ASD Training

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Welcome to the ASD Training!

- Please read each page of this training carefully.
- There will be comprehension checks throughout the training.
- After the training is complete, you will move into the post-test.
What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?
ASD is diagnosed using guidelines in the DSM and/or the ICD.

The DSM and ICD are guidelines for diagnosis used by psychiatrists, psychologists and other health care professionals.
Different Countries use the DSM and/or the ICD to Diagnose Autism

Developed in the United States

Developed Internationally by the WHO

Cross culture slide
In the current DSM, there is 1 autism spectrum with different levels of severity (support needs)
The DSM has been revised based on new scientific knowledge

Older version

Newer version

Current Edition

DSM-5
(Published in 2013)
The current DSM-5 made the different types of ASDs in the DSM-IV into 1 autism spectrum.
Former Types of Autism

You might have heard of...

- Asperger’s Disorder
- Autism
- Rett’s Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder NOS

These terms were used in the former version of the DSM, DSM-IV.
These types are no longer used. There is now one autism spectrum with different levels of severity.
Comprehension Check √

• Is there only 1 autism spectrum disorder in the DSM-5?

Yes

No
Comprehension Check ✓

• Is there only 1 autism spectrum disorder in the DSM-5?

   Yes

   No
The DSM-5 defines the autism spectrum in terms of social and behavioral difficulties that begin in childhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Features of Autism Spectrum Disorders</th>
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<td>Social Communication Impairment</td>
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<td>Restricted Interests or Behaviors</td>
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DSM-5 criteria for ASD

Social Communication Impairment
- Reduced social-emotional reciprocity
- Deficits in nonverbal communication
- Difficulty with relationships

Restricted Interests or Behaviors
- Repetitive movements, object use, or speech
- Rituals, routines or resistance to change
- Restricted, intense or focused interests
- Over or underreactivity to sensory information or unusual sensory interests
The ICD criteria for autism will change in 2017

The changes in the diagnostic criteria for autism adopted by the DSM in 2013 will likely be adopted by the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) in 2017.
What are some early signs of ASD?

- Limited eye contact
- Delayed speech
- More attention to objects than people
- Less pointing or gesturing
- Less imitation
What are some early signs of ASD?

• Doing the same thing over and over

• Becoming upset when routines change

• Delays in motor development

• Over or under sensitivity to noise or touch
How Is ASD Diagnosed?

• ASD is diagnosed according to DSM criteria by specialists

• Specialists use semi-structured observations, standardized tests, and parental interviews to inform diagnostic decisions
How Is ASD Diagnosed?

- The Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) is a parental interview often used to gain information about developmental history and everyday functioning.

- The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2) uses semi-structured observations to measure symptoms.

- The ADOS-2 Toddler Module allows diagnosis of children as young as 15 months of age.
Comprehension Check √

• Specialists can diagnose infants as young as 15 months of age with ASD.

  True

  False
Comprehension Check \( \sqrt{ } \)

- Specialists can diagnose infants as young as 15 months of age with ASD.

True
Can ASD be diagnosed with brain imaging or blood tests?
Can ASD be diagnosed with brain imaging or blood tests?

• There is NO physiological test for ASD
• In the future, physiological tests may exist:
  – Atypical brain structures, particularly unusual connections between parts of the brain, are often observed in ASD
  – A blood test developed in 2012 may identify around 70% of people with ASD based on 55 genes associated with ASD
Is ASD becoming more common?
ASD diagnoses continue to increase

• In 2011: A screening of all school children in a city in South Korea found that 1 in 38 children had ASD

• In 2014: A study in the US found that 1 in 68 children had ASD
ASD rates are increasing, but it is unclear why

- Diagnosis of ASD has drastically increased over the past 50 years
- This increase is due in part to changes in diagnostic criteria
- It may also be partially due to increased awareness
- However, it also may be that there is a genuine increase in the rates of ASD
• Diagnoses of ASD have increased significantly over the past several decades.

