Advancing Inclusive and Evidence-Based Therapies for Autism in Europe

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"Upgrading competences for choosing evidence-based therapies for people with autism, their relatives and their key professionals"

Intro

Target audience:
- professionals
- autistic people and families

Objectives:
- creating an enriching and dynamic learning space.
- providing resources and tools tailored to the different needs of those seeking to better understand autism

| EASY-TO-READ | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |

Objectives and competences for the module

- **Understand what autism is**: Recognize autism as a spectrum of neurological developmental disorders, emphasizing its diversity and uniqueness in each individual and understanding the relevance of the neurobiological basis.
- **Explore the impact of autism on individuals and their families**: Discuss the challenges and strengths associated with autism, and how it affects various aspects of daily life for individuals and their families.
- **Identify the symptoms and main characteristics of autism:** Distinguish the main areas of development affected by autism, including communication, social interaction, and behavior patterns.
- **Demystify autism:** Debunk common myths and understand that autism is not a disease that needs curing but a developmental disorder that one lives with.
- **Promote the importance of early detection and intervention:** Highlight how early detection and intervention can positively influence the child's development.
- **Highlight the need for a multidisciplinary approach:** Explain how collaboration between professionals from different areas improves support and development for the person with autism throughout their life

AUTHERAPIES

1. Introduction to Autism

- Definition of Autism: Symptoms and main characteristics

- History and evolution of the concept of autism.

- Prevalence and risk factors.

- Diversity of autism

- Importance of translational neuroscience

2. Detection and Diagnosis

- Recognising and Diagnosing Autism in Early Childhood

- Diagnosis and evaluation process.

3. Myths and Realities

- Debunking common myths about autism.

- Current perspectives on autism.

4. Impact of autism in individuals and their families.

- Impact of autism in early childhood: strengths and challenges.

- Impact of autism in adolescence: strengths and challenges.

- Impact of autism in adult life: strengths and challenges.

- Impact and challenges for families: strengths and challenges.

5. Resources and Support

- Organizations and resources available for families and professionals.

- Support networks and online communities.
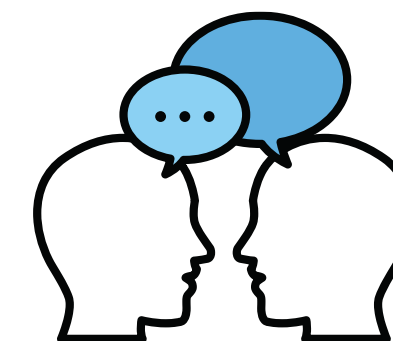
Module 2: How to identify Evidence-Based Interventions

Objectives and Competences for Module 2: How to identify Evidence-Based Interventions

- **Understand what evidence-based interventions are:** Define the concept and the importance of evidence-based interventions in autism.
- **Develop skills to assess scientific evidence:** Teach participants how to read and understand research studies, identifying solid methodologies and significant outcomes.
- **Distinguish between evidence-based and non-evidence-based interventions:** Provide criteria and tools to evaluate the validity and efficacy of different interventions and treatments for autism.
- **Identify dangerous or non-evidence-based interventions:** Provide information on identifying interventions that lack scientific foundation and could be harmful.

AUTHERAPIES

1.Introduction to evidence-based interventions
a. Definition and explanation of the concept.
b. The importance of evidence-based interventions for autism.
c. Criteria for selecting the best therapy
d. Classification according to evidence evaluation systems, such as GRADE or SIGN.
e. AUTHERAPIES CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

2.Criteria for evaluating interventions for autism
a. Pre-Treatment Assessment and Foundations of Intervention
b. How to evaluate the scientific evidence of proposed interventions
c. Evidence versus anecdote.
d. The hierarchy of evidence
e. How to read and understand scientific studies.
f. Key questions to ask when evaluating an intervention.

