

Minnesota Supervisors Conference

Addressing Mental Illness, Crisis and Behavior Difficulties

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Biography: Frank F. Weber is the Clinical Director of CORE Professional Services PA. Frank was the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award from the MN Psychological Association for his work in reducing sexual abuse in Minnesota. He is a past recipient of the President's Award from the MN Correctional Association for his forensic work. Frank has performed assessments in homicide, sexual assault, domestic abuse, parenting and professional employment scenarios. He has been interviewed on investigative shows and profiled cold case homicides. Frank founded CORE in 1995, and has written sex offender treatment workbooks as well as two college developmental psychology textbooks.

Why do we do this work? It's the only way to make the world better.

-Men are throwing women in the river. Downstream women were pulling them back out and saving them. The women pulling them back out are victim's services. (Essential to the survival of victims. No impact on the number thrown in.) The only way to change that number is to work with the men who are throwing them in.

We make the world better.

Victim vs. Offender

If you work with victims, you work with offenders. If you work with offenders, you work with victims. Victims at times are afraid to talk to others about their hurtful behavior.

There isn't any way a client can present that I can't use to help them.

- Angry: "I'm glad to see you have strong feelings. Like me, you'd like to see changes. Let's see if we can use your strong feelings productively."

"We don't tolerate abuse so don't expect me to tolerate it from you."

I will call the law enforcement if you don't exit my office. Then, I call.

Threat: "Don't you dare hang up on me."

Response: "If you can end this call in the next 10 seconds, I won't."

- Unresponsive: "So many people come in here and talk my ear off. It's kind of nice to finally have someone who is ready to just sit and listen to my advice." "Moments of silence are powerful. I'm glad we got to this point so quickly."
- Narcissistic: In Greek mythology, Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in a pond and ultimately drowned.
 - Take advantage of their narcissism. "Most people I work with can't get through this without getting in trouble again, but I think you're smart enough where you could do this."
 - When they say, "I'm not like other offenders," I say, "Great."
- "The system sucks." Response: "It's worse than you think. You wouldn't believe the number of times I get frustrated at it, but we need to focus on things we have control over." Their feelings about the system are irrelevant to what needs to be done.

Redefine progress: The people we work with used to get in trouble every day. If you are feeling burned out on a client, take one meeting just to listen to them. Remind yourself: "God put people like you on this earth to prove that I can be a decent person."

Sex is like boxing. If you're both not consenting, one of you is committing a crime. Puberty is occurring earlier and people are marrying later. (2 centuries ago, puberty occurred at 16. Now 11-12)

Sexting is like getting a tattoo. When you realize tomorrow it was a bad idea, it's still there.

Confront the comment: "These days we don't know what sexual harassment really is." --

-----> **Really? I do.**

Is talking sexual harassment?

Is sitting next to someone sexual harassment?

Is touching someone between the legs without their consent harassment? Is that complicated?

It's about Respect and Responsibility

The goal is to assist the offender with developing a healthy nonabusive lifestyle. A treatment program should have:

~Accountability statements: People who don't take responsibility for their behavior, have difficulty changing.

~Safety planning: This should include redirection of unhealthy thoughts and behavior, and recognition of high risk situations.

~Healthy venting exercise.

~Apology letter to the victim.

~Identification of how the offender will live differently.

When people are healthy they can be honest, and let people think what they will.

HEALTHY VENTING 	vs.	EMOTIONAL DUMPING 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not blame others• Sticks to one topic• Owns up to their mistakes• Does not self-victimize• Works on a solution together• Open to constructive feedback• Does not repeat the same issue over and over• Does not take up unnecessary time• Listens and acknowledges other's perspective• Feels beneficial		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blames others• Overwhelms the other person with multiple issues• Does not own up to their mistakes• Plays the victim• Not open to finding a solution• Defensive to constructive feedback• Repeats the same issue over and over• Inconsiderate of time• Does not respect or listen to other's perspective• Feels toxic



When we can no longer change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” Viktor Frankl

Don't put yourself in a situation where people can make an accusation.

Safety Planning

Trigger

Prevention Plan

Sexual thought How are you going to change that thought? (worst moment)

Boredom Behavior incompatible with offending

Stress Take a deep breath

Anger Is this who I am?

Examples of effective use of Safety Plan

High Risk Situations (to avoid)

Goals (Without goals they are just treading water.)



Acceptance: Be real. Not perfect.

Ask clients if they are ready to accept that these are conditions they have to live their life by. Our job is not to retry the case. The inability to accept their state is what gets them in trouble. (They need to find that map at the mall that says you are here and accept it.) If they have no unsupervised contact with minors, and need to be sober, they need to let others know this, otherwise they will constantly be in high risk situations. We can only go from where we are at. (After high school my options were: poor kid going to work or school – King of England was not an option). Once we are in a better place we get better options. When people change, they relax and are able to be honest with others. The biggest struggle people in trouble have is shame. They spend all their time talking about why this should not have happened instead of using their brain to get out of it. (Lost in the woods & shame analogy)

Accountability:

Do not apologize for expecting people to be accountable. The clients we work with have been getting by with things forever, so when you ask them to be accountable they are angry. It is exactly what they need to be better and healthier people. It is not our job to make them happy. It is our job to make them healthy. Their behavior is not a reflection of us.

3 frogs are on a log.

2 decide to jump into a pond

How many are still on the log?

3-- Deciding to do something isn't the same as doing it.

The first step toward solving a problem is recognizing you have one. It's also the easiest...

Our job is "Now what are you going to do?" No problem is so bad that you can't make it worse.

Normalize.

We all have unhealthy thoughts. The problem is when people allow unhealthy thoughts (and sometimes unhealthy people) to take residence in their life. (Analogy: Are you a cave opening or a door?)

There is no **average** person. The **average IQ** is **100**. If you score 100 on all 16 of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale subtests your IQ is 120.

Do not apologize for expecting people to be accountable for their behavior. Stress from family: It's difficult to maintain an addiction without others enabling it.

Make a list of what you need to get done. Address 1 at a time. Worse 1st.
Too much "yes" leads to stress.

"Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue. It only does so by the dedication to a cause greater than oneself... Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: but you have to let it happen-- by not caring about it."

Happiness is the byproduct of completing meaningful tasks.

In other words, do the tasks—do the right thing—happiness will ensue.

Viktor Frankl

They say something is better than nothing. Nothing is better than some things.

A measure of maturity is your ability to appreciate the success of others."

Success only comes with the help from others.

Karma is real. Don't expect it to be reciprocated for 3 months.

We have a larger number of mentally ill people coming out of incarceration today than we ever have had at any point in history. How did the problem develop?

We have always had mental illness. In the early 1960's President John Kennedy looked at the abuse in asylums and initiated a project to close them down. This process would take decades. Thirty years ago, psychologists were telling us that mentally ill people are less likely to engage in violent behavior. (This was based on the data suggesting 18% of our population is mentally ill, and less than 18% of our convicted criminals were mentally ill at the time.) What they failed to consider, is that our most dangerous mentally ill individuals were locked in institutions and were receiving behavioral consequences, instead of legal charges. Now that institutions have closed, mentally ill people are on the streets, and statistics show that mentally ill people are **3X** more likely to engage in violent behavior.