True

False
Comprehension Check

• Diagnoses of ASD have increased significantly over the past several decades.

True

False
Who gets diagnosed with ASD?
In the US, where health care is not universal some minorities are diagnosed less
Is ASD less common among minority groups?

• Probably not

• White people are diagnosed more frequently and earlier than some minorities in the US

• However, community screenings tend to show similar rates of ASD across ethnic groups

• The different rates of diagnosis across groups are probably due to other factors, such as access to health care and awareness of ASD
Is ASD more common among wealthy and educated families?

• In the US, where access to health care IS NOT universal, ASD diagnoses are more common among wealthier families.

• In Sweden, where access to health care IS universal, ASD diagnoses are more common among poorer families.

• ASD is only more common among wealthier families when wealthier people have better access to health care.
Males are diagnosed more often than females
Is ASD more common in males?

• Yes

• However, diagnostic measures may be less effective in identifying females with ASD

• Recent community screenings have found higher rates of ASD in females than were previously reported
Where do people with ASD live?

- Rates of ASD have not been calculated for most countries.

- However, wherever researchers have looked, they have found people with ASD.
There are people with ASD living in countries throughout the world.

True

False
Comprehension Check ✓

• There are people with ASD living in countries throughout the world.

   True

   False
Cultural factors may influence rates of diagnosis

- In some countries, parents may not want their children diagnosed with ASD due to stigma.
- However, increasing awareness about ASD helps to decrease stigma.
- Even in countries, such as the United States, where awareness of ASD is relatively high, lack of understanding creates stigma for families.
Often but not always observed in people with ASD:

- Difficulty reading emotions/body language
- Interest in rules
- Odd facial expressions, speech tone or wording
- High levels of honesty
- Very literal language
- Socially isolated
- Keeps talking when others aren’t interested
- Avoids touch/eye-contact
- Does not conform
Often but not always observed in people with ASD:

- Attention to detail
- Repetitive focus on the same topic or activity
- Excellent memory for facts and dates
- Reacts intensely to changes
- Laughs unexpectedly
- Unusual movements
- Difficulty planning
- Enhanced perception
- Systematic thinking
Comprehension Check √

• People with ASD often have enhanced perceptual skills.

  True

  False
Comprehension Check √

• People with ASD often have enhanced perceptual skills.

True

False
We all have some autistic traits
Gifted people and systematic thinkers like scientists tend to have more autistic traits.
ASD is diagnosed when traits limit everyday functioning and when enough traits are exhibited.
Intelligence varies among people with ASD just as it does among people in general.
What causes ASD?
What causes ASD?

• There is no single cause of ASD
• Multiple genes and environmental factors (like autoimmune issues, stressful events, and pollution) probably interact to cause ASD
Is ASD passed down from parents to their children?
Some types of ASD are passed from parents to child.
But many genes associated with ASD are new mutations in the child.
Myths about what causes ASD

• People used to think that cold, distant mothers caused ASDs

• This is false; nevertheless, parents may have some ASD traits like their children
Myths about what causes ASD

- Research suggesting that vaccines cause ASD has been discredited; there is no evidence that vaccines cause ASD.
Comprehension Check √

- Poor parenting causes ASD.
  
  True
  
  False
Comprehension Check √

• Poor parenting causes ASD.

  True

  False
Do people with ASD have less empathy than others?
Do people with ASD have less empathy than others?

First hand accounts of people with ASD:

“Since I can remember… I have been pierced and pained by the intensity of life.” Dawn Eddings Prince

“I’m also someone who cares deeply about the world, about inequality, injustice and am often the first person to help anyone who is lost, hurt, crying or in trouble.” Donna Williams

“I feel a lot inside only I cannot express my feelings as openly as a normal person can.” Cowhey
People with ASD may have less cognitive empathy but more affective empathy.

