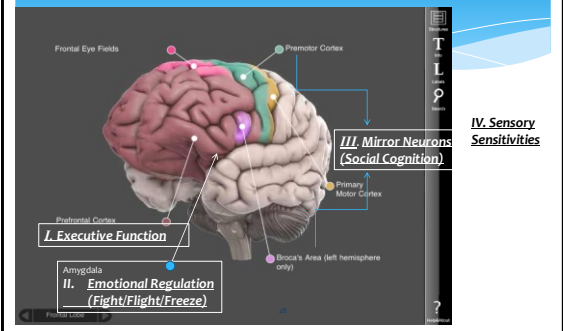


COPING

27

The Brain



I. Executive Function - COPING

Start **EARLY** with instilling school and self-care habits

- * Homework when do you do it, how to get it turned in
- * Books to be remembered
- * Planner contains all items of homework
- * Incorporate microwave, washing machine, clothes storage

When talking about making decisions, encourage understanding of problem solving process.

* We do homework first. Why?

29

I. Executive Function - COPING

- * Use visual reminders / diagrams with concrete language to provide methods.
Pinterest can provide some good education / organization concepts.
- * Use rewards that are significant for that child (special interests are a good motivator) to get habits into place.

30

I. Executive Function - COPING

- * Try to put the coping aids (folders, diagrams, bins, etc.) as **CLOSE AS POSSIBLE** to the place it will be needed.
- * Devise the process, and show via hand-over-hand, or via diagram, how to follow it.
 - * Don't just tell
 - * Don't expect learning by watching your hands do it

31

I. Executive Function - COPING

- * Introduce technology to aid executive function as early as possible:
 - * Use 12x12 Time Timer to improve sense of passage of time
 - * Use phone to create reminders
 - * Use phone to encourage reading of email

32

I. Executive Function - COPING

- * MOTIVATION –
 - * An Executive Function
 - * As appropriate allow/encourage special interest to lead to careers
 - * “Different ... Not Less” – edited by Temple Grandin
- * CONSIDER – Not amplifying the ‘he is so smart’ as a way of giving praise.

33

I. Executive Function - COPING

- * Sometimes medication can help – sometimes it can make it worse
 - * Oversensitive Amygdala (see Emotional Regulation) can react badly to stimulant medications
 - * Dosages should be started smaller than for typically developing peer
 - * Best to be working with a child psychiatrist that is familiar with ASDs.

34

II. Emotional Regulation - COPING

- * Sometimes medication can help – but sometimes can't be tolerated
- * Working to decrease over-stimulation using Sensory Integration techniques
- * Explicit instruction on WHY to regulate – on what other's see and think in response, and why this is important.

35

II. Emotional Regulation - COPING

- * Cognitive Behavioral Therapy can help – but with focus on using concrete ways of reinforcing ideas that are suited to that individual
 - * Art
 - * Music?
 - * Explicit phrases seen repetitively

36

II. Emotional Regulation - COPING

- * AS APPROPRIATE Slowly de-sensitize to things that are emotionally difficult or of obsessive focus
- * FOR EXAMPLE if change in schedule is tough, work on very small changes
 - * Prepare child for the possibility of change repetitively over time by talking about it after the fact, and well after a melt-down
 - * Explain why changes happen in concrete terms
 - * Help them know what to say to themselves (have them repeat something), and what they can do to soothe themselves (hug a stuffy, use a weighted blanket, look at a happy picture of a pet) while they are doing so
 - * Tell them (we're leaving at 4:50, not 4:45 today)
 - * Explain why
 - * Remind them of their coping techniques

37

III. Social Cognition - COPING

- * Tim Kowalski, a speech and language pathologist specializing in Asperger's Syndrome, gives an understandable and comprehensive breakdown of social skills.
- * Social Skills are taught to help with Social Cognition, but they do not replace mirror neuron activation

38

Social Cognition - COPING

- * The basic parts of speech:
 - * Phonology,
 - * Semantics (vocabulary),
 - * Syntax (grammar)
- * Pragmatics (use and function of language)
 - * 'Zero Order Skills' describe the innate patterns of behavior that, if missing or handled inappropriately, are immediately noticeable.

Richard Lavoie's "It's So Much Work to be Your Friend: Helping the Child with Learning Disabilities Find Social Success"

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Social Pragmatics

- * In 'Social-Pragmatic Success' Kowalski comments
 - * "One cannot simply point at a specific feature as the defining characteristic of social communication success or failure. Rather it is the sum of all the parts that creates the gestalt, and it is the gestalt that is of vital importance."

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AND YET...