Perspective: The most dangerous individuals are those under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They are **7X** more likely to be violent.

Testifying in Court

Court: Present what you have & let it go.

- First of all, accept that it is not your job to win in court. It is your job to supervise and hold people accountable.
- Attorneys make me crazy, as it is all about winning and losing for them, when the reality is that it is seldom black and white. Share story in court about attorney asking if his client is “mentally retarded.” (Dick Plocpnick in court)

Daubert vs. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals

Ruled the judge is considered the gate keeper of expert testimony and the data accepted. The Daubert Case applies to all experts. (Psychologists, Corrections Agents, Tire experts, Medical Examiners)

What are the 3 parts of the Daubert standard?

Under Daubert's progeny, scientific expert testimony is admissible when the testimony meets the following three-part test:

- the proffered witness must be an expert,
- the expert must testify about matters requiring scientific, technical, or specialized knowledge; and,
- the expert's testimony must assist the trier of fact. (Trier of fact is the judge, and it refers to assisting his decision in the case.)

In law, a trier of fact, or finder of fact, is a person or group who determines which facts are available in a legal proceeding and how relevant they are to deciding its outcome. To determine a fact is to decide, from the evidence presented, whether something existed, or some event occurred.

“A statistician is a person who drowns in a lake with an average depth of 3 feet”.

Experts who meet with offenders are generally perceived as more credible than those who write books.

Have a pretrial discussion with the attorney, when possible, to get an idea of what will be addressed.

With a jury, refer to your vitae as a resume. Speak in a language they understand. Share the credentials most relevant. If you go on and on, people stop listening.

Don't carry anything to the stand you wouldn't be comfortable with both sides seeing. If you bring something to the stand, either attorney can ask to see it.

Don't slouch. Sit leaning slightly forward as you respond to questions. Sometimes as a powerplay attorneys will look at the jury when asking you a question. In that case, I would look at the jury when I answer.

Stay respectful, even when attorneys aren't. Memorize some facts that I know will come up in the interview, so you're not checking on everything. Knowing a few is enough to appear competent.

Criminal case criteria is "*beyond a reasonable doubt.*"

Civil case criteria is a "preponderance of evidence." (More likely than not.) So any data presented as less than 50% isn't "reasonable certainty."

Example: "It is my opinion there is a 25% chance of developing epilepsy." The case was dismissed based on this testimony. However, the was retried and this testimony was accepted: "I'm 100% certain there is a 25% chance of developing epilepsy." The certainty of the expert has to be greater than 50% even when the odds aren't.

When you need more time, it's acceptable to ask the attorney to repeat the question. If you understand it, and still need more time it's okay to say, "Could I have a few minutes to think about this before I respond?"

Over-advocacy for, or over-criticism, of the client can weaken your testimony. Answer the questions, try not to go further. Avoid humor and sarcasm. Do not try to defend everything. For example an attorney might ask: **Why are you making this recommendation when it's not supported by this other professional ?**

1. You can operate from the perspective that you have additional information the professional didn't have.
2. Say: "If you simply focus on advocating the offender, you might have this opinion. But I serve both the offender and the community. When you look at the larger picture my recommendations best serve our community."
3. Or just say: "I'm not certain what this professional based their opinion on. (I operate from the assumption that 5% of the world is nuts, even those on my side.)"

Answering Questions in court:

Attorney: Are you impartial?

"I don't think it's possible for anyone to be completely impartial, but I'm doing the best I can." Total impartiality is not achievable.

Attorney referring to a book: "Would you consider this text authoritative?"

"No. The problem with textbooks is they are already a year outdated by the time they are printed." I wouldn't consider any book as authoritative.

Attorney: "Would you change your opinion if I presented you with new information?"

"I'm not sure. I am confident in my opinion based on the information I received."

Attorney: 'I noticed you didn't pass your exam the first time."

"I had a bad day. I passed it when I took it in ____." This is a way of minimizing the significance of the statement.

Attorney: "Have you ever told a lie?"

"Not under oath."

Attorney: "Isn't it possible..."

Example 1: "Isn't it possible that this man could turn his life around without having to go to treatment?"

It's possible, but not likely. His abusive behavior was the result of a series of decisions which he managed to rationalize as acceptable. Most likely, he will continue to make poor decisions using those same rationalizations. He would benefit greatly from having his poor choices examined in a therapeutic environment and from guidance developing a healthy lifestyle. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, which is why an intervention is needed.

Example 2: Are placing a restriction on contact with minors because you believe that this man who has only sexually abused girls might also sexually abuse his son?

"It's possible, but not likely. Of greater concern is his lack of effort to create a safe and nurturing environment for a child. I have concerns over what his son might be exposed to."

Attorney: Did you meet with the prosecuting attorney to discuss your testimony before court today?

"Of course."

Attorney: What did you discuss?

"We reviewed my assessment (or recommendations)."

Attorneys are taught to set up a critical question with a series of "yes" responses to obvious questions. It makes it easier for the witness to simply say "yes," to the next question. Stop before responding to the critical question and consider the best response.

I generally leave the courtroom after testifying. I leave because I am not an agent of the court. If I stay a jury might think "you must not be very busy," or "this expert seems too interested in this case (loss of impartiality)."

Our job is not to win or lose cases. Our task is to present the information we have, and allow the court to make it's decision.

We have a larger number of mentally ill people coming out of incarceration today than we ever have had at any point in history. How did the problem develop?

We have always had mental illness. In the early 1960's President John Kennedy looked at the abuse in asylums and initiated a project to close them down. This process would take decades. Thirty years ago, psychologists were telling us that mentally ill people are less likely to engage in violent behavior. (This was based on the data suggesting 18% of our population is mentally ill, and less than 18% of our convicted criminals were mentally ill at the time.) What they failed to consider, is that our most dangerous mentally ill individuals were locked in

institutions and were receiving behavioral consequences, instead of legal charges. Now that institutions have closed, mentally ill people are on the streets, and statistics show that mentally ill people are **3X** more likely to engage in violent behavior.

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Psychopathy:

Antisocial individuals often have good or charming surface-level social skills. Their skills are not very deep or long-lasting, but they can make a good initial impression.

