



Professional Background




kids Solutions

Finding Every Child's Potential



Defining Autism

Developmental Disability

Range of Severity

Severe Autistic Disorder

Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not

Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

Asperger's Syndrome


Overview of Today

#1 Issue of Diagnosis

#2 Research in Male and Female ASD Brains

#3 Interventions and Supports

#4 Special Topics



Defining Autism (cont'd)

Three core symptoms:

- Qualitative impairments in social interactions
- Qualitative impairments in communications
- Repetitive & stereotyped patterns of behaviour

-Why is Diagnosis Important?

*Having a diagnosis is the starting point in providing appropriate support for girls and women in the spectrum.


*A timely diagnosis can avoid many of the difficulties women and girls with an autism spectrum disorder experience throughout their lives.

-Girls are Often MISSED

*-Tony Attwood research shows ratio of ASD in males and females is 1:4 BUT referral for diagnosis is 1:10!

-According to American Association of University Women boys are only 4% more likely then girls to have a disability BUT they account for approximately 70% of all special education placements and resources.

-Why do you think girls are missed?



-Reasons for Low Referral Rate

*Girls with autism are less likely to display behaviours of concern or aggressive behaviours (perhaps not until puberty)

*Girls show lower rates of language delay problems.

-Reasons for Low Referral Rate

- More likely to try and mask the behavior of peers to fit in and mask social challenges
- Likely to seek peer interaction

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

*

- May only have one close friend at a time, or have a mother hen figure around them to help them fit in.
- May be viewed as sweet, innocent or naïve, or a know it all and also may seem shy, quiet or solitary.
- Likely to love animals or young children - often girls with autism are obsessed with horses or cats

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

- Are often excellent readers and write complicated stories.
- Often interested in art, music, literature and are very creative.
- May have poor handwriting and math's skills and may struggle with colouring and drawing in a traditional way.
- More likely to play with dolls as friends or have intense imaginary friendships or immerse themselves in fantasy worlds.

- More likely to be diagnosed later in life often when a secondary mood disorder or associated mental illness develops.
- Are more likely to be in abusive relationships or taken advantage of financially, physically, sexually or emotionally.
- More likely to suffer anxiety and depression.

-Symptoms of ASD in Women

- Have particular intense obsessive interests or collections/hobbies.
- May be very well educated and enjoy studying.
- Have great difficulty with school but not seek support from teachers as not wanting to displease them or draw attention.
- They may have barely passing grades and suffer teasing bullying or being ousted from social context.

-Symptoms of ASD in Women

- *Immune to peer pressure including fashion and common interests
- *Unaware / Uninterested in how others see them
- *Socially Naïve
- *Fantasy Worlds
- *Interests in animals and fiction (princesses, unicorns)
- *Does poorly in group activities / projects as wants to be in control of it all

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

- *Not living up academically to documented IQ scores
- *Poor fine motor skills
- *NVLD – Non Verbal Learning Disorder
- Difficulty with Math, visual cues, handwriting

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

- May not follow fashion or trends unless it relates to their intense topic of interest.
- Tend to dress comfortably due to sensory concerns and have a plain "wash n wear" hairstyle.
- Less likely to wear makeup, deodorant or perfume as they find it very irritating.
- Less likely to care what others think of them

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

- *Odd Comments
- *See world uniquely – ie Life Cycle of a Donut
- *Sidelines by peers
- *Do not pick up on or understand minor bullying
- *Lack reciprocity in social play
- *Very controlling and Directive with Peers
- *Sensory Sensitivities *Especially loud and crowds
- *Word Reading vs Comprehension unbalanced

-ASD Symptoms in Girls to Watch for

-Symptoms of ASD in Women

- May have issues with employment, many career paths or job changes.
- Tend to be happiest in familiar environments, rarely socialise and have few friends or one constant friend.
- If in a relationship may take it very seriously or obsessively
- May engage in self-harm to escape sensory overload or emotional rejection.
- May have pets or prefer the company of animals

-New DSM-V Diagnostic Criteria & Categories

*Separate diagnostic categories of Autism, PDD-NOS, and Asperger's Removed

*1 Single Autism Spectrum Disorder Category

*Pros and Cons

DSM-V

*Please turn to handout resource

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-Specified Severity

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Requires support in most environments. Without support, it is difficult to maintain functional skills in most environments. Communication is limited to simple words or phrases. Social interaction is limited to simple, reciprocal interactions.	Requires support in most environments. Without support, it is difficult to maintain functional skills in most environments. Communication is limited to simple words or phrases. Social interaction is limited to simple, reciprocal interactions.	Requires support in most environments. Without support, it is difficult to maintain functional skills in most environments. Communication is limited to simple words or phrases. Social interaction is limited to simple, reciprocal interactions.

