



12th ANNUAL AUTISM
CONFERENCE 2022

THEME: CREATING A COMMUNITY OF

AWE-TISM
Advocates



Topic:

SEEKING AND PRACTICING EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPIES

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Session Objectives

- At the end of this session, I want to ensure:
- That I describe what evidence-based therapies/interventions mean
- That families feel empowered to demand for value for their money
- That we take steps to prevent professional malpractice and the abuse of people living with developmental disabilities



Session Objectives

- That we encourage professionals on all levels to continue to maintain their licenses and certifications, practice within their area of specialty, obtain mentorship and/or supervision where required and seek the appropriate training required to practice in their chosen professions
- That we Call on local Institutions of higher learning to help in developing curriculum and pathways to achieving relevant education



What is an evidence-based therapy (EBT)?

- EBT is a set of treatments or practices that are peer reviewed and derived from replicated and evaluated research showing empirical evidence of safety and effectiveness.
- Peer reviewed – a community of similarly trained professionals evaluating the truthfulness and effectiveness of a treatment or practice



What is an evidence-based therapy (EBT)?

- Based on research – a controlled research that is free of researcher bias and demonstrates the effect of a treatment on the target condition
- Empirical evidence of effectiveness – the effect of the treatment or practice on the target condition must demonstrated to be true and significant
- Replicated – other professionals need to repeat the research and demonstrate that earlier research results are upheld and/or advanced



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment

- Autism is a neurological disorder that impacts specific areas of functioning in the lives of people who live with the condition.
- Areas impacted include social communication and interaction as well as limited and repeated behaviors and interests.
- These impairments create deficits in communication, self regulation, social interaction and behavior



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment

Most professionals (peers) agree on the interventions that work best in managing the symptoms of Autism. The professionals include:

- Speech and language therapy – Speech therapist
- Psychology – Clinical/Educational Psychologist
- Behavior Therapy - Behavior Analyst
- Occupational therapy – Occupational therapist
- Pharmacological therapy – Doctor (Psychiatrist, Paediatrician, etc.)
- Others



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Speech Therapist

- The SLP; also called Speech Therapist is a speech expert that completes assessment, diagnosis and treatment of speech disorders, communication and swallowing problems.
- To qualify as a Speech Therapist, the person must possess a relevant Master's degree in Audiology and Speech Pathology and be an inducted member of the Speech Pathology and Audiology of Nigeria



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Speech Therapist

- Can practice within a government institution or operate a private practice
- Credentials are renewed annually with continuing education
- Anyone without these qualifications should only be a Speech Therapy Assistant and must be supervised by a fully qualified Therapist wherever they practice



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Behavior Analyst

- The Behavior Analyst (BA) is an expert that completes assessment and treatment of behaviors. The BA can help to increase/improve the occurrence of target behaviors or help to reduce the frequency or intensity of challenging behaviors. BA also help to teach novel behaviors
- To qualify as a BA and practice independently, the person must possess a relevant Master's degree and be a member of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) in good standing.
- The Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis and International Behavior Analyst credential are alternatives more readily available to professionals in Africa.
- Credentials are renewed every 2 years with continuing education



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Behavior Analyst

◦ Those who do not possess either of these qualifications should not hold themselves out as Behavior Analysts. They may be Behavior Therapist Assistant (BTA) practicing under a Behavior Analyst.

For more information, please visit www.bacb.com or www.qababoard.com



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Occupational Therapist

- Occupational therapy practitioners are among the professionals who provide services to children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), embracing both leadership and supportive roles in service delivery.
- The primary goal is to enable clients participate in activities of daily living
- Roles include sensory integration and self regulation therapies, adaptive devices/aids for learning, training in fine and gross motor skills and development of independent living skills amongst others



Consider EBTs in Autism treatment – Occupational Therapist

- Practitioners must possess relevant degrees, pass a certification exam and be a member of the Medical board of rehabilitation therapists
- Annual renewal and continuing education required
- Those without these credentials are assistant who should practice under a supervisor.



