

Anxiety & Obsessive Behaviors in people with I/DD

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Overview

- **Definitions**
 - **Anxiety**
 - **Obsession**
 - **Behavior**
- **Prevalence of anxiety disorders**
- **Effective analysis of anxiety**
- **Treatment options**

Definitions

- **ANXIETY**
 - Increased worry & concern
 - Perceived lack of safety
 - Autonomic arousal
- **OBSESSION**
 - Repetitive thoughts
 - Ego-dystonic; unwanted
 - Not enhancing function
- **BEHAVIOR**
 - Observable actions that an animal/person makes

Prevalence

- **Most common disorder**
- **Reports from 17-95% of individuals with I/DD**
- **Rate increased with history of untreated, unrecognized trauma**
- **Spectrum**
 - **Normal \leftrightarrow Psychopathological**
 - Generalized Anxiety; phobias; panic disorder
 - PTSD
 - OCD
 - Specific habits: trichotillomania, pica...

Detecting Anxiety

- **Is there something new (or scary) going on?**
- **Does the person show physiologic signs and symptoms?**
 - What is their state of arousal?
- **Evidenced in what is spoken about and what is specifically not said.**
- **Excess worry may preoccupy all attention.**
 - Not everyone shares the same worries.

Perceiving obsessive behavior

- **Decoding compulsions**
 - Number of repetitions; feel right
- **Repetition reflecting mental cues**
 - Preoccupied
 - +/- vocalizations
 - Mannerisms
 - Behavior may not be fixed; can be interrupted
- **Increase with increasing stress or emotional pressure**
- **May not respond to reassurance**

Therapeutic Strategies

- **Reassurance**
 - Listen; take concerns for real
- **Environmental change**
 - Assure safety; verify threat
 - Engage in participation
- **Medications**
 - SSRI, SNRI, TCA
 - BZD, alpha-blocker, beta-blocker
 - AED, mood stabilizer, antipsychotic...
- **Psychotherapy**

Therapeutic Strategies

- **Relaxation**
 - **Direct touch:** massage, hot-tub
 - **Self-directed:** auto-hypnosis, meditation
- **Exercise**
 - **Movement:**
 - Increase aerobic expenditure
 - Kinesthetic feedback
 - **Outdoor activity; solo or group**
- **Sleep restoration**
 - **Improve sleep quality, duration**
 - **Assure regular hours (circadian rhythm)**

Case discussions...

- **A woman like her mother**
 - **IMI**
- **A man who wouldn't go out**
 - **Luvox**
- **...**