Psychopaths are often abnormally calm when antisocial individuals will become upset or angry. Psychopaths tend to underreact. They lack close emotional relationships. They lack emotional attachment. When they build relationships, it is only for the benefit of themselves. They lack remorse. Antisocial Personality Disordered individuals can have empathy for their children or family. A psychopath is narcissistic and has intense but shallow emotions. They have a high degree of boredom and a need for stimulation. Characteristics of a psychopath include disinhibition, while at the same time, stimulus seeking, meanness (aggressively pursuing what they want without concern of the impact on others), and boldness (as described in this situation as being socially dominate and lacking inhibition). Robert Hare, the world's expert on psychopaths, commented that our society is moving toward valuing some of the traits of psychopathy. Most narcissistic aren't psychopaths. Most psychopaths are very narcissistic. A high degree of narcissism makes them more dangerous. Their lack of contrition seems to stand out most in the interviews. Individuals with psychopathy will typically not back down when caught in a lie. Instead, they tend to double down and argue for the lie. They are talkative and attempt to dominate the conversation. They will often shift the topic if they feel they are not in control. They often omit essential details and avoid words associated with emotion. Psychopaths have a low frustration tolerance. Female psychopaths don't exist in equal numbers, but they exist. Female psychopaths still tend to have some interest in social interaction. They are more prone to social forms of manipulation. Female psychopaths are more likely to use sexuality rather than force. It is estimated that about one in ten psychopaths are female. With regard to behavior, female psychopaths may use sexuality more than men because it is available to them. In other words, psychopaths will use what is available to manipulate others. If that same resource was there for men, they would use it also.

Psychopaths do not beat polygraph examinations (lie detector tests). Dr. Robert Hare is the expert. {HARE PCL-R}.

Recognize the Stress of the work

Symptoms of Stress:

- Feeling overwhelmed, moodiness, irregular sleep, problems with memory, and physical aches and pains.

Stress from family of offenders

- Remember the client got everyone in the situation. The family is a secondary victim. “They’ve been inconveniencing you for a really long time and you’re still putting up with it.” It is difficult to maintain an addiction without help from others.
- Set boundaries. I cannot share this information without his consent.

Make a list

- Stress builds up one event at a time until you have an overwhelming pile. The only way to address this is one at a time. Make a list and start picking them off one at a time. Try to do the worst one first as you will think about this until you address it. Once the worst is done, the rest are easier.

Too much “yes” leads to stress

- Stop taking on new tasks and agreeing to help others. For everything you add, you need to stop doing something else to maintain your balance. Everything you agree to do is a decision to spend less time with someone else.
- Distinguish between what you “have to do” and “could do” (every year I dump the “could do” basket in the garbage).

Re-prioritize your life

- Family will always be the most important, but you have to take time to **exercise**, 20 minutes. You have to take time to **relax**. Eat **healthy**. You do not have to be perfect. Just better. Develop a regular **sleep** routine.

Burnout

- Let’s re-examine the whole situation. Reframe the thoughts you have about your stress. Anger assignment in the workbook. Pay attention to your selftalk. Are you escalating yourself or calming down. What do I want to do? What would a decent person do? What if you approached this situation with a different attitude? “A new light through old windows.” 90% of people who leave employment are competent in their jobs, but are leaving for interpersonal reasons. When I worked for the state I used to say, “It’s not a bad job if you don’t think about it.” It is generally not the work that upsets people, it is concerns about unfairness. Focus on your job.

Serenity Prayer (Religious version)
(Paraphrased from the writing of Reinhold Niebuhr)

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;

Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it.
Trusting that God will make all things right,
If I surrender to acceptance;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy, forever in the next.

Serenity Prayer (Non-religious version)

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference.

To live one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time.
Accepting that hardship is the pathway to peace.

To learn to accept the world as it is,
Rather than as I believe it should be.
I will trust that things will work out in the long run
If I surrender to acceptance now.
Over time I will achieve peace,
And a happiness beyond what I can currently comprehend.

- What motivated you to go into this field?
- Give coworkers credit for their successes, or for handling situations well. “A measure of maturity is your ability to appreciate the success of others.” When you do this, you will eventually find others helping you. Do not expect to see this reciprocated for four months. All of our emotions exist in relation to others (anger, love...).
- Take breaks.
- Take time to organize. It will save you time in the long run.
- Be realistic. Do not overschedule. Only so much can be done in one day (often less).
- Talk about stressors, but tell them you are not expecting solutions. You just need to say it (vent). Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus.

Consider the effect of our work on our family, friends, and community:

- “Everything can be taken from a us but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.” Viktor Frankl

- “Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself. Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it.” Viktor Frankl

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Anxiety Disorders

Helpful Hints

Avoidance is not a healthy coping strategy. You need to find ways to work through your anxiety.

- 1. Focus on a neutral stimulus.** When you are anxious, focus on a neutral stimulus, such as deep breathing. Longer inhales reduce anxiety. They slow your central nervous system and allow you to think more clearly. A panic attack takes about twenty minutes to work through. Keep in mind it will be over in twenty minutes. It will not kill you! Focus on deep breathing.
- 2. Find the origin of your anxiety.** If you struggle with panic attacks, consider when the panic attacks first occurred. This may have been years earlier or even in your childhood. Talk to a therapist about this. Acceptance is a big part of reducing anxiety. Accept that you cannot avoid being in the situation you are in now. It's here. You can only choose what you do from this point forward. Instead of wasting energy shaming yourself, use your brain to make your life better.
- 3. Share with others that you are anxious.** You would be surprised how many others struggle with similar feelings. Sharing often results in others giving you permission to relax and be less worried.
- 4. Take action.** Anxiety builds one event at a time, so it needs to be alleviated the same way. Make a list of things you need to do and start doing them one at a time. Do the worst first if possible, as that will make the rest easier. Figure out what is making you anxious and address it. For example, if finances are your concern, work toward drawing up a budget.
- 5. Let it go.** Do not dwell on past concerns. Change what you can and let the rest take its course. Don't over schedule your life. Everything you take on is a decision to do less of something else. "Too much yes leads to stress."
- 6. Break the cycle.** When you feel anxious, take a brisk walk or engage in a hobby to refocus. Exercise, particularly outdoor exercise, produces endorphins and reduces anxiety.
- 7. Stick to your treatment plan.** Keep therapy appointments. Consistency can make a big difference, especially when it comes to taking your medication.
- 8. Socialize.** Do not let worries isolate you from loved ones or enjoyable activities. Social interaction and caring relationships can lessen your worries and will ultimately make your life more enjoyable.
- 9. Self-talk.** Tell yourself, "I will be okay. It is just my anxiety. I have been through this before. Every time I fight through it, I get stronger."

Major Depressive Disorder

Helpful Hints

Noncompliance is the biggest obstacle to resolving depression. I tell people, “There is nothing I may be able to say to you today which will end your depression, but there are a number of tasks I can ask you to do which will begin to relieve your depression.” Remember, depression is not cured overnight. It takes approximately nine months, in most cases, to work through an individual’s depressive symptoms. If friends or professionals can help them follow through with the following recommendations, resolution typically occurs.

