

EMOTION REGULATION IN ASD

What is emotion regulation?

Processes that we use to modify emotional reactions. We can be aware of these processes or not, purposefully trying to do them or not. In other words, sometimes it takes effort to manage emotion.

- x Emotion regulation problems are common in people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- x Emotion regulation problems can be associated with symptoms of depression, anxiety, behaviors such as aggression or self-injury, and social difficulties, both in people with ASD and without ASD.

How do problems with emotion regulation show up in ASD?

- x Issues with recognizing emotions L Q R Q H ¶ V V H O I
- x

THERAPY WITH CLIENTS WITH ASD

Tips for therapists treating emotion regulation problems in a client with ASD:

- x Have an open and accepting attitude! Most individuals with ASD and extreme emotion dysregulation want the situation to be better.
- x Be confident ±most often what works outside of ASD is worth trying with clients with ASD, with some modifications ±so use what you know works well
- x Use concrete, straightforward statements and questions
- x Use visuals to support learning
- x Avoid over-questioning; make sure you allow long pauses for clients with processing difficulties
- x Offer discrete choices if client has difficulty with open ended inquiry
- x Encourage the client to communicate back their understanding of concepts/problems
- x Consider more repetition and more practice of skills to increase generalization
- x Parent/guardian can often be extremely useful to engage in treatment, to aid communication and ensure use of strategies at home
- x Be aware of common cognitive challenges that may need to be considered and addressed. For example, black-and-white thinking tendencies could lead clients to think there is a single way to do (problem).
- x Do not assume a client is being defiant, resistant, or oppositional; although this sometimes occurs, it is most often the case that there is an underlying skill deficit or lack of understanding that the client may not be able to effectively communicate

Are there research supported approaches for treating emotion regulation impairment in ASD?

- x Cognitive-behavioral therapy (1.04S70 G[(D)5(o not)-3()-4(a)13(u000t79 r6W*nBT/F1 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 41.04 421.8

ONLINE RESOURCES

Online resources about emotions and behavior in ASD:

Mental health: <https://pautism.org/resource/mental-health/>

Meltdowns: <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/meltdowns.aspx>

Suicide: <https://pautism.org/resource/suicide-health-mood/>

Challenging Behaviors: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/challenging-behaviors-tool-kit>

Mindfulness resources :

<http://www.mindful.org/>

<http://www.mindfulnet.org/page2.htm>

<http://www.mindfulnessforteens.com>

Mindfulness practices streaming audio:

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/resources/mindfulness-audio-guided-practices/>

Evidence -based programs for problems that can be related to emotion regulation difficulties:

Rigidity/inflexibility/executive function challenges: Unstuck and on Target
<https://www.unstuckontarget.com/>

Social skills: PEERS
<https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers/teens>

Addressing sleep difficulties
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/atnair-p-strategies-improve-sleep-children-autism>

