

Speakers

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Presentation Goals

- Discuss the demographic changes among persons with autism and related disorders
- Explain how this has affected the “high functioning” end of the spectrum
- Discuss the service needs of young adults with autism and related disorders.
- Discuss some of the services offered by New Directions

Autism “Spectrum”

- Group of diagnoses formally known as the “Pervasive Developmental Disorders”
 - Autism
 - Asperger's Syndrome
 - Pervasive Developmental Disorder NOS
- Ranges from the “absent-minded professor” to the severely autistic.
- Often referred to informally as “Autism Spectrum Disorders” or “ASDs”

Changing demographics of Autism

- Prior to the 1990's - autism: 1/2500
- Currently - 1/500-1/150 for all ASDs
- Recent Epidemiology Research:
 - CDC 2007: 1/150
 - Based on a review of documents in 12 US states
 - Frombonne 2003: 1/166 based on 3 studies using same methods
- We are currently experiencing a significant increase in the number of children with an ASD diagnosis

Changing Demographics of Autism

- Over 20,000 students with ASDs will be entering advanced academics or the work force this year.
 - The Autism Society of America estimates there will be nearly 1.5 million U.S. adults with diagnosed ASDs by 2014
- A disproportionate percentage of the increased diagnosis has been among “high functioning” persons
 - More ASD young adults than ever will be seeking post-high school education

Changing Demographics of Autism

While many persons with ASD may be academically and intellectually prepared for college, few are prepared for independent living.

Adult service needs

- The Autism Society of America (ASA) has called the lack of services for adults with ASDs a “national crisis”.
- Childhood services (ages birth to 21) available under a range of federal programs
 - Early Start
 - Medicaid
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Adult services available under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Medicaid and some state laws (CA’s Lanterman Act)
 - However, typically available to only the most impaired persons and primarily through Medicaid waiver program
 - And, even when eligible, there are few appropriate programs for higher functioning adults. “Eligibility does not provide entitlement”.

Adult Service Needs

- Young adults with high functioning autism typically need a range of skills and supports:
 - Independent living skills
 - Cooking
 - Shopping
 - Financial guidance
 - Transportation / driving
 - Etc.
 - Academic supports
 - Tutoring
 - Academic "guidance" counseling
 - Etc.

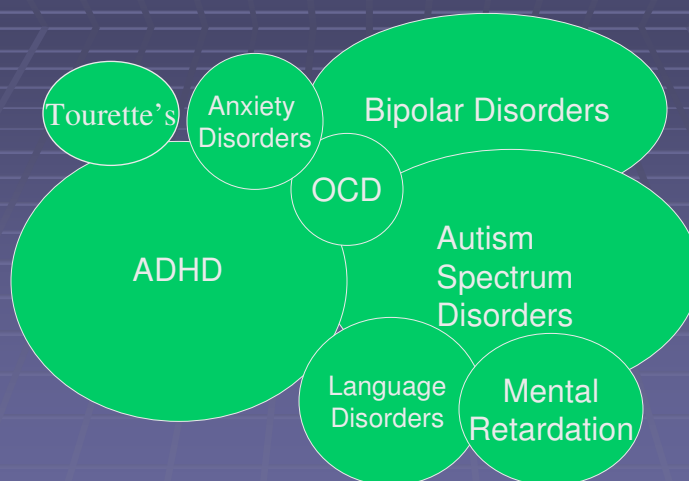
Adult Service Needs

- Supports cont.
 - Social skills
 - Activity planning, supported social interaction
 - Skills training / education about dating/sexuality
 - Guidance around drugs and alcohol use
 - General social skills training
 - Emotional supports
 - Group and individual therapy
 - A majority of adults with HFA have other co-occurring mental health concerns

Adult Service Needs

- A majority of adults with high functioning ASDs have other co-occurring psychiatric diagnoses
 - Anxiety disorders
 - OCD, social phobia, generalized anxiety
 - Affective disorders
 - Dysthymia, major depression, bipolar
 - Impulse control problems
 - ADHD, trichotillomania
 - Learning disabilities
 - Language disorders, reading comprehension, written expression, gross and fine motor problems
 - Neurological disorders
 - Epilepsy, Tourette's Syndrome, etc.