- 1. Attend counseling to receive help addressing the thoughts and circumstances which contribute to the depression.**
- 2. Consult a physician or a psychiatrist to see if medication intervention is necessary.** Most physicians can prescribe antidepressant medication.
- 3. Develop a regular exercise routine.** It is essential that you push yourself to be active, as your brain produces endorphins when you are active, which make you feel better. This can be as simple as walking. Start small and maintain or increase it. (Fifteen minutes of walking is better than none.) Keep in mind friends can encourage and help with this by encouraging their participation in a physical activity. (Walk with them.)
- 4. Develop a regular sleep schedule.** It is helpful to have a regular bed time. They should not be utilizing video games, their cell phone or T.V. after it is time to go to sleep. They should be getting up at a regular time and have expectations of involvement in activities.
- 5. Proper nutrition is helpful.** Help them maintain a healthy diet and find healthy snacks. Try not to reinforce behavior with junk food. If they are overweight, help them reduce portions to the size of their palm. Increase intake of fruits, whole grains and calcium while reducing intake of foods with salt and sugar. Folic Acid and Vitamin B-12 are low in some individuals with depression.
- 6. The individual should abstain from alcohol and illegal drug use.** Alcohol is a depressant. Illegal drugs have a negative impact on brain chemistry and exacerbate mental illness.
- 7. Social activity helps reduce depressive symptoms.** People often have the least desire to attend activities when they would benefit from them the most. Encourage social involvement. Take a moment to talk to them and let them know that people care about them.
- 8. Help with problem solving day to day difficulties has been found to be useful, particularly with older adults.**

Resource: Anyone in MN can text “741741” anytime of day or night and receive free anonymous help.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Five phases of response to trauma. (Identify which stage the person is in.)

1. Outcry
 - Also known as “emergency”, this is marked by intense responses and high levels of anxiety. Instinctual “Fight or Flight” response may occur.
2. Denial (numbing and avoidance) “I’m okay.”
 - Also known as “emergency”, this is marked by intense responses and high levels of anxiety. Instinctual “Fight or Flight” response may occur. “If you wouldn’t be that way, I wouldn’t respond like this.”
3. Intrusions (pangs and repetitions). Every time partner makes an urgent request (s)he shuts off, because it immediately reminds partner of abusive father.
 - Individuals will do their best to protect themselves from mental anguish by denying emotions they are struggling with.
 - Crisis workers may create a safe haven where the client can both address and the issues and escape the issue
4. Working through: helps the client regain a sense of control
 - Also known as the transition stage, individuals begin to accept and understand the trauma and how it has affected their life. Positivity for the future begins to increase.
5. Restoration of Equilibrium
 - Also known as the integration phase, coping skills to address PTSD symptoms are used in daily life.

Causes

1. Maltreatment during childhood
 2. Sexual or physical abuse (The predominant cause of PTSD in the U.S. is rape or physical abuse)
 3. Combat or war (Psychological reactions to war most often occur during down times after a period of combat)
 4. Automobile accident
 5. Natural Disasters
- **A person who has support people to help them immediately after a trauma is less likely to develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.** As a matter of fact, **the immediate level of support is more significant in recovery than the severity of the trauma.** Soldiers who receive brief simple treatments, while being allowed to remain on duty, have the best treatment outcomes. This option is not always possible.

- Give the person credit for surviving and getting help. Give them credit for changing. You need to get them to see the trauma as a bad slice of life, rather than the event that ruined their life. Their life is not ruined. It was a bad event.

Helpful Hints

1. **Let them know you will try to be available to listen when they are ready to talk.** Therapy involves giving them a greater sense of control, so you need to give them some control over when the issue is discussed
2. **Encourage them to exercise.** This can help reduce their anxiety and improve their feelings of self-worth
3. **Help them develop a support system through family, friends and spiritual groups.**
4. **Agree that you can call a “timeout” during a disagreement and the discussion will stop.** Give each other a time when you will resume the discussion (if necessary). This could be 4 hours or 20 minutes later, depending on the person. When you resume the conversation, focus on a solution, rather than what was said previously. Be positive. Blame takes you farther away from solutions. Use “I” statements and avoid “you” statements. For example, “I felt sad over discussion,” rather than “you’re an idiot.”
5. **Encourage them to attend counseling and share their feelings.**
6. **Nightmares can be addressed by allowing the individual to talk about them or journal about them.** When we try to repress memories, they sometimes come out in our dreams. Discussing the problems reduce the frequency of this over time.
7. **Sexual reactivity can be addressed through desensitization.** An example would be having a person who was sexually assaulted in the past experience soothing nonsexual touch (back rubs or foot rubs) from a loving partner. “Touch” is then associated with positive memories.
8. **Rage is the most difficult PTSD symptom to treat.** Rage is often addressed through a combination of medication, relaxation techniques (including learning to self-timeout) and behavioral strategies. Domestic Violence programs are helpful.
9. **Family therapy can be helpful, as it allows each family member to share how they are affected by the problem.**

Resources

National center for PTSD: Their purpose is to improve the well-being and understanding of PTSD

Telephone: (802)296-6300

Website: www.ptsd.va.gov

Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute, Inc.: They are a non-profit organization of international scope that helps people understand, recover from, and treat traumatic stress (including PTSD) and many other mental health illnesses

Telephone: (410)825-8888

Website: www.sidran.org

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder may be related to over-activity of norepinephrine

Helpful Hints

1. **Minimize caffeine use, and avoid alcohol and illegal drugs.**
2. **Keep a mood chart.** During waking hours, individuals should keep track of their mood on an hourly basis for ten days. Their mood should be rated on a scale where “1” would be very depressed and “10” would be hyperactive. This helps individuals understand the relationship between mood and their behavior.
3. **Have a regular sleep routine.** There should be no television, video games, and no computer use in their bedroom. At the very least, television, video games, and the computer should not be accessed when the individual should be sleeping. Bipolar individuals need a sleep routine, as they tend to have sleeping difficulties.
4. **Bipolar individuals need a routine that is regularized as much as possible.** Employment or volunteer work can help develop this structure. Stressors which could destabilize routines should be addressed ahead of time whenever possible.
5. **Try to implement a couple of different rules.** The first is the “two-person rule,” which means that individuals should not make major decisions until first checking with two stable people. The second is the “forty-eight-hour rule”. If it is a good idea, it will still be a good in forty-eight hours. This would reduce their poor impulsive choices.
6. **The individual needs to realize that medication compliance is necessary to achieve their desired goals.**
7. **Bipolar individuals need to learn to self-timeout.** They typically do not calm down until they separate from others (go to their room or step outside). When a bipolar person is upset, continued interaction will likely escalate their anger. I recommend a “two-volley rule.” If the client is upset and the staff tries to calm them (volley 1) but the client becomes even more upset, staff should end the conversation (volley 2). Do not try to get the last word in. Allow the conflict to end and discuss it later when they have calmed down.

Domestic Abuse is the most dangerous situation a law enforcement officer enters. Remember it’s a big thing for people to call the police. The level of trauma is seldom expressed immediately. I recently was given a recorded domestic abuse incident to listen to by the victim. She wanted her husband to listen the next day, to see how bad he is when he’s drunk, not realizing she would be physically assaulted and raped before it was over. He repeatedly made her say, “You are my master.” It was amazing how quickly he sobered up and became polite when the police arrived. Without the recording, you would have no idea of how severe the trauma was that night. He never had to listen to the recording. His attorney argued, “It would be too traumatic for him.”

Emotional intensity is like a pot on a burner.

1. Separate from the burner (remove from situation or person that’s triggering anger.).
2. Allow to cool. (Interview individuals separately and don’t leave too quickly.)

Borderline Personality Disorder

Helpful Hints

All personality disorders involve externalizing problems to avoid responsibility. There was a time in their life where they felt burned, so they feel this response pattern is necessary to avoid abandonment.