What do YOU think about the new DSM-V?

Morning BREAK

-So HOW is ASD Currently Assessed or Screened for?

*Most Common ASD Screening & Assessment Tools:

- The CHAT
- CAST (Childhood Autism Spectrum Test)
- The Australian Scale for Asperger's Syndrome
- ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale)

-The CHAT

*Designed for use by Physicians during well baby check-ups at 1-2 years of age

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-The Cast

*A free screening rating scale designed for parents or teachers to complete

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-RESEARCH by Gould & Smith 2011

Title: Missed Diagnosis or Missed Diagnosed? Girls and Women on the Autism Spectrum

Authors: Gould, Judith; Ashton-Smith, Jacqui

Source: Good Autism Practice, Volume 12, Number 1, May 2011, pp. 34-41(8)

-Gould and Smith Findings

-There is a need to consider the extent to which females on the autism spectrum present differently from males and to explore whether they have different needs.

-This would then have implications for the systems, instruments and processes used for diagnosis and for the types of interventions offered.

-Gould and Smith Findings – cont'd

-Current international diagnostic criteria do not give examples of the types of difficulties experienced by girls and women.

- In order to recognise the different behavioural manifestations, it is important to take a much wider perspective regarding the social, communication and imagination dimensions in addition to the special interests and rigidity of behaviour.

-Gould and Smith Findings – cont'd

Suggestions are made on how diagnostic questions might be altered to identify some females on the autism spectrum who might otherwise be missed.

-Difference in how Girls Present that must be taken in account in diagnosing - 1

-Girls are more able to follow social actions by children and copy them, perhaps masking the symptoms of Asperger syndrome (Attwood, 2007).

-Girls are often more aware of and feel a need to interact socially. They are involved in social play, but are often led by their peers rather than initiating social contact. Girls are more socially inclined and many have one special

-Difference in how Girls Present that must be taken in account in diagnosing - 2

-In our society, girls are expected to be social in their communication. Girls on the spectrum do not 'do social chit chat' or make 'meaningless' comments in order to facilitate social communication. The idea of a social hierarchy and how one communicates with people of different status can be problematic and get girls into trouble with teachers.

-Difference in how Girls Present that must be taken in account in diagnosing - 3



-Evidence suggests that girls have better imagination and more pretend play (Knickmeyer et al, 2008). Many have a very rich and elaborate fantasy world with imaginary friends. Girls escape into fiction, and some live in another world with, for example, fairies and witches.

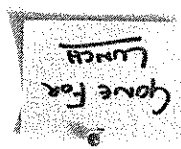
-Difference in how Girls Present that must be taken in account in diagnosing - 4

-The interests of girls in the spectrum are very often similar to those of other girls – animals, horses, classical literature – and therefore are not seen as unusual. It is not the special interests that differentiate them from their peers but it is the quality and intensity of these interests. Many obsessively watch soap operas and have an intense interest in celebrities

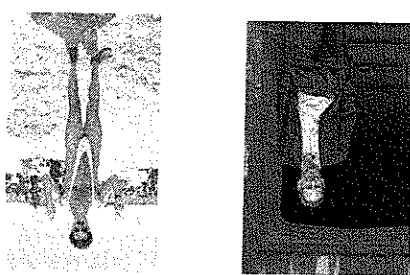
-Re-Examining ASD Assessment Tools

*As a group examine the Australian Scale for Asperger's Syndrome and note what you would keep or change if you were creating "The Australian Scale for Asperger's Syndrome IN GIRLS"



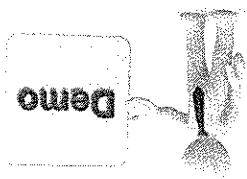
-LUNCH BREAK




-Simon Baron Cohen RESEARCH

-What a good Assessment should include:

- Asking the right questions
- Taking a DETAILED developmental history
- Gathering information about the person in different settings
- Using standardized measures or numerous types: self report, parental report, teacher report, clinician observations, clinician standardized assessment



-Assessment Report EXAMPLE



*Let's review the ADOS and discuss how well suited it is for GIRLS

The ADOS

-The Road to Diagnosis

- #1 Noticing Signs of Concern
- #2 Discussing Concerns with Family Doctor OR Teachers
- #3 Referral for Assessment
- Pediatrician
- Family Doc
- School Psycho-Educational Assessment
- Regional Child Development Clinic
- Psychologist in Private Practice

-Research Findings

(2) Researchers are hoping a greater understanding of autism in both sexes will improve the chance of finding treatments. -Masculinisation may implicate physiological mechanisms that drive sexual dimorphism, such as prenatal sex hormones and sex-linked genetic mechanisms.'

-INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS

-Overview of Areas of Need
-School Supports
-Parental Supports
-Community Supports

Biological sex affects the neurobiology of autism – VIDEO

Simon Baron Cohen Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm5D0CtFp4>

(1) - Revealed 'neuroanatomical masculinisation' in brains of autistic girls

"females with autism show neuroanatomical 'masculinization', female brains which exhibit autism traits are similar to sections of a typical male brain. (2) Researchers are hoping a greater understanding of autism in both sexes will improve the chance of finding treatments.


-Research Findings

Biological sex affects the neurobiology of autism

This study seeks to answer two questions about how autism is modulated by biological sex at the level of the brain:
(i) is the neuroanatomy of autism different in males and females?
(ii) does the neuroanatomy of autism fit predictions from the 'extreme male brain' theory of autism, in males and/or in females?


Biological sex affects the neurobiology of autism – WEB Links

<http://brain.oxfordjournals.org/content/136/9/2799.short>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2388624/Girls-autistic-masculine-brains-scientists-claim.html#ixzz2Fbxy00f>




-IEP's

-Some IEP Examples: Pre-teaching, less homework, less written output, extra testing time, use interests to teach




-IPRC's

*Individual Placement Review Committee
 -Challenges & Issues Faced
 -Integrated vs Separate
 School board Differences
 *YRDSB vs YRSDSB
 -Space Availability




-School Issues

-IEP's & IPRC's
 -Advocating for Resources
 -Social Supports
 -SSIS
 -Attwoods 4 Areas
 -Queen Bees




-IEP's

*Individualized Education Plan
 -Accommodations vs Modifications
 * "accommodation" describes alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content & complete assigned tasks.
 accommodations do not alter what is being taught
 The term "modification" may be used to describe a change in the curriculum.



-Many Areas of Need

- Puberty, hygiene and grooming
- Menstruation and PMS
- Sexuality development
- Personal safety
- Self-perception and confidence
- Media, fashion and "fitting in"
- Mental health including eating disorders, anxiety and self-harm



-Many Areas of Need - 2

- Coping with the culture of gender
- Support with school or study
- Support with managing relationships, money and managing a family
- Specific support with pregnancy, birth, bonding with the baby and postnatal depression.

ONGOING School Process

-Parents need to be proactive
-Designate Communication System
-Bringing in the "expert" can help in advocacy
-Find an advocate (ex – Kerry's place case manager)

-SOCIAL SUPPORTS @ SCHOOL

-Girls mature socially more rapidly than boys
and use more sophisticated verbal and non
verbal communication and create more complex
social hierarchies and cliques
-PEER PROGRAMMING CAN HELP
-On lower grades can involve the entire class in
group instruction
-In middle school can be more focused on
specific core network of supportive peers

-Gould & Smith - 2011

* There needs to be a focus on the "hidden
curriculum" which directly teaches the skills that
typically-developing girls learn indirectly and
intuitively, such as the unwritten rules of girls'
social interactions.
* Also need to address self-image, self-esteem
and confidence building. Gender identity is a big
issue for girls, as is emotional wellbeing and
fostering mental health.

-SSIS

-Review SSIS – Social Skills Intervention System




4 Essential Areas to Know In Order To Fit In
1. Creating Appeal and Image
2. Understanding Where to Fit In
3. Meeting Social Expectation
4. Overcoming Bullying and Mean Girls

-Tips for Fitting In At School – By Attwood

-Creating Appeal


- There is something to like about everyone but
some are better at projecting their likeable
traits in social situations
*Positive Friendship Cues = positive, friendly,
kind, moderate actions, go with the flow, follow
conversation, not overbearing
*Negative Cues = Clinginess, hyperactive,
insults, overly opinionated, controlling