- * Standardized instruments usually do not capture the pragmatic deficits of those with Aspergers / HFA.
- * Speech Pathologists do not receive effective training to assess and treat difficulties with pragmatics
 - * (although some are developing this skill both in public schools and private practice)

41

SO...

- * Result?
 - * Our children are often not found eligible for services
- * Outcome?
 - * Difficulty with keeping a job, maintaining relationships.

42

Defining social skills

SOCIAL SKILLS NEED TO BE TAUGHT. THIS LIST OF 'DEFINITIONS' gives a GOOD guide for what needs to be taught.

1. Emotions:
 - * Recognizing emotional states in self & others
 - * Expressing emotional state
 - * Using self-control

adapted from www.socialpragmatics.com

43

In other words...

- * If you run into me in the hall, did you do it on purpose?
- * How do you feel about running in to me?
- * How do I feel about you running in to me?
- * What should I do with that feeling?
- * What should I say (if anything) to the person who ran into me?

44

Social Cognition - COPING

- * Tony Atwood's 'Cognitive Affective Training'
- * Repetitively use scales to assess current internal state.
- * IN THE MOMENT, or via memory,
 - * Lead child to consider how their bodies muscles feel
 - * Belly
 - * Neck
- * And connect this feeling to a word or an image for an emotional state
- * Then connect this to skill to regulate emotion (self-calming – using whatever techniques are helpful)

45

Defining social skills

2. Relationship dynamics
 - * Joining a group / being left out of a group
 - * Difference between requests and demands
 - * Disagreeing
 - * Apologizing
 - * Fitting in
 - * Caring and sharing

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In other words...

- * If I want to play video games with Alex, how do I ask?
- * What if Alex says no?
- * What if Alex says yes?
 - * How do I feel?
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- * If we're playing video games, how do I blend in with everyone else?
- * What if the group asks me to play video games but I don't want to?
- * What if I'm the best video game player there?
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Defining social skills

3. Communication's 'Hidden' components
 - * Body language
 - * Vocal tone
 - * Perspective taking
4. Conversation
 - * Initiating
 - * Maintaining
 - * Terminating
 - * Responsibilities of speaker vs. listener

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- * How did that girl say 'sure'?
 - * Did she mean 'Cool!' (head up, eyes sparkling, tone is high)
 - * Or did she mean 'whatever – go away'. (turns away and rolls eyes as saying it, to re-engage with her friend next to her)
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- * Let's say I see that girl again, how do I start talking to her? What should I say if she talks back? What stuff should I NOT talk about? How loud should I talk? Where should I look? When should I stop talking? How can I figure out when she is done talking?

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Social Cognition - COPING

- * Begin with foundation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- * For students with average or higher cognitive abilities – ABA as a primary treatment modality is not as effective.
- * But CBT is only part of the story

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General social skills programs miss the mark

Tim Kowalski points out that research has shown:

- * "...outcomes for social skills training are largely ineffective due to *minimal generalization* into functional daily use. Practice does NOT make perfect. The group leader must be aware of the inherent difficulties in generalization or functional gains will remain elusive." (italics are mine)

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SO – first we need to add...

- * Key concepts that allow the professional to interpret how material is received, and the difficulties with putting it into practice in real-life social situations.

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Key Concepts

- * Recognize that faces in motion don't make sense
 - * Student may have no difficulty with static face
- * Difficulties with central coherence – recognizing what details are important vs. those that are not.
- * Theory of mind / taking perspective must be taught.

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Key Concepts (cont)

- * Ability to understand another's perspective is needed to assess intent.
- * Anxiety drives many inappropriate behaviors.
 - * Individual often does not sense own emotional state.
- * Need to use concrete language - be specific.
 - * When specifying 'it', 'this' or 'that' don't assume you are understood.

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Key Concepts (cont)

- * "Hidden Curriculum" (Brenda Smith-Myles, PhD)
- * Intervention is needed 'in the moment' & repetitively.
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- * Integration with 'Neuro-Typical' peers
 - * Liane Holliday's 'Pretending to Be Normal'
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Integrated Play Group Research

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IV: Sensory Sensitivity - COPING

- * Use individually chosen techniques like weighted blankets, jumping on trampoline, bouncing on yoga ball, spinning to help soothe when your child is over-stimulated.
 - * Discuss with an Occupational Therapist
- * Help your child develop awareness of how these techniques can help him/her

84

IV: Sensory Sensitivity - COPING

- * Help your child recognize the situations for which he/she might need to prepare for overstimulation, and consider using sensory integration techniques before hand to reduce overall arousal level.
- * Regulate the amount of time spent in a helpful activity to reduce over-use and hyper-focus.

85