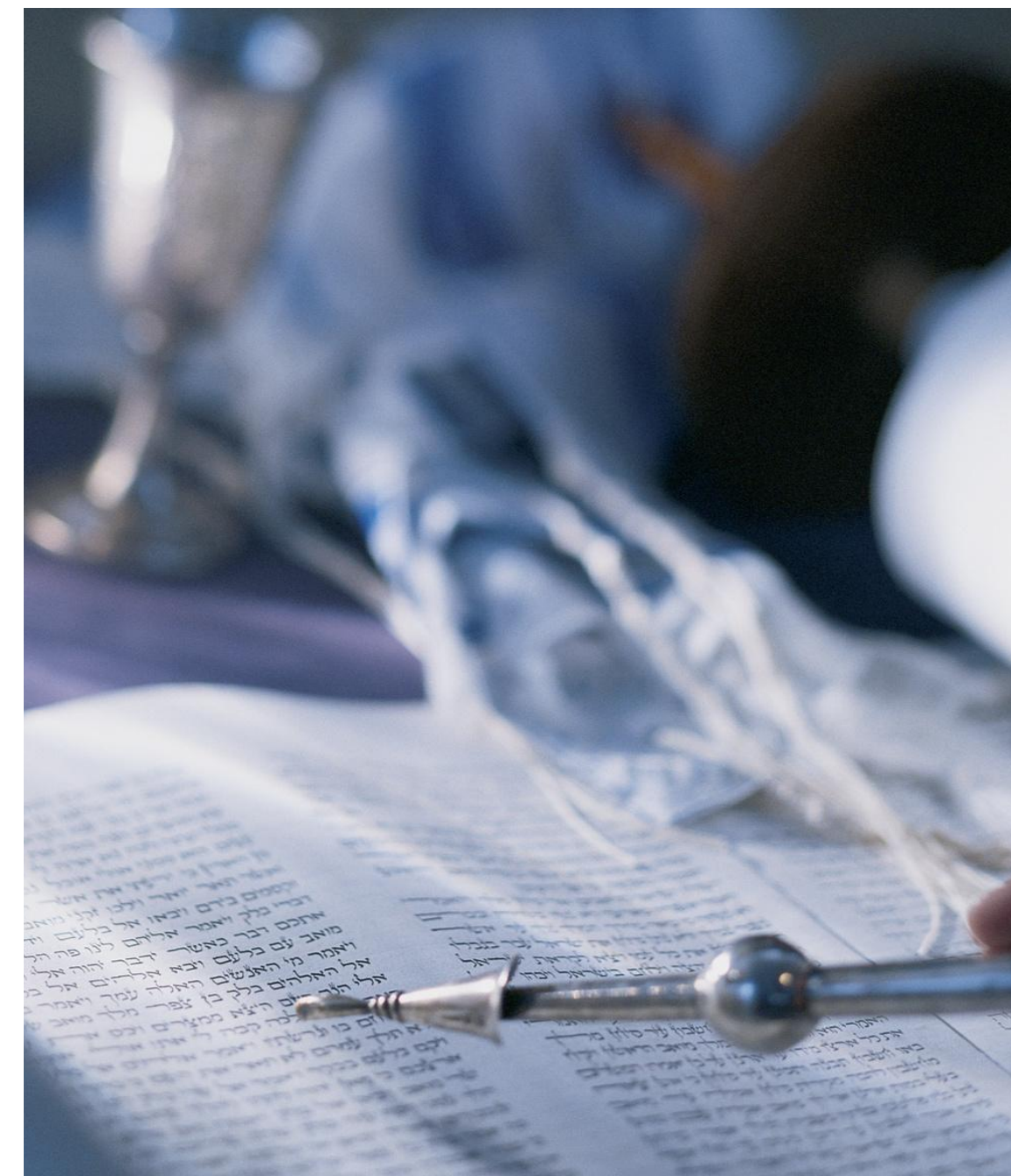3. **Evidence-based and non-evidence-based interventions for autism.**
    a. How evidence-based interventions improve quality of life for autistic people.
    b. Common elements of effective intervention programs
    c. Strategies and adaptations for the comprehensive support of autistic people

4. **Identification of interventions that lack scientific support**
    a. Risk associated with these interventions
    b. Strategies to avoid being misled by unfounded claims.

