

Treatment of Restricted, Repetitive Behaviors in the Context of ASD and ID

Restricted, repetitive behaviors can include hand flapping, body rocking, repetition of sounds or words, arranging and re-arranging items, intense and unusual interests, strict adherence to routines, and difficulty tolerating change.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Limited or no evidence exists for recommendation of psychotherapeutic medications in this domain.
- Restricted, repetitive behaviors should not be a target of treatment unless severely interfering with the individual's level of functioning in daily activities or causing significant distress.
- Parent/family education is recommended.
- Caution is recommended when attempting to reduce these behaviors, as they may be helpful for self-regulation of anxiety, agitation, and/or frustration.
- In some cases, restricted interests can be an asset (e.g., if used as an effective reward for expected behaviors or a focus of social engagement).
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and/or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) may be the most beneficial treatments and should be adapted to the individual's language and cognitive abilities.

Level 0 - Comprehensive Assessment:

- ◆ Developmental history and cognitive assessment (neuropsychological or educational)
- ◆ Restricted, repetitive behavior symptom history (simple versus complex, restricted interests), including assessment of severity and functional impairment
- ◆ Comprehensive medical assessment, including physical examination (If history of staring spells or focal neurological signs, obtain EEG, MRI).
- ◆ Parent-teacher rating scales

→ Level 1 - Psychosocial/non-pharmacological intervention and treatment of comorbidities.

- ◆ Treatment of comorbid medical problems, including seizures
- ◆ Treatment of sleep problems
- ◆ Treatment of comorbid psychiatric illness
- ◆ Psychoeducation
- ◆ Behavior strategies (e.g., structured activities, setting limits, redirection)
- ◆ Behavior therapy (differential reinforcement of other behavior, extinction based therapy)

→ Level 2 - CBT Adapted for ASD and/or ABA:

- ◆ CBT adapted for ASD and/or ABA