-IMAGE

-How you are ranked & how to improve your Ranking

-Pros and Cons of Fitting in versus Staying more unique




-Meeting Social Expectations

-How to show interest in a friend

-How to gage specific situations

-What girls talk about




-Understanding Where to Fit In

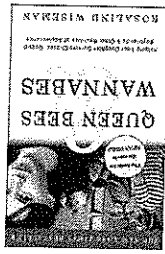
- Social Structures & Hierarchies

-Levels of Relationships


*Close Friends vs Classmates



-Overcoming Mean Girls




See Book "Queen Bees and Wannabes" by Wiseman



- Parenting Supports

#1 Asperger's in Pink Tips:

- Be a Pointer
- A cup is better than a bucket!
- Self care & Stamina are Important



- Parenting Supports

#2 Telling Friends & Family

- Who do you tell and how?
- Disbelief
- Different Treatment

Skills should be taught EARLY
 Things to consider:
 -Practical use of period supplies
 -Discretion at school and in public
 -What to do if supply emergency
 -How to handle pain and emotionality

Menstruation

Confront mean girl by naming bullying behavior
 Ask teacher for help
 Learn come-backs, roleplay and teach assertive responses
 Learn to ignore
 Do not show a reaction
 Identify a safe person or place in the school
 Identify a positive and accepting peer group
 and foster that relationship

Bullying – Advise by Wiseman



Afternoon BREAK

-Menstruation
 -Bullying
 -Dating
 -College
 -Self Advocacy
 -Work
 -Anxiety

Special Issues

#3Behavioral Strategies
 -VISUALS & STRUCTURE
 -FAIR AND FIRM
 -SUPPORTED PLAY DATES
 -RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES
 -SPECIALIZED VS INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

- Parenting Supports

-Social Skills Groups
 -UCLA PEERS Program
 -Kerry's Place
 -Online forums and Websites
 -Anxiety Groups
 -Individualized Therapy

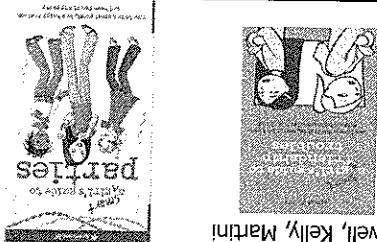
- Community Supports

Bullying – Advise by Wiseman

Parent can call mean girl's parents
Parent can talk to teacher
Parent can talk to administrator
Add bullying coping skills to IEP
Request a school or class wide bullying program

Bullying Book

A smart girls guide to friendship troubles – By
Crisswell, Kelly, Martini



Dating

-Telling a 'friend' from a 'boyfriend'
-boyfriends spend time with you alone, share
hobbies and interests, call you at home, text
you, add you to their facebook, as a girlfriend,
commitment you, pursue closer physical contact

Date Coaching

Coaching on dating skill – do not assume these
are known!
-DISCUSS: topics to discuss, potential date
activities, giving appropriate compliments,
Levels of Appropriate Touching, Safety
Awareness
-ROLEPLAY: voice tone, nonverbal skills,
physical proximity, eye contact, drawing
boundaries

BE AWARE & SMART

NOTE: Safety Awareness – heightened risk for
sexual assault and date rape (Debbaut 2003)
*Safety Plans, Safety Signals, Diffusing Anger,
Emergency Contact #'s, Cell, Warning Signs of
an Abusive Relationship

COLLEGE

(1) Plan early – many skills needed to be taught
to succeed in college
*SKILLS = Self Determination, IDing
their needs, Self Advocacy
(2) Pick the Right School
(3) Review Coursework & Schedule
*Sensory needs, routine needs, learning
styles
(4) Provide Documentation Upfront to Receive
Support Services
(5) Teach \$ and Time Management

-SPECIAL INTERESTS
 "I cannot emphasize enough the importance of finding and then developing a talent area in children with ASD that can be turned into a viable profession such as drafting, commercial art, cabinet making, fixing cars, or computer programming. These efforts provide an opportunity for a person to have an individually satisfying career" - Temple Grandin

@ WORK 1

Path to a Job (from Girls Under the Umbrella by Ernsperger)
 #1 Brainstorm Areas of Interest
 #2 Seek out Volunteer Work
 #3 ID possible Job Coaches and Mentors
 #4 Create a checklist for Getting Along on the Job
 ie - On time, personal hygiene, appropriate clothing, smiles and greets coworkers, talks about appropriate subjects, maintains personal space, stays organized, on task, completes work

@ WORK 2

Step #1 Acquire Knowledge About Their Own Disability
 -"invisible" disability means often misunderstood
 -Must understand self and be able to explain strengths and weaknesses

