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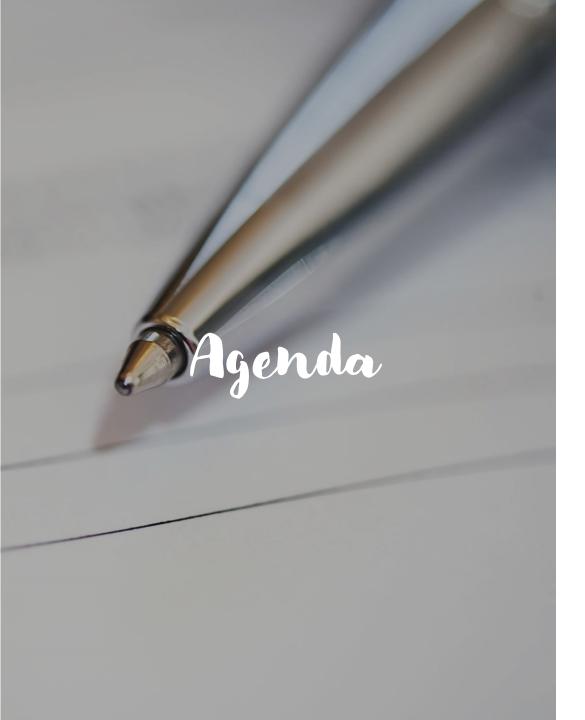
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Autistic Advocacy in Counseling

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- Introductions & getting to know you
- Intersection of race, sexuality, gender & autistic identities
- Current trends in the autistic community
 & views of therapy
- Affirming counseling strategies for autistic clients

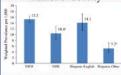
Autistic Advocacy in Counseling

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CURRENT TRENDS & ISSUES

- Prevalence CDC (2022): prevalence of ASD diagnosis changed to 1 in 44 from 1 in 5
- Lack of representation Epidemiological studies focused on children and high-income countries. Low prevalence of ASD in Hispanic & African Americans due to being excluded from research studies
- Girls ASD more than 4x diagnosed in boys than girls (101 low support needs, 21 high support needs); Parents report higher levels of stress during diagnostic process
- Racial divide- Black & Hispanic/Latine autistics experience more barriers to access one than Whites resulting in later diagnosis, lower diagnostic rates & lowered utilization of interventions. Mindiagnosis
- Socioeconomic~ Children with low SES experiences more barriers to access care than Whites causing later diagnosis, lower prevalence rates & lowered utilization of interventions
- Non-binary & trans- Trans autistics are more likely to engage in self-herm & suicidal behaviors than allistic peers; overrepresentation of gender dysphoria
- Sexuality- Higher rates of queerness & asexuality among autistic adults as compared to allistic peers

Intersection of Race & **Autistic Identity**



Intersection of Sexuality &

- **Autistic Identity**
- ASD individuals demonstrates lower sexual knowledge, less formal and informal sexual education, & less social contact
- ASD females report greater sexual anxiety, less sexual desire & arousability but greater levels of sexual behavior than ASD males
- ASD individuals demonstrate greater levels of queer attraction
- Prevalence of being gay, bisexual, asexual higher in ASD than non-ASD individuals
- More likely to identify as asexual due to not having strong feelings of sexual desires & behaviors

Implications of ASD Race & SGE Intersectionality

-lack of adequate healthcare including refused care

- Institutionalized sources of marginalization; inadequate insurance coverage for healthcare needs

- ASD vulnerable to sexual victimization
- ASD females report higher rates of unwanted sexual experiences than non-ASD
- ASD may have reduced access to adequate sex ed

Gender & Sexuality

- ASD, especially ASD females, experiences gender dyaphoria traits more than allistic peers
- ASD females more likely to report larger range of sexual orientations than ASD males
 High autistic traits more like to identify as bisexual
- More likely to identify as queer

Resources

- comprehensive toolkit- Dr. Ali Cunningham
- Welcome to the Autistic Community- Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- Life Journey Through Autlant: A guide to safety- Organization for Autism Research
- Autistic People of Color Fund: BIPOC & ASD
- Tweinbow: LBTQI+ & ASD
- Women, Nonbinery & ASD
- https://autisticedvocecy.org/
- https://awnnetwork.org/
- Is it Autism and if so, what's next (Autism

References

Affirming Counseling Strategies

- Recognize and acknowledge oppressive experiences
 - Neurodivergence
 - Ableism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia
 - Self-diagnosis in conjunction with clinician testing & assessment
 - Functioning labels & forms of communication
- Assess the family & interfacing systems
 - Social supports
 - Therapy & other social services

Affirming Counseling Strategies

- Presume competency
 - Strengths-based assessment and self-identity
 - Identity-first versus person-first language
- Instilling resilience & optimism
 - Appreciation & embracing neurodivergence
- Collaborate with other professionals
 - MDs, SLPs, OTs, BCBAs, Case Managers, Coaches (Vocational, EF)



Open Discussion

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Further Learning: Resources

Autistic Advocates on Social Media

- Fidgets & Fries (Instagram)
- Nigh.Functioning.Autism (Instagram)
- Autistic Callum (Instagram)

Books

- Counseling adults with autism: A comprehensive toolkit
- Welcome to the Autistic Community- <u>Autistic Self Advocacy Network</u>
- Life Journey Through Autism: A guide to safety (Organization for Autism Research)

Further Learning: Resources

Foundations:

- Autistic People of Color Fund: BIPOC & ASD
- Twainbow: LBTQI+ & ASD
- Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network (AWN): Women, Nonbinary & ASD

Websites:

- https://www.aane.org/
- https://autisticadvocacy.org/
- https://awnnetwork.org/
- https://researchautism.org/
- Is it Autism and if so, what's next (Autism Speaks)

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