- 1. Encourage individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder to regulate their own emotions.** They are hyper-reactive to environmental stimuli. Do not take it personally. This is why the client needs help. The best description of Borderline Personality Disorder is, “When the engine gets hot the brakes don’t work.”
- 2. Do not try to get in the last word.** Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder always get in the last word. I point out that anger is part of our emotional repertoire. Instead of asking, “Are you angry?” I ask, “How angry are you?”
- 3. Borderline clients always target one staff.** Normalize this by pointing this out to the staff person and encourage that staff person to be patient and maintain good boundaries. I point out to the client that we choose how we respond. Ask yourself, “What would happen if you didn’t respond at all?” No response is the best solution.
- 4. Be respectful in all of your interactions with the client.** Give them credit when they have “normal” problems instead of always being in crisis.
- 5. Make certain to give them attention when they are not in crisis.** They know they can get attention by self-harm. They need to learn to obtain attention in an appropriate manner.
- 6. Borderline Personality Disorder individuals accept feelings as fact.** Help them understand their feelings are the result of the way they respond and they could respond differently.
- 7. Strongly encourage therapy attendance.** Regular therapy results in biological changes in the brain and increased coping skills. One Borderline Personality Disorder individual shared that when she started therapy she could “barely see beyond the hood of her car” so she was always reacting. After her involvement in therapy, she could see three blocks ahead and was smart enough to turn rather than go down some roads.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

Helpful Hints

- 1. Hold them accountable for their behavior.** Stick with a behavioral plan, or develop a system of rewards and consequences if one is not in place. Adjust the plan to address their efforts to manipulate it. (Most people who exhibit antisocial behavior either had it modeled to them or had no accountability as children. Their defense attorney typically provided support for not taking responsibility for their actions.)
- 2. Help them learn to regulate their emotions.** You might say, for example, “You are becoming upset. It is time to take a walk.” Have them consider their “self-talk” and how it both can escalate and de-escalate their emotions.
- 3. Expect them to remain alcohol and illegal drug free.** The likelihood of change without sobriety is poor.
- 4. Make them earn what they receive.** Do not be one more person they take advantage of. If they truly care for you, they will make the effort to earn favors. They don’t respect people who easily give in.
- 5. Expect that they abide by rules or conditions of probation.** Report them if they do not. I have sent some individuals to jail five times before they eventually implemented honest life changes. They later thanked me and admitted that they never would have changed if they would have been allowed to bend the rules.
- 6. Understand that they will complain and make insulting comments when they face consequences.** This is the nature of the disorder and they have been able to get people to back down by acting this way in the past. Do not spend time arguing with them. Simply expect them to deal with the consequences and tell them you will start over again with helping them when the consequences are finished.
- 7. Address co-existing conditions (such as depression).**
- 8. Give them credit for prosocial behavior (going out of their way to help someone).** Keep in mind they manipulate others because it is rewarding. Make it rewarding to be decent.

Schizophrenia

The most common form of hallucinations are auditory (hearing voices). They are typically not constant and there are situations that make the voices worse. The most common form of delusions are paranoia, often involving law enforcement.

Helpful Hints

1. **Medication intervention is necessary.** You cannot talk someone out of severe paranoid ideation; attempting to do so makes them feel that you are part of the conspiracy against them.
2. **It is most helpful to think of each psychotic episode as a stroke which will require cognitive work to recover from.**
3. **One of the best things you can do is have them work on puzzles or mental tasks that they can be successful at.** Try to find tasks that do not appear so childlike that they are condescending. Understand that they may only participate for a short period of time to start with, and be accepting of this. Cognitive remediation involves having them perform repetitive tasks. (Have them “overlearn” tasks by repeating them.)
4. **Individuals with Schizophrenia function best when things are ordered and structured.** Keep in mind that their thoughts are very fragmented. Structure can give them some security and keep them taking care of daily tasks, such as brushing their teeth, eating, going to bed, etc. Without structure, all of these basic tasks would only occur occasionally.
5. **Organize their environment.** If you want them to dress better, put nice clothes on a hanger next to their bed. Thought disordered people typically wear what they can easily find. If you are concerned that they are not brushing their teeth, make sure the toothbrush is in an obvious spot. (It is not unusual for a thought disordered person to store their toothbrush in an odd place, like their bottom dresser drawer.) Getting them to use checklists can be particularly helpful in helping them organize their behavior. They struggle with generalizing learning, so a task may need to be relearned in a new environment.
6. **Teach them by overlearning correct steps.** Eliminate options to guess wrong. Individuals with Schizophrenia have difficulty distinguishing the correct response from others, so give them the correct response and rehearse it with them. Mark Vonnegut (the son of author Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.) wrote that having Schizophrenia is like being on a train racing at 200 miles an hour because the thoughts occur so fast and so random. Make learning easy. I wrote a program to teach an individual with Schizophrenia to use his laundry basket. We put it in the middle of his bedroom and every week moved it one inch closer to the closet. In one year, he was putting his dirty clothes in the laundry basket in the closet.

- 7. Understand that they will have days where they will not function well.** Minimize expectations on those days and help them through it. Being psychotic is very scary, as it is all real to them. Make sure their psychiatrist is made aware of the frequency of the difficult days

Schizoaffective Disorder

In psychology “affect” refers to mood. Depression is a mood disorder. Someone with schizoaffective disorder meets the criteria for both schizophrenia and depression. (For example: They experience hallucinations or delusions and periods of depression.) You can use the hints listed under each.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

