


UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Developing Self-regulation in children with autism

Dr Prithvi Perepa
Lecturer- Autism Studies
University of Birmingham



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Session structure

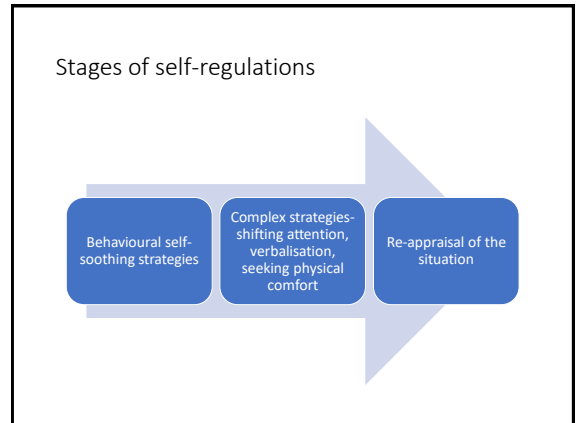
- Self-regulation and its implications
- Difficulties for children on the autism spectrum
- Some potential strategies

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What do we mean by self-regulation?

- Ability to plan an activity or goal and monitor own behaviour
- To control own actions, thinking or emotions
- Important for social integration and personal development

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Potential behaviours in children with autism

- Repetitive behaviours
- Ritualistic behaviours
- Distraction, difficulties in shifting attention
- Difficulties in managing emotions
- Difficulties in delaying gratification
- Anxiety, irritability, aggression, depression

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Possible reasons

- Social communication differences
- Anxiety and unpredictability
- Sensory processing differences

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Theoretical explanations

- Lack of sense of self (Hobson, 2002)
- Lack of theory of mind (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985)
- Executive functioning difficulties (Ozonoff, 1995)

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Executive function

- ☐ Ability to plan and monitor actions,
- ☐ Intentionality- create and maintain goal directed behaviour
- ☐ Inhibiting our behaviours,
- ☐ and being able to shift attention

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Initial steps

- Observation and assessment
- Understand from the child's perspective

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Teaching the behaviour- Dealing with anxiety

- Preparation
- Graduated exposure
- Anxiety management strategies- visual clues, role play, social stories, self-talk
- Clear instructions- pictorial, peer/adult modelling

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Using rewards

- Immediacy of reward
- Quality of reward
- Probability of reward

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Developing self-awareness

- Interactive approaches
- All about me booklets
- Circle time

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Self-monitoring

- Identify the target behaviour
- Collect baseline data
- Teach self-monitoring- video/ peer/adult modelling

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Instructional stages

Understanding own emotions

Understanding emotional levels

Discuss possible responses

Plan strategies that can be used

Practise in prepared situations

Independent implementation

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Self-monitoring

- External comparison and reinforcement
- Goal setting
- Self-reinforcement

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Self-regulation strategies

- A range of strategies may be required
- Can be used for wide range of skills
- With different age groups
- At home and school

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