Co-Occurring Disorders



Hans Asperger (1944)



- “For success in science or art, a dash of autism is essential.”
- Symptoms/Capabilities Vary Tremendously
- Proper Placement is Essential

Asperger’s “Spectrum”

- Ranges from the “absent-minded professor” to the full blown highly functioning autistic.



What are the Causes of Pervasive Developmental Disorders?

- Much more research has been conducted on autism than on Asperger's disorder or other pervasive developmental disorders
- 4:1 Ratio the same – Etiology
- Referral for assessment is 10:1
- Biological factors/Genetics
- Males – Obsessive Interests more pronounced
- Females- typical seen as delayed in emotional maturity. Play interests are delayed
- Use diagnosis that facilitates treatment

What are the Causes of Pervasive Developmental Disorders?

- A variety of explanations for autism have been offered
 - Recent work in the psychological and biological spheres has persuaded clinical theorists that cognitive limitations and **brain abnormalities** are the primary causes of the disorder

What are the Causes of Pervasive Developmental Disorders?

- Biological causes
 - **Some studies have linked autism to prenatal difficulties or birth complications**
 - Some theorists have proposed that a postnatal event – the MMR vaccine – might produce autism in some children, although subsequent research has found no link

How Do Clinicians and Educators Treat Pervasive Developmental Disorders?

- Treatment can help people with autism adapt better to their environment, although no known treatment totally reverses the autistic pattern
- Treatments of particular help are behavioral therapy, communication training, parent training, and community integration
 - In addition, psychotropic drugs and certain vitamins have sometimes helped when combined with other approaches

In children with autism...

As many as:

- 60% with poor attention/concentration
- 40% hyperactive
- 88% with morbid or unusual preoccupations
- 37% with obsessive thinking
- 86% with rituals
- 89% with stereotyped language
- 74% with sig fears/anxiety
- 44% with depressed mood, irritability and agitation
- 11% with sleep problems
- 43% with self injury
- 10% with tics

From Tsai, L (2000) Focus on autism and other developmental disabilities

Adolescence

- Adolescence can be a difficult period
 - Physical and sexual changes, social and academic pressures, personal doubts, and temptation cause many teenagers to feel anxious, confused, and depressed

Program Goals

- Multidisciplinary Treatment
 - Clinical Interventions (Psychological & Psychiatric)
 - Coordinated/Organized Approach
 - Measurable Results
 - Vineland II - Adaptive Functioning
 - Behavioral Planning and Reinforcement
 - Financial Services and “Real World” Accountability

Program Goals (Cont.)

- Family therapy
 - Ongoing
 - Two formal Meetings
- Social Modeling and Support
 - Social Skills groups / Relationship training
- Basic living skills
 - Shopping
 - Cooking
 - Social Skills/Relationship training
 - Tutoring
 - RA Services

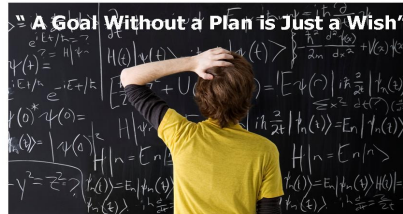
Social Skills Training

- Nov 2007
- Journal of Autism and Dev. Disorders
- “Social Skills training for adolescents with Aspersers syndrome and high-functioning autism.”
- Results- Social Skills Groups Generalize outside TX group

Tse, J., Strulovitch, J., Tagalakis, V., Meng, L., Fombonne, E.
Issn # 0162-3257 (Electronic 1573-3432)

Motivated ?

- Article- “A modified brief solution-focused therapy approach for adults with developmental delay.”
- Conclusion- Approach most successful for those who were self-referred and were supported in the therapeutic process by others.
- Journal of Systemic Therapies
 - NY: 2001. Vol 20 Iss 2; pg 24, 17 pgs
 - Stoddart, K.P., McDonnell, J., Temple, V., Mustata, A.



SERVICES:

Individual Service Plans

Clinical Psychology

Vocational Assessment & Support

Life Management Skills Training

Educational Support Services

Multi-Disciplinary Tx Approach



New Directions
For Young Adults, Inc.

www.NewDirectionsFYA.com



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