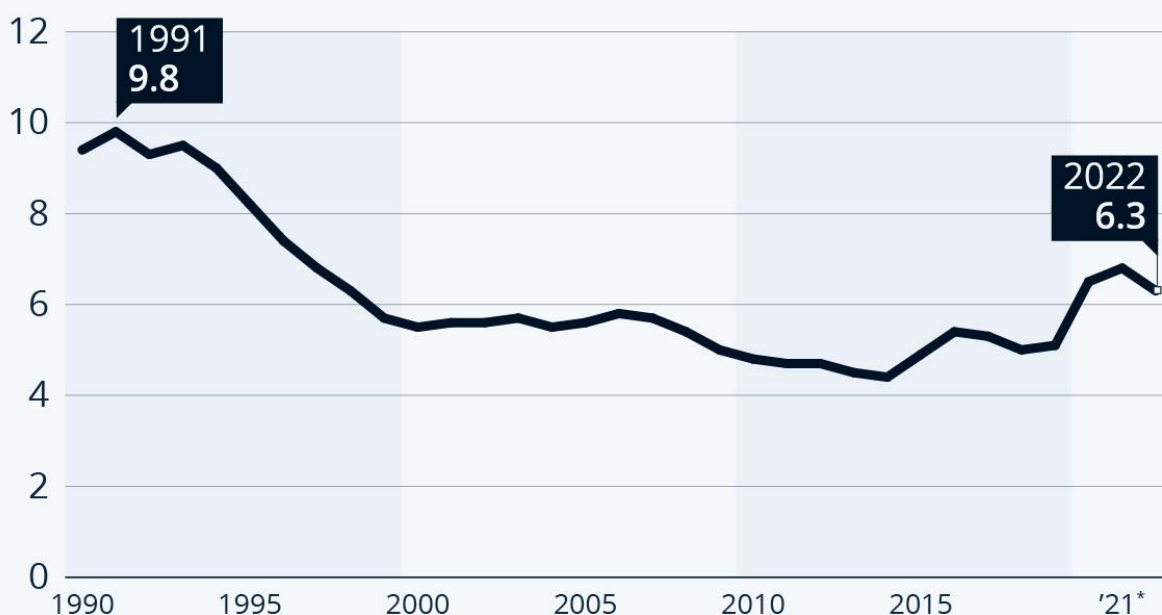
Helpful Hints

1. **Persistence.** Encourage them to attend scheduled therapy sessions. Remember they will have occasional setbacks. During their periods of “narcissistic injury,” they will insult you. Understand it is part of their disorder and do not take it personally. Bring the focus back to resolving the problem at hand. When they bring up the past ask, “How come I’m the only one interested in moving on here?”
2. **Narcissistic individuals accept feelings as fact.** They may say, “I feel this way because you screwed up.” The truth is they feel this way because they always over-react to situations. My favorite quote from a Narcissistic person is: “I know you think I’m narcissistic, but I’ve never been in a room where I wasn’t the smartest and best looking person.”
3. **Teach individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder about their disorder.** Educate them so that they can better understand their symptoms, risk factors and treatment options. Help them recognize the self-statements which begin their unrealistic thoughts. There was a time in their life where they were burned and they feel this response style is necessary for self-protection. They pay a great price in loss of love and creativity as a result of their rigidity. They’re afraid of being ordinary. They desire admiration but prefer to be admired at a distance since it’s safer. Narcissists are the “empty actor.” They don’t want people to see the fraud underneath. Everything is to maintain their image. Help them find the person beneath the surface.
4. **Encourage them to seek help for additional mental health problems.** Their addictions, depression, anxiety and stress can feed off one another, leading to a negative cycle of emotional distress and unhealthy behavior. Alcohol and drug use exacerbates narcissistic and antisocial characteristics.
5. **Prompt them to use relaxation and stress management techniques.** Stress-reduction techniques, such as meditation, progressive relaxation, yoga or other forms of relaxation, are particularly helpful during high stress times. Soothing and calming helps prevent outbursts.
6. **Remind them of their goals.** Recovery from Narcissistic Personality Disorder can take many years. Keep them motivated by helping them keep their recovery goals in mind. Remind them that they can repair some damaged relationships and become happier with their life. Henry Ford put it simply when he stated, “Whether you think you can or think you can't - you are right.” Their fixed patterns are amenable to change.
7. **Share the “Jack story” to help them understand how their ruminative thoughts distort reality.** A man has a flat tire. He is in the middle of nowhere and has no cell phone reception. He opens up the trunk and realizes the handle to the jack is missing, so he needs to get help. He sees a light on in a farmhouse ahead and starts walking toward it.

As he is walking toward the farmhouse, he starts considering that the farmer may not wish to help him. The farmer may choose to refuse to help him. The farmer may have heard stories about his family and may not like them. As he gets close to the farmhouse, the farmer steps out the door to see what he wants. The man yells at the farmer, “You can keep your damn jack,” and walks back to his car. His misery is a result of his own internal rumination.

U.S. Homicide Rate Comes Down From Pandemic Peak

Homicide rate per 100,000 people in the U.S. (1990-2022)



* Estimation. Limited data in 2021 due to reporting system change

Source: FBI



Secondary Stress Trauma

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

Dr. Naomi Rachel Ramen

- ▶ Secondary Stress Trauma (STS) is the emotional strain of exposure from working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. STS is from indirect trauma, not from personally experiencing the trauma, from working with those who have. (Also known as Compassion Fatigue or Vicarious Trauma.)
- ▶ Not to be confused with burnout, which happens over time, STS is a state of tension and preoccupation with the stories/pictures of trauma they have witnessed or have been shared by victims or coworkers.
- ▶ STS can impact a person’s personal life (such as relationships with family and friends), and emotional and physical health.
- ▶ **What Makes an Event Traumatic? It ...**
- ▶ Involves a threat—real or perceived—to one’s physical or emotional well-being.
- ▶ Is overwhelming.
- ▶ Results in intense feelings of fear and lack of control.
- ▶ Leaves one feeling helpless.
- ▶ Changes the way a person thinks of the world, themselves, and others.

Tools for Treating STS

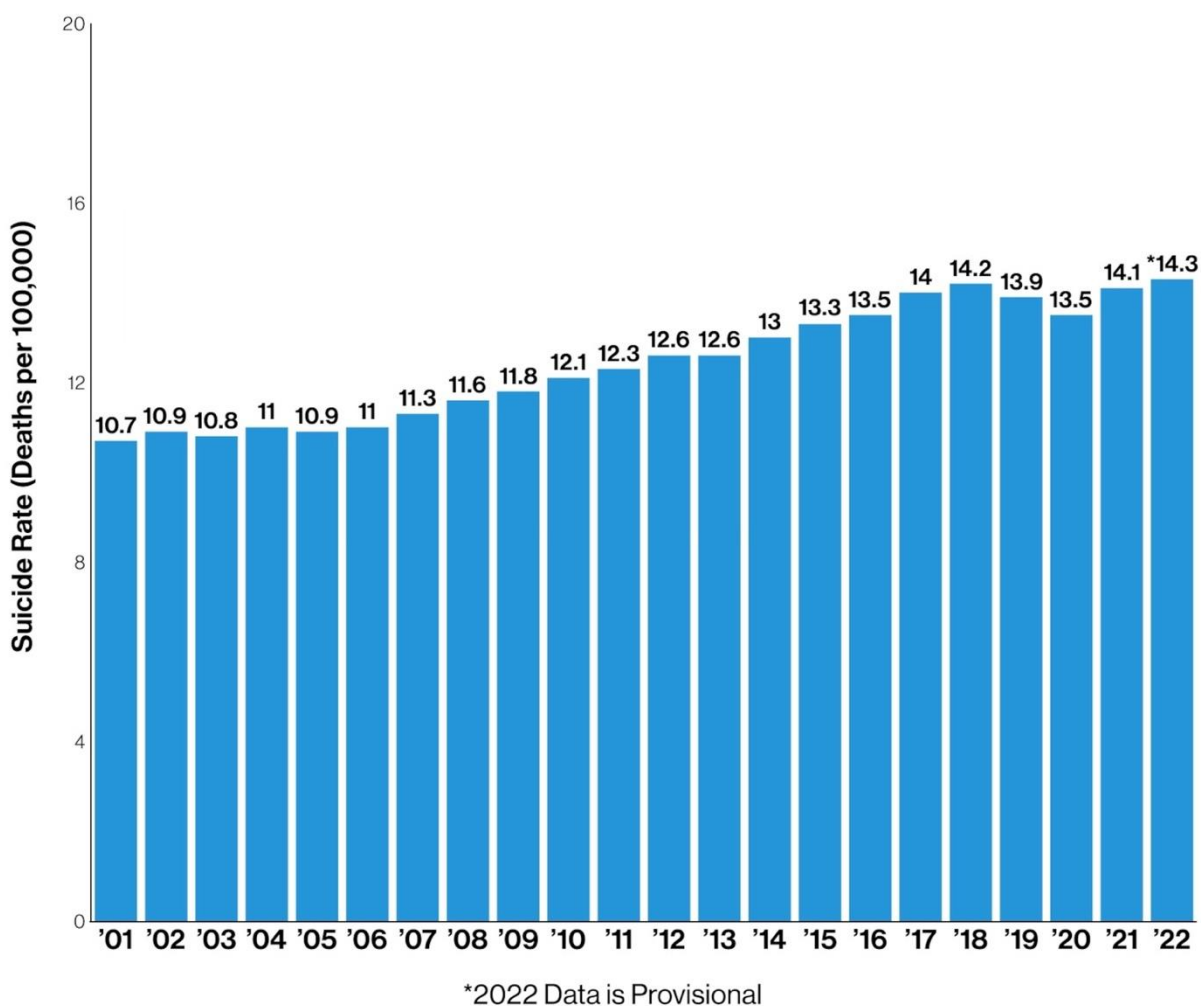
- Develop a warning system
 - Not everyone will experience STS the same. Recognize your warning signs.
 - Identify a rating scale of 1 to 10; learn to recognize what an 8 or 9 looks like. For example, “When I stop returning phone calls, I know I am at an 8.” Consider an 8 or above your “Red Zone”.
- Implement an immediate strategy if you are approaching your Red Zone, such as taking a week off from work, avoiding trauma work if possible, or seeking the help of a therapist.
- To avoid reaching the Red Zone, practice good self-care. (*Eat healthy, Exercise, Share*)