SELF ADVOCACY - 1

Step #2 Discuss Disclosure Issues
 Who to tell and when
 Create Lists
 Role Play Disclosure

SELF ADVOCACY - 2

SELF Determination
 -Places decision making and control in the hands of the young woman with ASD.
 -Encourages active problem solving and personal responsibility

SELF DETERMINATION

Steps to Self Determination:
 Understand their value as a person
 Understand the wide variety of future Opportunities
 Research shows: Students empowered with self determination
 Have more successful post-school outcomes (Hall, 2000)
 Have higher rates of employment and earn a higher wage post grad (Test, 1997)

SELF DETERMINATION - 2

ANXIETY

* A psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components

* Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor. It may help an individual to deal with a demanding situation by prompting them to cope with it. However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder.

Defining Anxiety



@ WORK Pamphlet

Harder (2010) has produced a booklet called 'Illustrated glimpses of Aspergers for Friends and Colleagues';

-This gives a valuable insight into the difficulties women on the autism spectrum experience at work and provides explanations to colleagues of the different ways in which such women perceive the world.

@ WORK 3

#5 Know what employers are looking for in an employee:

-On time, honest, teamwork, interpersonal skills, motivation & initiative, work ethic, analytical skills, flexibility, computer skills, time management, organized


ASD Women @ WORK

-Society has expectations of both men and women, but many women on the autism spectrum believe that these expectations are greater for women.

-At work, women experience 'a glass ceiling that is double glazed' according to the authors. Women experience the same difficulties as other women, plus the difficulties experienced by women on the autism spectrum.

-These women often go into professions that are traditionally male-orientated.

Anxiety at Different Ages



Young Children often experience anxiety more in the form of physical symptoms.

Stomach Aches are VERY common!

Types of Anxiety Disorders

There are several recognized types of anxiety disorders, including:

- Panic disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobias
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder

When is Anxiety Good?



When is Anxiety Good?

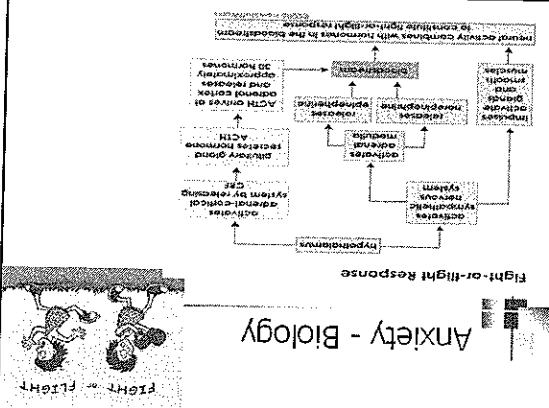


When is Anxiety Good?



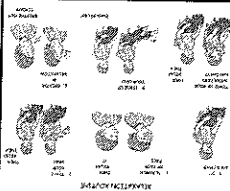
Anxiety - Biology

Fight-or-flight Response




Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Relaxation Tools for Home and School
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Social Stories
- Orlick CDs
- Taming Your Dragons




Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Relaxation Tools for Home and School
- Visualization
- Orlick CD
- Taming Your Dragons




Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Relaxation Tools for Home and School
- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Visualization
- Mindfulness Meditation



Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Relaxation Tools for Home and School
- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Smell the strawberry and blow the candle
- Terry Orlick CDs
- Taming Your Dragons by Belknap



Diagnosing Anxiety

- Clinical Psychologist
- Guardian Interview
- Child Interview
- Teacher Interview
- Standardized questionnaires (MASC example)
- Developmental Pediatrician
- Guardian Interview
- Child Interview
- Sometimes standardized questionnaires

Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Relaxation Tools for Home and School
- Anxiety and Coping Tools for Home
- Professional Intervention Services

THOUGHTS

BEHAVIORS EMOTIONS

CBT

Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- 1:1 with a Psychologist
- Group Therapy

Cognitive-behavioral Approach for Adolescents

1) Re-socialization or socialization	2) Problem solving
3) Change "cognitive distortions" & beliefs of self & the world	4) Relaxation

Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Anxiety and Coping Tools for Home
- The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook For Kids - Shapiro
- I Bet I Won't Fret - Sisemore
- Anxiety Workbook for Teens - Schab

Supporting Children with Anxiety

- Professional Intervention Services
- How do you know when they are needed?
- Who should you see?
 - Psychologist for Diagnosis & Therapy
 - Self Refer
 - Pediatrician or Psychiatrist for Medication
- Referral through family doctor