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Targeting Social, Academic, & Transition Needs of Young Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Guest Editor: Linda R. Schreiber, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL, ASHA Fellow
In partnership with American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders

Assessing Personal Constructs of Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Person-Centered Measure of Social Cognition

Sean Hess, PhD, CCC-SLP
Trisha Self, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL

Moderated by:
Amy Hansen, MA, CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, SpeechPathology.com
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Assessing Personal Constructs of Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Person-Centered Measure of Social Cognition

Sean Hess, PhD, CCC-SLP
Wesley Medical Center
550 N. Hillside Ave.
Wichita, KS 67214

Trisha Self, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL
Wichita State University
1845 N. Fairmount Ave.
Wichita, KS 67260-0075

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Learning Objectives

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Define and describe personal constructs.
- Describe the process of repertory grids and how to use them to explore personal constructs.
- Identify 2-3 ways repertory grids can be used as person-centered tools to assist individuals, families, caregivers, and professionals to better understand social cognitive processes of adolescents with ASD.
Disclosure

- The presenters have no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationship(s) within the products or services described, reviewed, evaluated or compared in this presentation.

- This presentation is in compliance with HIPAA standards to protect the privacy of clients discussed. Written authorization was provided by both clients and their legal guardians for their likeness to be presented for educational purposes and research seminars.

Introduction

- Core Differences of Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - Theory of Mind
  - Weak Central Coherence Theory
  - Theory of Executive Function Deficits
  - ASD as a Disorder of Prediction
Introduction

- Standardized Assessments
  - Social Skills Improvement System
  - Pragmatic Language Skills Inventory
  - Social Responsiveness Scale - 2
  - Social Language Development Test: Adolescent
  - Test of Problem Solving – 2: Adolescent
  - Test of Pragmatic Language - 2
  - Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language - 2
  - Functional Communication Profile - Revised

- Nonstandardized Assessments
  - Social Thinking-Social Communication Profile
  - Autism Social Skills Profile

Social Responsiveness Scale – Second Edition

- Sample Questions:
  - Interacts appropriately with other children
  - Is not well coordinated
  - Avoids eye contact or has unusual eye contact
  - Seems self-confident when interacting with others
  - Has good self confidence
Observed Behaviors

Underlying Social Cognitive Processes

Theory of Personal Constructs

A person’s processes are psychologically channeled by the ways in which he or she anticipates events.
Personal Construct Scale

Repertory Grid
Questions we had:

1. What do personal constructs of adolescents with ASD who have average or above average intelligence and language skills tell us about their interpersonal relationships and how they form?
2. How is information gained from a repertory grid different than that of a standardized test of social skills?

The Process

- Multiple single case studies of adolescents with ASD who had average or above average intelligence and language skills
- 2 days:
  - Day 1: Cognitive and language evaluations
  - Day 2: Repertory grid assessment
Participants

- 5 adolescents (3 males, 2 females) diagnosed with ASD
- ASD diagnoses confirmed via medical records
- Diagnoses confirmed by investigator via Childhood Autism Rating Scale – High Functioning Protocol
- Participants aged 16-17 years

Physical Configuration of Room

[Diagram of physical configuration of room with labels for Camera 1, Camera 2, Participant, PI, and Table Workspace]
Day 1: Cognitive & Linguistic Testing

- Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, 3rd Edition (TONI-3)
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 4th Edition (PPVT-4)
- Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, 5th Edition (CELF-5)
Day 2: Repertory Grids

- Repertory Grids:
  - Establishing elements
  - Eliciting constructs
  - Rating elements

Elements:

1. Self
2. Ideal self
3. Disliked person
4. Annoying person
5. Family member
6. Liked person
7. Someone I want to be friends with
Core Process

Stage 1: Describing Elements

Stage 2: Maximum Context Triadic Method of Eliciting Constructs

Stage 3: Relating Elements to Constructs

Stage 1 Work System

Elements (names of people on post-it notes)

Stage 1 Focus Box

Prompt 1: 'How would you describe (name of element #1)?'

Prompt 2: Wait in expected silence.

Prompt 3: 'Is there anything else you want to add?'

Step 1: Move element #1 into focus box.

Step 2: Move element back into box at top of table.

Step 3: Move element #2 into focus box.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 1-3 until all elements are described.

Optional Prompts

1: 'How would you describe his/her personality?'

2: 'How else would you describe him/her?'

3: Concept mapping

4: Thought bubbles
Core Process

Stage 1: Describing Elements

Stage 2: Maximum Context Triadic Method of Eliciting Constructs

Stage 3: Relating Elements to Constructs

---

Stage 2 Work System

Elements
(name of people on post-it notes)

Stage 2 Focus Boxes

Similar

Different

Participant

PI

Table Workspace

---

Core Process

Step 1: Move 3 elements into focus boxes.

Prompt 1: "Tell me a way these two people are similar, and how the third person is different from these two."

Prompt 2: Wait in expected silence.

Step 2: Return elements to row of boxes at top of table.

Step 3: Move next triad of elements into focus boxes.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 1-3 until: (a) participant can no longer provide new constructs for two consecutive triads or (b) participant requests to end this stage.

Optional Prompts

1: "How are these two similar?"

2: "How is this one different from these two?"

3: "How are these two alike in terms of personality?"

4: "What is the opposite of (similarity) to you?"

5: Place only 2 elements in focus boxes; ask: "how are these two different?"

6: Concept mapping

7: Thought bubbles

8: Abandon triad; move to next triad
Core Process

Stage 1: Describing Elements

Stage 2: Maximum Context Triadic Method of Eliciting Constructs

Stage 3: Relating Elements to Constructs

Stage 3 Work System

Elements (names of people on post-it notes)

Table Workspace

Stage 3 Focus Box

Participant

Ph

Step 1: Elements are in boxes at top of table.

Step 2: One 5-point construct scale is placed in focus box.

Step 3: Clinician places Post-it notes with construct poles on scale.

Prompt 1: ‘Now, please rank these people on your construct scales. There is more than one way to do this. It could look like this’ (arrange example of Post-it notes on construct scale).

Prompt 2: ‘Or, it could look like this’ (arrange 2nd and different example of Post-it notes on construct scale).

Prompt 3: ‘Or, it could look like this’ (arrange 3rd and different example of Post-it notes on construct scale).

Prompt 4: ‘You must place every person on every scale, but you don’t have to use each point of the scale.’

Step 4: Complete scale is moved to top of table.

Step 5: Repeat Steps 2 – 4 until all elements have been ranked on all construct scales.

Optional Prompts

1: Participant may affix Post-it notes to construct scales.

2: Concept mapping
Some answers to our questions:

1. What do personal constructs of adolescents with ASD with average or above average intelligence and language skills tell us about their interpersonal relationships and how they form?
   i. They think about social constructs.
   ii. Their construct systems related to social relationships are complex.
   iii. Their construct systems are organized in a way one would expect from individuals who understand social roles.
   iv. Their social constructs are based on their abstracting experiences in social situations.
   v. They attempt to construe the construct systems of others.
   vi. They recognize what social behaviors they would change to move toward an ideal self.
More answers:

2. How is information gained from a repertory grid different than that of a standardized test of social skills?
   i. The data derived from the SRS-2 is a number.
   ii. Difference in design
   iii. Self-reporting
Questions?