5. **Resources and Tools for Decision-Making**
    a. Guides and databases of scientifically evaluated interventions.
    b. Keeping up to date with research
        i.   RSS (Really Simple Syndication)
        ii. Alerts and subscriptions
        iii. Webs, blogs, wikis.
        iv. Academic social networks
        v.   Keeping up to date

Objectives and Competences for Module 3: Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for Autism

- **Know the different areas of intervention for autism:** Understand that autism has not a cure and identify the main areas of intervention for autism.

- **Identify interventions with the strongest scientific evidence for autism:** Become familiar with the therapies that have been shown to be most effective for individuals with autism according to recent studies.

- **Consider interventions with not much evidence but promising results in the intervention of persons with autism:** Become familiar with the therapies that have a medium level of evidence but show promising results.

- **Analyze the benefits and limitations of evidence-based interventions:** Assess how these interventions can improve the quality of life for individuals with autism and understand their potential limitations.

Importance of a comprenhensive and integral assessment in order to plan the intervention.

1 COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS
• Assessment of cognitive functions
• Assessment of sleep disturbances

2 COMMUNICATION
• Assessment of language
• Assessment of communication

3 SEX AND AFFECTIVITY
Assessment of sexual functions and intimate relationships

4 BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS
Assesment of behaviours
Assessment of perceptual functions

5 NUTRITION
Assesment of nutritional status
Assessment of food selectivity and sensibility

6 MOTOR FUNCTIONS
Assesment of movements functions

7 EXERCISE AND FITNESS
Assesment of exercise capacities

8 DAILY LIFE ACTIVITIES
Assesment of activities of daily living

9 RELATIONSHIPS
Assessment of interpersonal interactions and relationships

10 SOCIAL LIFE
Assessment of participation in community and social life

11 FAMILY SUPPORT
• Assessment of carer and family needs

12 EDUCATION & VOCATION
• Educational assessment
• Vocational assessment

13 SELF MANAGEMENT
• Assesment of self-management capacities

14 MENTAL HEALTH
Assessment of mental health

Example of high evidence interventions for the area of cognition

Assessment of cognitive functions

Cognitive training

Provision and training in the use of assistive products for cognition

AUTHERAPIES

Example of not recommended interventions for the area of cognition

Prism glasses

Ayurveda

Integrated Listening System program

Example of dangerous interventions for the area of cognition

Urine therapy

Turpentine

Colonic irrigation

Primal scream therapy

Objectives and competences for the module

- **Understand fundamental rights in the treatment process**: Learn about the rights to be informed, to participate in decision-making, and to consent or refuse treatments.
- **Develop effective communication skills:** Equip participants with the skills to communicate assertively and clearly. Promote communication among autistic people, families and healthcare professionals.
- **Encourage informed and critical decision-making:** Provide necessary tools to critically evaluate information about treatments and therapies.
- **Promote self-advocacy and active participation:** Motivate autistich individuals and their families to be their own advocates and active participants in their treatment process. Motivate professionals to promote self-advocacy and active participation.
- **Navigate the healthcare system and support services:** Teach how to identify and access available resources and services that can support the treatment process.

1. Patient and Family Rights

1.1 Respect for Dignity and Individual Rights

1.2 Nonmaleficence

1.3 Beneficence

1.4 Autonomy

1.5 Justice

1.6 Confidentiality

1.7 Professionalism

2. Communication Skills with Healthcare Professionals

2.1 The importance of working as a team in collaboration with professionals.

2.2 Strategies for effective and assertive communication.

2.3 How to prepare for medical appointments and what questions to ask.

2.4 How to communicate preferences and concerns to professionals.

2.5 Handling disagreements and how to request second opinions.

3. Self-Advocacy and Active Participation

3.1 Strategies for self-advocacy in the context of autism.

3.2 The role of autistic people and their families in the treatment team.

3.3 Creating personalised treatment plans.

4. Navigating the Healthcare System and Accessing Services

4.1 Guide to understanding the healthcare system and support services.

4.2 Planning for the transition for young autistic adults.

https://autherapies.eu/