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Week 4 Essay Question

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Literary Review

Translation of Anxiety Treatment to Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Robert R. Selles and Eric A. Storch wrote a journal article titled *Translation of Anxiety Treatment to Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders* which explained different treatment options for the high levels of anxiety many youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face. This article provides the research field with an understanding of intervention plans for youth with ASD. The authors state that forty-two to eight-four percent of all individuals with ASD are also diagnosed with some form of anxiety disorder as well. The most commonly diagnosed anxiety disorder among people with ASD is specific phobia, followed by social phobia, OCD, and others. After explaining the prevalence, they continue the article by describing the effectiveness of different treatment options.

Selles and Storch examine Psychopharmacological Interventions, including Paroxetine, Sertraline, Fluoxetine and other drugs that have been studied in their relation to reducing the effects of anxiety among youth with ASD. Currently, none of the antidepressants that have been researched in relation to ASD and anxiety have been approved by the FDA, nor have they been proven in their success. Selles and Storch also outline different Psychotherapeutic Interventions by looking primarily at the inclusion of parents in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The family environment plays a vital role in the life of a youth with ASD, and the authors of this

article outline the importance of equipping the parents/primary caregivers of the children with ASD with proper intervention tools in order to help in reducing anxiety for their child.

Social Work Early Intervention for Young Children with Developmental Disabilities

D. Micael Malone, Patrick D. McKinsey, Bruce A. Thyer, and Elizabeth Stracka wrote the journal article titled *Social Work Early Intervention for Young Children with Developmental Disabilities*, which outlined early intervention techniques and the importance of therapeutic intervention. Malone et. al defines early intervention as providing services to a young child with the goal of enhancing the child's development and equipping the family to effectively manage the special needs of the child, while minimizing the potential for developmental delay.

Malone et. al spends a portion of this article focusing on the interactions between the intervention therapy provided to an individual child (for example, anxiety-coping techniques,) and family factors (the support and resources surrounding the family system). The authors then continue to provide a framework of topics to be covered in social work early intervention. Some of these topics include home visits, which assess the living condition of the child and the parent-child interactions, the services provided to the family system, assistance in planning for transition, as well as an evaluation of community resources and support in which the family can rely on.

Early Intervention and Autism: The Impact of Positivism and the Call for Change

Ruth Glynne-Owen, from the School of Education in the University of Edinburgh, wrote *Early Intervention and Autism: The Impact of Positivism and the Call for Change* with the intent

to provide qualitative research to the field of early intervention. In her article, Gynne-Owen provides readers with a challenge to reevaluate the intentions behind early intervention. She questions mainstreaming, a term used in education meaning the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in classroom settings with children without disability. Should the goal of early intervention therapy be to prepare children for a mainstream classroom setting? Or should the intention, instead, be to empower children from a young age and to allow them to creatively and uniquely be themselves?

This article challenges the societal norms of early intervention in a powerful, thought-provoking way. The questions asked the data provided cause social workers in this field to reevaluate their intentions of the therapy provided to their clients. It also could pave the way for many social workers to rework their therapy techniques in order to better suit children with ASD.

Research Problem

It is clear that anxiety and ASD are strongly related to one another. Despite the high rates of anxiety within the autistic population, there seems to be little to no effective intervention methods to help youth with autism cope with this anxiety. Previous research has proven that psychopharmacological and psychotherapeutic have not been fully effective in adequately lowering levels of anxiety and therefore, it is time to reevaluate intervention techniques and strategies in order to better counsel the autistic community.

Research Question (or Hypothesis)

The hypothesis is that early intervention will lower the levels of anxiety among youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In this research experiment, infants (below the age of three) will be provided early intervention therapy involving anxiety-coping mechanisms. The therapy provided to these infants will be considered the independent variable (IV). These same children will be tested later on in life, at the age of ten, to test their anxiety levels at this stage of life. The Dependent Variable (DV) is the anxiety level test subjects later on in life. It is expected that the effect of early intervention therapy will result in lower levels of anxiety in the individuals tested than the national average rates of anxiety for people with ASD.

References

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