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Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Electric Training Modules

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INTRODUCTION

The South Central Crisis Center is a State Operated Services mental health facility in Mankato, Minnesota. The center is designed to offer people suffering an acute mental health episode, such as suicidal thoughts, or who need a medication adjustment or other psychiatric services, up to a few days in a safe, secure environment. The center accepts referrals from law enforcement, county or health care professionals in these participating counties: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Freeborn, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Rice, Sibley and Watonwan.

Recently, the program has been serving a larger amount of clients who have a diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder or high functioning Autism along with other comorbid mental health diagnoses. These clients pose a new challenge to the program as their behavior and learning styles differ from those of other clients the program serves. In order to better serve their clients, the staff at South Central Crisis Center requested training materials on behavioral traits and learning styles of clients who are diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders.



Minnesota Department of Human Services

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To meet the needs of the clients at the South Central Crisis Center, a literature review was conducted, looking at various studies of behavioral traits and learning styles of adults with Asperger's Disorder and high functioning Autism. From this literature review an electronic training module was developed. This module consisted of a power point presentation and a learning manual.

To begin the process, a literature review was completed. Literature consisted of evidence-based intervention techniques and intricacies that make up this disorder. Literature was based on primarily on adults with Asperger's Disorder, although some of the findings included adolescent case studies. Literature consisted of:

- Case-studies
- Evidence-based text
- Evidence-based behavioral tools
- Qualitative studies
- Literature reviews

After fully reviewing the literature, a power point and training manual was developed to serve as a training tool for the staff at the South Central Crisis Center. The goal of this tool was to educate the staff on typical behavior and learning styles of adults who have been diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder. By following the training modules it is hoped that staff will be more comfortable working with people with this diagnosis who present to the South Central Crisis Center.



Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Electronic Training Modules

Jennifer Stuehrenberg

South Central Crisis Center, Mankato, MN

LITERATURE REVIEW

Study	Population	Measures	Findings
Social Challenges and supports from the Perspective of Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities	18 adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder	Qualitative Analysis of Individual Interviews	Study found that individuals commonly experienced experiences such as isolation, difficulty initiating social interactions, challenges relating to communication, longing for greater intimacy and effort to develop greater social/self awareness. Structured social activities and small group dyads were recommended to gain self confidence along with social skills
An Exploratory Study of the Stigma Associated with a Diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome: The Mental Health Impact on the Adolescents and Young Adults Diagnosed with a Disability with a Social Nature	Parents of adolescents and young adults diagnosed with AS who participated in a qualitative study conducted in 2002. Second group consisted of volunteer sample of parents. There was a total of 10 adolescent and young adults analyzed	Cross-sectional study using a self-administrated mail questionnaire and a web-based questionnaire	Many stated that peer victimization was an issue. 20% met criteria for a diagnosis of major depressive disorder. 30% met criteria for generalized anxiety disorder.
Suicidal Ideation and Comorbid Disorders in Adolescent and Young Adults Diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome: A population at risk.	10 adolescents and young adults diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome.	Cross-sectional study using self-administrated mail questionnaire and a web-based questionnaire	50% of the sample had clinically significant levels of suicidal ideation, 20% met criteria for a diagnosis of major depressive disorder and 30% met criteria for generalized anxiety disorder.
Diagnosing Aspergers Syndrome in the Elderly: A series of Case Presentations	5 case studies	Developmental History, Diagnostic Questionnaires and Cognitive Assessments	Many of those diagnosed with Asperger's are young at this time due to the newness of the diagnosis. It was found that older patients with undiagnosed AS may be receiving inappropriate treatments. It was also determined in this study that greater awareness of AS in older populations is necessary to ensure better management of such patients.
Standing out and Fitting in: A Report on a support group for Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome using a personal account	1 case study. A woman who participated in a discussion and support group aimed primarily at young adults with Asperger Syndrome	Informational interviews	Clinical and educational services need to work together to ensure that young people have immediate access to support models. These support models would be viewed as preventative services to meet the needs of clients as they progress in their lives.
Peer Victimization in Adolescents and Young Adults Diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome: A Link to Depressive Symptomatology, Anxiety Symptomatology and Suicidal Ideation	10 adolescents and young adults diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome	Qualitative study. Snowball sampling and volunteer sampling.	A high comortality of diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and suicidal ideation. A high proportion of the participants showed high level of peer victimization.
Evidence of a Divided-attention Advantage in Autism	20 adults with high-functioning autism and Asperger's Syndrome and 20 adults matched to the experimental group on education, age, and IQ.	Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale	Although the differences were not great, The ASD group scored lower on visual
Brief Report: Impaired Identification of Discrepancies Between Expressive Faces and Voices in Adults with Asperger's Syndrome	18 adults diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome and 18 age and gender matched adults described as "typically developed"	2 way analysis of variance with the factors group and condition	Adults with AS were less accurate at distinguishing between congruent and incongruent expressive faces and voices. Both AS and control group had similar accuracy to expressive faces and voices in isolation.
Dissociation of Cognitive and Emotional Empathy in Adults with Aspergers Syndrome Using the Multifaceted Empathy Test (MET)	17 individuals with Asperger's Syndrome and 18 well-matched controls	Pre/Post test to assess empathy	Individuals with AS are impaired in cognitive empathy, although they do not differ from controls in emotional empathy
Empathic Accuracy in Adults with a Pervasive Developmental Disorder During an Unstructured Conversation with a Typically Developing Stranger	11 high-functioning adults with PDD and 11 typically developing adults served as the control group.	Measured ability of adults with AS to communicate with strangers.	Individuals with PDD tended to speak longer to "stranger" that approached them. Social cues were not always recognized by the adults with PDD. Mind reading performance in the PDD group correlates with their performance on the empathic accuracy study.
Motor function in adults with Asperger's disorder: A comparative study	7 females and 8 males ages 21-35 diagnosed with Asperger's	Motor skills assessed with an individual assessment.	Adults with Asperger's tend to be impaired in regard to balance, coordination, dexterity and muscular strength.

