set and interests

Kim & Lord, 2010
10. Promote independence

Gerhardt & Lanier, 2011; Baker, 2006
Select a region on the map to view contact information for a CARD site and resources near you.

CARD sites

Florida Atlantic University
Florida State University
University of Central Florida
University of Florida at Gainesville
University of Florida at Jacksonville
University of Miami
University of South Florida

www.autism.fau.edu
www.ufCARD.com
www.ucf-card.org
www.card.ufl.edu
www.hscj.ufl.edu/pediatrics/autism/
www.umCARD.org
card-usf.fmh.ufl.edu
References & Resources

American Speech Language Hearing Association.  www.asha.org


