

The Association between Theory of Mind and Anxiety in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder is being Researched

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ABSTRACT

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a wide variety of talents, including Theory of Mind (ToM) as a significant component. Early Theory of Mind (ToM) skills, such as collaborative attention, arise during childhood and lay the groundwork for the co-emergence of affect control via social referencing. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have delays and impairments in the development of ToM and a large percentage of ASD children also have anxiety and poor affect control. In addition to the existing symptoms of ASD, many children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have high rates of anxiety and poor affect control, which can put a strain on quality of life. Higher levels of anxiety have been linked to more externalising behaviours, as well as social impairments such lower social responsiveness and social maladjustment. Individuals with ASD may struggle to recognise and regulate their affect response correctly when confronted with uncertainty, resulting in elevated levels of anxiety.

Keywords: ASD, ToM, Anxiety

INTRODUCTION

ASD suffer from a wide range of social communication deficiencies, and their diminished ability to respond and react correctly based on social cues may contribute to feelings of greater uncertainty in social situations, which can be very anxiety causing. It's critical to recognise that ASD-related social communication impairment is a multi-faceted issue that encompasses a wide range of abilities, from poor social awareness to low social motivation. Identifying deficiencies in specific social skills that may have a substantial role in the intensity of anxiety symptoms might thus aid in the creation and modification of more targeted interventions to better target and improve the efficacy of anxiety treatment in people with ASD [1].

The cognitive ability to assign mental states (such as beliefs, wants, and intentions) to others as distinct from oneself is known as theory of mind (ToM). Understanding that people act based on their wishes (for example, I am hungry, so I will grab for that apple) implies that other people have their own desires (she must be hungry), demonstrating a theory of mind or attributing mental states to others. When autistic children are worried or anxious, they may exhibit symptoms that are similar to those seen in autism, such as stimming, compulsive and ritualistic behaviour, and reluctance to change in routine. Hypo connectivity or a lack of connectivity

in the autistic brain, permits weakly connected regions to move apart, producing sulci between them." The deeper these sulcal pits are, the more language production is impaired, according to research. Although some persons with ASD may never be able to truly construct a ToM in the manner that other people do, they may be able to learn how to do similar actions from a functional standpoint [2]. Anxiety can exacerbate autism symptoms. It has the potential to disrupt [educational] curriculum and produce behavioural problems in children. It can make it difficult for individuals to find work and live alone. Mindfulness-based therapy, according to the researchers, may be beneficial. People may learn unique breathing and relaxation techniques, meditation, and other exercises as part of a mindfulness treatment. Mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) appear to be beneficial anxiety therapies for autistic adults, according to a few researches. When toddlers develop theory of mind, are they able to spot other people's incorrect beliefs? By the age of four, most youngsters have a greater understanding of the theory of mind. Most youngsters can grasp that others may have erroneous views about objects, people, or circumstances before the age of four [3]. Another hypothesis is that theory of mind stems from our ability to communicate, which allows children to hear individuals discuss their thoughts and emotions. The fact that language fluency and the capacity to pass the false belief test appear around the same age backs this

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up. When someone has a very loud, very public meltdown, the best thing to do is to be sympathetic. Listening and respecting their struggle without passing judgement is what empathy entails. Provide them with a sense of security and love. Punishments must be abolished [4]. Instead of looking at passers-by, concentrate on your youngster. Once they're calm, get out your sensory toolkit and teach them coping methods. Theories are developed to explain, predict, and comprehend phenomena, as well as to question and extend current knowledge within the confines of crucial confining assumptions in many cases. The theoretical framework is the framework that holds or supports a research study's theory.

CONCLUSION

The ability of our children to understand themselves and others depends on their ability to form a theory of mind. People can introspect and evaluate their own ideas and mental states when they have this ability to understand mental states. Self-awareness is essential for the development of a strong sense of self. Theories are important because they guide and explain what we observe. When

a researcher conducts an investigation and gathers data through observation, the investigator must have a clear understanding of the information that needs to be collected. Valid theories are thus supported by research and serve as a solid foundation for practical activity.

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