Let us consider EBTs in Autism treatment - Psychiatrist

- The Psychiatrist is a medical doctor with advanced education and specialization in mental health, emotional and behavioral conditions
- The Psychiatrist does NOT only treat 'mental cases'. They take care of brain health and are trained to diagnose conditions that affect learning and brain health
- A trained Paediatrician or other specialist Physicians are also able to assess and provide diagnosis of a developmental disability – autism
- These medical practitioners are also able to provide prescription medications that may be used to treat different conditions



The Multidisciplinary Approach

- The supporting professionals discussed above all work together to improve the quality of life of our clients
- When the professionals all work together, it is described as a multidisciplinary team
- Recall that Autism is a neurological disorder that impacts
- Social communication – communicating with others
- Social interaction as well as limited and repeated behaviors and interests.
- Self regulation, sensory issues, activities of daily living



The Multidisciplinary Approach

- In each of the areas of impairment in autism, specific professionals are required to provide supports.
- Social communication – communicating with others – SLP, BT
- Social interaction as well as limited and repeated behaviors and interests – BT, Psychologist, Psychiatrist
- Self regulation, sensory issues, activities of daily living – Occupational Therapist



The Multidisciplinary Approach

It is difficult for one professional to be able to work in multiple domains and be provide the best supports hence, families must seek and recruit specialized professional rather than those who claim to be able to do everything.



Some EBTs in ABA

There are a number of EBTs that are being used in different professions

- Antecedent-Based Interventions
- Differential Reinforcement Discrete Trial Teaching
- Extinction
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Functional Communication Training
- Modeling
- Naturalistic Intervention
- Parent-Implemented Intervention



Some EBTs in ABA

- Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Prompting
- Reinforcement
- Response Interruption
- Self-Management



Some EBTs in ABA

- Social Narratives
- Social Skills Training
- Structured Play Groups
- Task Analysis
- Technology-Aided Instruction and Intervention



A study – The case of Jim

- Treatment of Life Threatening Pica with 5-year Follow-up. Busch, Saini, Zorzos & Duyile, 2018
- Jim was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Seizure and Pica disorder
- Ingested 5 latex gloves causing intestinal blockage and requiring emergency surgery
- He engaged in severe physical aggression if stoppage of pica is attempted



A study – The case of Jim

- Medication (SSRI and antipsychotics) was prescribed but no significant impact on pica but produced sedation and weight gain
- Occupational Therapist, Psychiatric Nurse and Developmental Service Worker involved
- Functional analysis of pica was conducted with treatment, fading of treatment and follow up
- Treatment included protective helmet, increase response effort for pica, response blocking, DRI, fading and generalization
- Jim is now living in the community without major restrictions



Treatment Packages

- Jim's case is a classic example of a multidisciplinary approach to supports
- Not one intervention was used but a suite of interventions – a treatment package
- Involving several professional collaborating to support a client
- Collaboration amongst professionals and institutions should be a norm to promote client outcomes.



Misapplication of Treatment

- There are other therapies and interventions that may have been used in the case of Jim but were not found to be appropriate
- Not all EBTs are appropriate for every situation
- The case of Blake throwing up and the use of overcorrection



The need for EBTs

- Imagine that your company needs a driver and you are in charge of recruitment, apart from any reference that the person may have or whether he has 10 years experience, you must demand for their driver's licence.
- Driver experience alone does not matter otherwise, your company will start dealing with harassment from the Police and other law enforcement agencies.



The need for EBTs

- When contemplating hiring a Therapist/Worker for your child, you must ask for the licence/certificate/qualification of whomever you are considering working with your child
- Certificate alone is not adequate, you must also ask about experience and references before you let them start
- Before they start, agree on the goals the Therapist will be working on and establish a timeline for review of whether goals have been achieved and determine next steps



The need for EBTs

- **Families:**

As parents and caregivers of individuals living with autism and other forms of developmental disabilities, we must ensure that we seek and retain services from suitably qualified professionals and that vulnerable children are protected from therapies that could harm them – not evidence-based.

- **Professionals:**

As professionals whose work is regulated, we operate as a community and are careful not to carry out treatments or practices that have not been tested for effectiveness



The need for EBTs

For novel treatments or practices, the practitioner must take every safety precaution and describe their methods and results to aid replication by members of the professional community

- Other stakeholders:

We have a responsibility to our society as government leaders, institutions of learning, private entities, religious organizations, etc.



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Future Direction

- Collaboration amongst professionals and Institutions
- Institutions of Higher learning to come up with programs and curricula to help train those interested in the field of developmental services
- Regulation of service providers



References

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THANKS FOR LISTENING

