Low Arousal Approaches to Help Reduce Aggression in Autistic People With Complex Needs.

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Low Arousal Approaches are Not About Fitting Square Pegs In to Round Holes

Low Arousal Approaches a Definition.

The Low Arousal Approach emphasises a range of behaviour management strategies that focus on the reduction of stress, fear and frustration and seeks to prevent aggression and crisis situations. The low arousal approach seeks to understand the role of the 'situation' by identifying triggers and using low intensity strategies and solutions to avoid punitive consequences for individuals with Autism.

Low Arousal.com

Features of a low Arousal Approach.

1. Starts with us and seeks to understand our part in behavior support.
2. Is an individual approach that seeks to understand the person, what they are hoping to achieve through the behaviour.
3. Seeks to understand the persons sensory experience, addresses sensory difficulties and makes the most of sensory strengths.
4. Understands the impact of environments on anxiety, stress, understanding (confusion)
5. Addresses the underpin difficulties.
6. Provides support to the person to manage their levels of arousals (alert —— Calm)
7. Promote wellbeing, happiness and meaningful physical activity

Understanding our part in behaviour change

- Finding a common place to start. We all have behaviour that challenges at times.
- Taking Time to reflect on and in practice.
- Learning how are behaviour is perceived by the person with autism, well meaning behaviours may not always be helpful or what the person requires.
- We need to be aware of our individual perspective of the behaviour and keep it in perspective.
- We need to be aware of our Language and attitudes around behaviour e.g. describe don't label, attention seeking, he knows what he's doing, its his autism.

Having an individual approach that seeks to understand the person,

The only way you will understand is if I put my brain in your head, then you will see things properly. (Miron Summers)
The Impact of Sensory Experience on Behaviour

If I experience the world differently to others, I may behave differently.

Sensory Impact Upon Behaviour

• Fear, Fight Flight responses.

• Behaviours can be triggered due to the anticipation of being subjected to a repeated painful sensory experience.

• May not have coping strategies for their sensory experiences e.g. asking for help / or problem solving.

• Have difficulty maintaining an optimal arousal level for activities, energy level that is too high or too low.

Sensory Impact Upon Behaviour

• May be afraid of activities such as; messy play, movement experiences, playground equipment, certain sounds, smells, or tastes

• Difficulties with transitions, i.e., stopping one activity and starting another moving from one setting to another.

• Difficulties with social interactions and relating to others.

Different Sensory Experience

• Gustatory
• Touch
• Vestibular
• Proprioceptive

4. Understands the impact of environments on anxiety, stress, understanding and the Resulting Behaviour.

Landscape of Fear.

Based on Kate Green. Differences in Strategies and Difficulties in Interventions.

Green. The child is happy and relaxed here and functions well.

Yellow. OK areas, functions reasonably well in.

Red. Finds it difficult to be in this area. Doesn't function very well in this area. Worried, Anxious,
Behaviours of Concern and the Environment.

Environments impact upon all of our behaviours both positively and negatively.

Things to consider,
1. What takes place there
2. The layout (no clear escape routes)
3. Sound, Smell, Visual, Textures, Sensory overload
4. Design of the environment limited personal space or areas to take yourself in order to self-regulate.
5. How predictable is the environment.

Living Near the Edge

Promote Wellbeing, Happiness and Meaningful Physical Activity.

Promoting health and wellbeing.

Happiness is not just not being unhappy. i.e., not being stressed.
Knowing when and what makes the person happy, Happiness profiles.

Importance of having activities that are meaningful to the person and that builds their self-esteem.

Happiness is….
(Person with autism)

"Happiness is when everything is arranged by colour and size. Happiness is when the last number fits and the puzzle is perfect."

"Happiness is when a special, trusted person is near. Happiness is a feast for the senses that is just right, not too little, not too much."

"Happiness is a delighted squeal, a flapping hand, a leap, a twirl. Happiness is the gentle sawtooth edge of a cat’s purr. Happiness is the sparkle of water, the tickle of shifting sand, the squish of mud."

"Happiness is emptying the can of shaving cream and the entire roll of toilet paper just to see how they look and feel."

Supporting Behaviour Through Communication and Interaction

(ensuring and maintaining the basics)

- Provide the individual with ways of initiating, refusing communication and ensure that we communicate effectively at all times e.g. (using visual)?
- Little things make a difference in communication
- Matching our language to the persons level of understanding
- Providing time for information to be processed and acted upon
- Help them understand the hidden rules that govern social interaction
- Providing a reason to play the communication and interaction game.
- Avoid confrontation

Work in Partnership with the Individual with Autism and Significant Others

- Enable service users to find solutions to and solve their own problems
- Working in genuine cooperation, partnership
- Supporting them to gain and have control over their life
- Working with parents and siblings
Keep it SHARP

- Simple
- Holistic
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Persevere

Further Reading

- The benefits of regular exercise in reducing anxiety (Petruzello, Lunders, Hatfield, Hubbs & Talbott, 1995)
- Reductions in stereotyped behaviors of people with ASD (Allison, Baile & MacDonald, 1997; Kern, Nagel & Funkas, 1984)
- Low Arousal Approach - Research Autism: research.autism.net/low-arousal-approach Brief description of the low arousal approach, a multi-component intervention which uses a variety of techniques to deal with challenging behaviors.
- A “Low Arousal” approach to Autism by Chris Barson
- www.research.autism.net/blogvaluate/low-arousal-approach-a-low-arousal-approach-to-autism
- Four key Components of Low Arousal Approaches, Autism}

Thank You for Joining me Today

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