25 journals were reviewed, journals displayed are most recent and most relevant to project design.

RESULTS

•Literature review conducted on 25 evidence based literature.

•Material was taken from this literature and compound into easily retainable information provided in a training module format.

•The electronic training module was presented to 5 of the staff at the South Central Crisis Center.

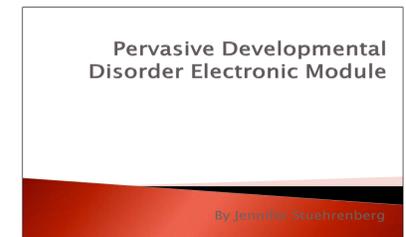
•Key learning concepts and Training Module goals:

•Gain a better understanding of diagnoses that fall under Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

- Autism
- Asperger's Disorder
- Rett's Syndrome
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- PDD, NOS

•Form an understanding of behavioral and learning traits that are common among individuals diagnosed with Asperger's or High Functioning Autism.

•Learn treatment tools that have proven to be affective when working with adults diagnosed with PDD.



FEEDBACK

For the most part feedback on this project was positive. The staff has been wanting some more information to assist in learning more about Asperger's disorder and most of them felt that this was an appropriate tool to use.

"A great way to learn the basics of this diagnosis! I'm sure we can use this as a tool to educate our staff for future clients who have Asperger's!" employee @ SCCC.

"This will be a great tool to use to train all of our current and new staff. These training modules offer explanations of symptoms and behaviors that are associated with people who are diagnosed with Asperger's. The benefits of understanding a diagnosis can help our clients successfully complete their goals," employee @ SCCC.

RURAL SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS

•This project has shown the importance of developing skills and awareness of all clients that are served within a program.

•Enhancing knowledge in specific areas assists in enhancing productivity and usefulness of programs located in rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Transforming the power point presentation into a tool that is useful for electronic training with a more interactive presentation.

• Develop a system of measurement for determining the impact of the electronic training module on staff and clients.