Risk Factors

Personal	Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma history • Pre-existing psychological disorder • Young age at time of trauma • Isolation, inadequate support system • Loss in last 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of quality supervision • High percentage of trauma survivors in caseload • Little experience • Worker/organization mismatch • Lack of professional support system

Suicide Rate in the United States

2001-2022



SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS, NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

Self-care

Nutrition	Breathe
Exercise	Call a friend
Social activities	Music
Mindfulness	Journal
Sleep	Alone time
Support	Pets
Patience	Therapy
Vacation	Support systems
Spirituality	

Organization Strategies

- ▶ Create a healthy work environment/organizational culture. Give others credit for successes. Ask about family. “The best measure of maturity is your ability to appreciate someone else’s success.
- ▶ Providing supportive leadership
- ▶ Providing quality supervision
- ▶ Debrief staff
- ▶ Hosting staff/team meetings, retreats, formal and informal opportunities to socialize
- ▶ Encouraging formal and informal peer support
- ▶ Acknowledging stress and Secondary stress as real issues
- ▶ Providing training and education encouraging staff health and wellness

STS Resources

A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professionals:

https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/ojpasset/Documents/CI_Management_In_First_Responders-508.pdf

Mental Health Services Locator:

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Vicarious Trauma Toolkit:

<https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/>

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Tantrum vs. Meltdown

A temper tantrum is not an autistic meltdown but both children with and without autism will have tantrums and meltdowns

What to do when an Autistic Child has a Tantrum:

1. Recognizing the motivation or purpose of the tantrum
2. Reinforcing positive behavior
3. Building the skills

Meltdown:

1. Autism meltdowns come from overwhelm or overstimulation
2. Involuntary reaction to overwhelming stressors, be they a sensory response or a cognitive response to overload
3. Doesn't care how others will respond
4. No involvement in the social situation

Tantrum:

1. Willful manipulation of behavior to get a required result
2. Requires cognitive functioning
3. Will look to see if they are getting a reaction
4. Can alter behavior for safety
5. Is in control and used to their advantage
- 6. Tantrums can turn into Meltdowns**

Warning signs of an eruption:

- Pacing back and forth in circles
- Increasing self-stimulatory behavior (flapping hands, self-talking)
- Perseverating on one topic
- Repeating words over and over
- Difficulty answering questions (cognitive breakdown)
- Stuttering or showing pressured speech or mute
- Extreme resistance to disengaging from a ritual or routine

Best Strategies to Calming Autism Tantrums and Meltdowns

TANTRUM

1. The motivation or purpose of the tantrum behavior

- To get attention
- To get what he wants/needs
- Denial of want/need
- Delayed access to what he wants/needs

Once you identify *WHY* they are throwing a tantrum, you can respond more appropriately. *For example: Bobby wanted to choose the TV show, but his sister put on Sesame Street before he got to the remote to turn on Dora. Bobby is now on the floor kicking, yelling, and crying (tantrum). Bobby wanted to choose Dora as the TV show but didn't get his way (purpose of behavior). The adult could calmly, concisely respond with "I see that you are [angry/disappointed/frustrated] because you didn't get to choose your TV show. When you're calm, we'll talk about it (walk away)" (parental response). When Bobby calms down, he can then be engaged in conversation about how to solve the TV show problem, but he does not get his Dora TV show immediately.*

2. Reinforce positive behavior

Catch your child when they ARE responding appropriately to small problems and praise them or reward them for great behavior! A hug, high-five, or "Way to go!" are all ways of proactively avoiding those tantrum outbursts by teaching your child that he has your attention for the times he's successful too!

Calling attention to what he does right, in the moment, will also help him build on those successes and positively respond in the future! In addition, modeling appropriate behavior yourself or pointing out acceptable behaviors in others can help reinforce appropriate ways for your child to respond and behave.

3. Build the skills

We know that children who demonstrate temper tantrums frequently struggle with impulse control, problem-solving, delaying gratification, negotiating, communicating wishes and needs, knowing what's appropriate in given situations, and self-soothing. Look for opportunities to build on these skills with your child and help them to be successful. It is best to work on these skills outside of tantrum moments, however.

MELTDOWN

Because every person with autism is different, it is impossible to have a one set of strategies for everyone.

