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Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder and Effective Treatment Methodologies to Mitigate Maladaptive Behaviors

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disability that causes significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Autism can be detected as young as 18 months or younger, and by the age of 2, a diagnosis can be provided; nevertheless, the vast majority of individuals do not receive final diagnosis until they are much older. Autism does not discriminate and can occur with all ages, racial and ethnic groups. Autism is more common in boys than in girls and researchers estimate the disorder to affect four times as many boys as girls (Ubelacker, 2010). Autism is a growing epidemic and the etiology is still unknown. Many individuals who carry this diagnosis are socially oblivious and lack capacity with judgment and decision making. There is some speculation that autism is related to immunizations and environmental factors. Although, autism is a lifelong developmental disability, those diagnosed with high functioning autism are able to function more independently than those diagnosed with profound or severe autism. Moreover, coping with autism is a significant concern for parents as they continue to struggle with finding appropriate individualized transition plans, resources and services needed to assist their children (Carter, 2014).

This presentation will illuminate both high functioning autism and profound autism in an effort to address effective treatment methodologies.

Some signs and symptoms associated with autism include the following:

- Does not babble by 12 months
- Does not use gestures or single words by 12 to 18 months
- Does not say two-word phrases on their own by 24 months
- Loss of language and social skill

- Echolalia
- Limited eye contact
- Preoccupation with preferred objects (socks, trains, and toys that may move, etc.)
- Disengaged in parallel play
- Difficulty with transition and routines
- Sensory difficulties
- Prefers not to be cuddled
- Rigidity
- Literal thinkers
- Abstract
- Lacks friendships
- Exceptional memorization skills

Some maladaptive behaviors that individuals with autism may experience include the following:

- Elopement/Wandering
- Detachment
- Soiling of the Clothing
- Aggression
- Property Destruction
- Oblivious to dangerous and/or hazardous situations

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- PICA
- Self-Injury
- Disrobing
- Non-deliberate stealing
- Obsessions

There are copious treatment approaches that could be utilized to decrease undesirable behaviors which includes having a well written treatment plan to address problematic behaviors. Applied behavioral analysis, (hereinafter referred to ABA) is a scientific approach aimed to evaluate and change behavior through measurable and objective data by incorporating qualitative and quantitative analysis. CARAFAP often uses ABA principles to implement task-based analysis, task-execution, forward and backward chaining, and executive functioning skills to treat the behavior. In summation, this presentation

is deigned to present real life case studies that CARAFAP has encountered with consumers, in addition to teaching effective treatment approaches with individuals affected by autism spectrum disorder.

Speaker Biography

Amanda Carter is from the United States of America, and was born in Washington, D.C. She is an only child who was raised in Maryland. She attended Shaw University located in Raleigh, North Carolina for undergraduate studies and successfully completed the required course work in three years with honors with a major in Psychology. Dr. Carter obtained her Masters Degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Subsequently, she enrolled into a Doctoral program at Nova Southeastern University located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and graduated in June 2014. Her dissertation research was conducted in East Haddam, Connecticut which addressed Parental Perceptions for Adolescents diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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