

Therapeutic approaches in Adolescents with ASD

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Types of Therapies for Treating Adolescents With Autism

People with autism have access to multiple treatment options, but what works for one person may not work as well for someone else. That's why it's so important to seek personalized care.

- Psychoeducation
- Behavioral Approaches
- Developmental Approaches
- Social-Relational Approaches
- Pharmacological Interventions

Treatment makes the symptoms more manageable.

It's important for each person to receive an individualized treatment plan made up of the therapies most likely to help them improve their day-to-day functioning.

Autism treatment modalities usually encourage positive behaviors and help people with ASD improve their coping skills. Some individuals may also benefit from speech therapy or occupational therapy.

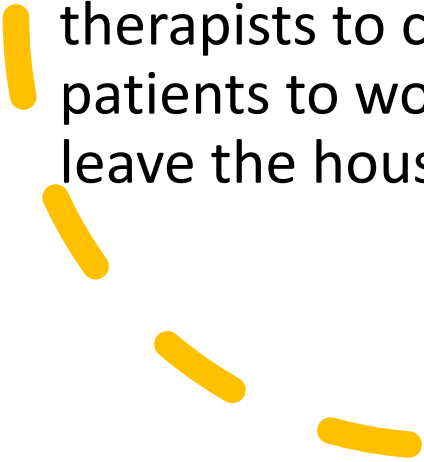


Online Therapy



Online therapy makes it possible for an individual with ASD to meet with a trained therapist without leaving their home. This is especially helpful for adults who experience severe distress when meeting new people or going to unfamiliar places. Many services, such as speech-language therapy, are just as effective online as they are when delivered in person.

Online therapy gives individuals with autism the opportunity to improve their functioning without adding to their distress. With advanced technology, it's even possible for therapists to change their video backgrounds to simulate other environments, allowing patients to work on their social skills or "visit" new places without the stress of having to leave the house.



In-Person Therapy

The main benefit of attending in-person therapy is that the individual has an opportunity to improve their coping skills. When they attend a therapy appointment, they may have to interact with a receptionist, therapist, and other staff members.

They may even see other individuals in the waiting room. This can help them learn how to cope with stressful situations. During in-person therapy, the therapist can also use specific objects to help the individual learn new skills.



Psychoeducation



ABA

Applied Behavior Analysis

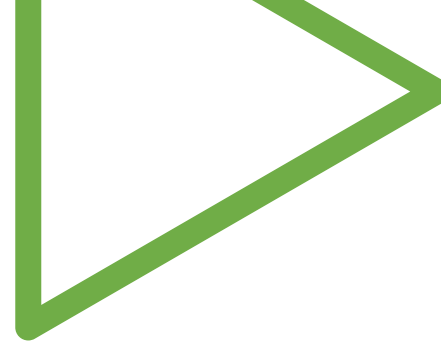


Applied Behavior Analysis



- The purpose of an ABA program is to reduce problematic behaviors and help individuals with ASD learn new skills.
- This treatment method is based on the idea that having some type of reward system encourages people with ASD to repeat positive behaviors.
- Newer treatment methods focus on helping people with ASD learn new skills in the context of activities they already do each day.

- ABA is based on the science of learning and behavior:
 - How behavior works
 - How behavior is affected by the environment
 - How learning takes place
- ABA therapy applies our understanding of how behavior works to real situations.
- The goal is to increase behaviors that are helpful and decrease behaviors that are harmful or affect learning.



- Applied Behavior Analysis involves many techniques for understanding and changing behavior. ABA is a flexible treatment:
- Can be adapted to meet the needs of each unique person
- Provided in many different locations – at home, at school, and in the community
- Teaches skills that are useful in everyday life
- Can involve one-to-one teaching or group instruction
- Positive reinforcement is one of the main strategies used in ABA
- When a behavior is followed by something that is valued (a reward), a person is more likely to repeat that behavior. Over time, this encourages positive behavior change.



- Good ABA programs for autism are not "one size fits all."
- Each program is written to meet the needs of the individual learner.
- The goal of any ABA program is to help each person work on skills that will help them become more independent and successful in the short term as well as in the future.

Treatment goals can include many different skill areas, such as:

- Communication and language
- Social skills
- Self-care (such as showering and toileting)
- Play and leisure
- Motor skills
- Learning and academic skills

- The person with autism will have many opportunities to learn and practice skills each day. This can happen in both planned and naturally occurring situations.
- ABA is effective for people of all ages. It can be used from early childhood through adulthood!



CBT

- It's based on the theory that many mental health conditions are the result of unhealthy patterns of thinking and behavior.
- A typical CBT session may focus on the following:
 - Learning to recognize when faulty thinking is creating problems
 - Developing problem-solving skills
 - Gaining a better understanding of why other people think and act
- It allows individuals with ASD to take control over their lives. Rather than waiting for someone else to provide support, they can develop better coping skills and work to adjust their own behavior.

Alternative Augmentative Communication

Some people with autism find that using pictures or technology to communicate is more effective than speaking.

Examples of AAC methods include:

- Sign language
- Picture exchange communication system (PECS)
- iPads
- Speech output devices

The speech-language pathologist can help to identify which AAC method is right for someone with autism and teach how to use the method to communicate.

Verbal Behavior therapy

Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and the theories of behaviorist B.F. Skinner.

- learning language by connecting words with their purposes.
- It teaches *why* we use words and how they are useful in making requests and communicating ideas.

Verbal Behavior therapy focuses on four word-types:

- **Mand:** A request, such as saying “Cookie,” to ask for a cookie
- **Tact:** A comment used to share an experience or draw attention, such as “airplane” to point out an airplane
- **Intraverbal:** A word used to respond or answer a question, such as “Where do you go to school?” “Castle Park Elementary”
- **Echoic:** A repeated, or echoed, word, such as “Cookie?” “Cookie!” This is important as imitating will help the student learn.

Social Skills Training

This type of treatment is especially helpful for adults who weren't diagnosed with ASD until later in life, preventing them from accessing early intervention programs.

During an SST session, a therapist uses direct instruction, modeling, role playing, and other techniques to help people with ASD learn how to communicate more effectively.

Depending on the individual's needs, this type of therapy may focus on increasing self-confidence, using appropriate nonverbal cues, or listening carefully when other people are talking. SST is useful for targeting any social skill that needs improvement.



Group-Based Social Skills Training vs Individual Social Skills Training

- Facilitate opportunities for peer support
- Normalising of problematic experiences
- Stigma reduction
- Shared problem-solving
- Enabling more realistic practice opportunities with peers
- Occasions to reduce isolation and increase positive social experiences

- 14 week curriculum
- Weekly 90-minute teen sessions and parent sessions
- Parent handouts
- Addresses core deficits for ASD
- Focuses on friendship skills and handling peer rejection and conflict
- Teaches social skills

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Social Skills for Teenagers With Developmental and Autism Spectrum Disorders



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THE PEERS TREATMENT MANUAL



Challenges

- Comorbidities
- Family
- Rigidity
- Tasks
- Why ???