**Cognitive Empathy:**
Recognize others’ thoughts and feelings

**Affective Empathy:**
Share others’ feelings
Comprehension Check √

• People with ASD cannot experience empathy.

   True

   False
Comprehension Check ✓

- People with ASD cannot experience empathy.

True

False
Can the limitations of ASD be overcome?

- Intervention, particularly early intervention, can improve functioning.
- Interventions that combine behavioral and relationship-based approaches are particularly effective.
- Interventions should be tailored to individuals and should make social interaction rewarding by building from the individual’s interests.
Does ASD limit functioning across the lifespan?

- Adults with ASD face many challenges
- Educated adults with ASD are often unemployed or have menial jobs
- They often report intense loneliness and desire to make friends but difficulty knowing how to do so
What types of challenges do adults with ASD face?

First hand accounts of people with ASD:

“I know that every time I try to make a friend or be a part of a group, some autistic trait pops up and seems to sabotage my efforts, no matter how hard I try to hold it back or try to control it.” Wayne

“My sense of isolation and depression grew with time. I went deeper into my own world for some sense of reconciliation and self-comfort.” Lawson

“And there is no place where I can hide. The ‘normals’ are everywhere, watching my every move.” Fred
What types of challenges do adults with ASD face?

- They may struggle to try to appear normal using learned strategies to mask difficulties.
- College and jobs have fewer supports and more choices than environments experienced by youths.
- Adult relationships, such as romance, often involve reading subtle social cues.
- High risk for anxiety and depression.
What are effective ways to teach people with ASD?

Adapted from Temple Grandin (Professor with ASD) and Susan J. Moreno

1. Adapt to sensory difficulties:
   – Ask if the student learns better from visuals, text or speech or struggles with processing multiple types of information at once
   – Reduce sensory distractions (loud noises, clutter or fluorescent lights)
What are effective ways to teach people with ASD?

2. Use writing and visuals as tools:
   - Provide alternatives to lengthy verbal instructions. Written or picture instructions allow people to process information at their own pace.

3. Use focused interests as a tool:
   - Explain concepts by relating them to an individual’s intense interests.
What are effective ways to teach people with ASD?

4. Make teaching materials clear:
   – Use concise instructions
   – Provide visuals and hands-on activities
   – Explain non-literal language as needed
   – Provide examples of concepts across situations to encourage generalization
   – Break tasks down into smaller steps and monitor progress
What are effective ways to teach people with ASD?

5. Provide calm structure:
   - Provide clear rules you can go back to
   - Prepare students for upcoming changes
   - If a student becomes upset, respond calmly

6. Provide supports for social interaction:
   - Assign designated roles to ensure the student participates in group activities
   - Teaching peers how to support students with ASD is often more effective than teaching students with ASD directly
Comprehension Check √

• Increased use of visual aids may be an effective strategy to help students with ASD.

True

False
Comprehension Check  √

• Increased use of visual aids may be an effective strategy to help students with ASD.

True

False
Does everyone wish autism could be cured?
Does everyone wish autism could be cured?

- No: The neurodiversity movement views ASD as a minority identity that is an important part of human diversity like race or sexuality.
Views of Neurodiversity Movement

• Disability is caused by societal responses to certain types of people as much as by atypicalities within people

• People with ASD should advocate for respect for their unique processing styles
Views of Neurodiversity Movement

• People with ASD should play a role in research about ASD which should focus more on helping people live in meaningful, fulfilling and independent ways.

• Research should focus on helping people cope with the demands of everyday life and be happy rather than focusing on causes of ASD.
What does the future hold for people with ASD?

- Increasing numbers of people with ASD are attending college
- Young adults with ASD are seeking jobs and careers in diverse fields
- Workplaces are becoming better adapted to the needs of workers with ASD
- People with ASD and their families are playing a greater role in national research initiatives
Thank you for your attention!

• NOW: On to the post-test!