Some common ones that support regulation across the day:

- Visual schedules
- Social stories
- Check-off lists
- Activity or task schedules
- Routine sensory diet activities, for example; using a weighted blanket during sleep, engaging in deep pressure activities at certain times in the daily routine, etc.
- May be helpful for scheduled quiet time
- Having a safe place to calm down

Portable Sensory Tool Kit for Meltdowns:

1. Sunglasses

- Sunglasses can be great for light sensitivity. Whether the sun can be too bright, or your child must deal with the harsh light of fluorescent light bulbs

2. A Weighted Lap Pad

- Like we mentioned above about deep touch pressure being a way to calm a person with autism, a weighted lap pad can help with this as well

3. Noise-Canceling Headphones

- Often, noises can become too much. Having a good pair of over the ear noise-canceling headphones to block out auditory stimuli or distraction can really help

4. A Wide-Brimmed Hat or Cap

- These can be helpful in allowing them some distance from social interactions and also good for blocking any remaining light

5. Chewy, Crunchy Snack

- While snacks are always good to have on hand, crunchy ones can help because oral proprioceptive input is calming

6. Unscented Hand Wipes

- These help with any tactile sensitivity when they accidentally touch something that irritates them

7. Preferred Scented Hand Lotion

- These can be helpful in combining offensive odors in the environment and instead offering a calming, preferred smell

8. A Fidget Toy

- Something repetitive, simple, and preferred can have a calming effect

Helpful Hints

1. **Make sure to notify the autistic individual of changes prior to making the change.** Not knowing what comes next makes them extremely anxious. Routines are important to autistic individuals. Autistic individuals are more accepting of change if they are notified ahead of time. This may include notifying them that you will be making an additional stop before going home/school, a change in Para/caregiver, or anything else that changes their normal schedule. (If you do not give them notification, you may end up dealing with a long lasting outburst.)
2. **Keep your voice as calm as possible when dealing with an outburst or escalation in behaviors.** It will keep them from escalating further, and usually helps bring behaviors back to their normal range fairly quickly.
3. **Don't push them to accomplish a task that a standard child of their age might be able to do, but they cannot.** Modify the task as needed. Pushing makes for a frustrating, angry day. This does not accomplish anything other than very bad days for the autistic individual. Activities need to be modified to the level of the child in question, not the developmental standards. The program needs to fit the individual's needs. They will excel farther and faster socially and academically if the program is designed specifically for them.
4. **Help individuals with Autism stay organized.** While they may be academically intelligent, they struggle with setting priorities.
5. **Be explicit (hints will not work).** Check to make sure they understand.
6. **Encourage self-care for family members.** Autistic individuals often have sleep disorders which affect their caregivers. Even discussing concerns with another parent of an autistic child on the phone is helpful.
7. **Avoid isolation.** Encourage them to interact socially and participate in clubs, when possible, or church youth groups.
8. **Role-play conversations to assist them with improving their skills.** Autistic individuals struggle with normal interactions and need to improve their social skills. Floor time (sitting on the floor and interacting face-to-face with the child) is an important part of teaching young children social reciprocity.
9. **Pick and choose your battles.** An obsession with violent pornography is concerning. An obsession with wearing clothing so the seams are on the outside is much less concerning
10. **Anticipate that you will be dealing with a picky eater who may dislike foods because of color and texture.** Identify foods that will meet their nutritional needs, and give them the opportunity to select from them. Encourage them to try new foods, but don't force them.

- 11. Be careful not to jump to conclusions.** Individuals with Autism are often sensory focused. During times of stress or excess stimulation they may begin rocking or rubbing themselves. They may learn that masturbation is calming and begin doing this in public. Help them to replace these behaviors with other appropriate calming skills, such as using Play-Doh, a stress ball, or another item of choice. Sensory stimulation activities can be relaxing, such as weighted mats or a sensory brush. The items should be age appropriate. Individuals with Autism may also struggle with the way clothes feel. It is not uncommon for them to undress in public or stay in the room without clothing. Allow them to choose clothing they feel comfortable in. Adult clothing is available in a variety of textures.
- 12. For some individuals, self-help skills are a greater priority than academic task.** Learning to wash their hands properly lessens the stress on their caregiver.

Intermittent Explosive Disorder

Helpful Hints

1. **Help them develop a card to carry with calming thoughts.** They can take out the card every time they are angry. Calming thoughts do not naturally occur to someone with Intermittent Explosive Disorder. The card may have simple statements such as: “I do not have to get along with all my friends all the time.” “Take a deep breath and think before talking.” “This is not the end of the world.” “Will this situation become worse if I react?” “What would happen if instead, I did not react?”
2. **Teach them to recognize things they can feel or see happening in their body when they are angry.** (Red face, dry mouth, increased heart rate.) It is time to take deep breaths if I have raised my voice, it is time to take a walk.
3. **When they start to become upset, teach them to take a “timeout” to calm down before they act.** It is the most important step to preventing assaultive behavior. It is the difference between being in trouble and walking away without problems. The difference between people who get charged with assault and those who do not, is that people who do not get charged have the wisdom to walk away.
4. **Know what to say to yourself and who to call when you are upset.** I say to myself, “Shut up,” because like most guys, talking when I am angry only makes me angrier. I need to shut up for a bit in order to calm down. Women may calm down when talking, but men tend to escalate. Men often need a cooling off period before a productive discussion will occur. Call someone who you can count on to help you calm down.
5. **Have them work through how they escalate and how they can de-escalate in therapy.** Have them take out the card and read it, to make it a habit.
6. **Have a repertoire of anger reducing activities.** A lot of people get the house cleaned, or the yard picked up when they are angry. Anger is energy. Use it productively.
7. **Go to bed angry.** Not everything can be resolved tonight. If it’s late, and you have to work tomorrow, let it go for the evening and allow yourself to address it tomorrow.
8. **The rule of 7.** Think of seven reasons the person might have acted that way, instead of simply to make you mad.
9. **Challenge them:** Work toward meeting a need that isn’t currently being met. If their partner needs them to talk further (out of a fear of abandonment) challenge them to do this.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Helpful Hints

- 1. Praise and reward good behavior promptly.** Since individuals with AD/HD have difficulty processing directions and other information, it is likely they are bombarded with corrections, leaving them with a low opinion of themselves. Reinforcing good behavior will make it more likely to occur again in the future.
- 2. Be consistent with discipline and make sure other caregivers follow through.**
- 3. Make a list of tasks to be accomplished each day.** Make sure they are not trying to do too much. Break down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. They can use sticky pads to write notes to themselves and place them on the fridge, on the bathroom mirror, in the car, or in other places where they will benefit from having a reminder. Take time to set up systems to file and organize information, both on their electronic devices, and for paper documents. Help them get in the habit of using these systems consistently.
- 4. Set and follow routines for meals, bedtime, play, and other activities.** Keep items, like keys and wallets, in the same place.
- 5. Make instructions simple and specific.** Divide large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. For example, "Brush your teeth, and then get dressed," instead of "Go get ready for school."
- 6. Ask for help from family members or loved ones.** Everyone needs help. It can be exhausting at times, so enlisting others for both emotional and physical support will reduce tension in the family.
- 7. Maintain a balanced diet.** Most diets that have been promoted for AD/HD involve eliminating foods thought to increase hyperactivity, such as sugar and caffeine, and common allergens such as wheat, milk, and eggs. Although studies have not proved a consistent link, some diets recommend eliminating artificial food colorings and additives. If certain foods are followed by increased symptoms, you may want to try eliminating it from their diet to see if it makes a difference. However, consult with your doctor or dietitian before starting a limited diet. A diet that eliminates too many foods can be unhealthy because it may lack necessary vitamins and nutrients.

- 8. Talk to colleagues, supervisors, and teachers.** AD/HD can make work and school a challenge. Individuals may feel embarrassed telling their boss or their professor that they have AD/HD, but most likely they'll be willing to make small accommodations to help them succeed. Encourage them to ask for what they need to improve their performance at work or school, such as more in-depth explanations or more time on certain tasks.
- 9. Help them understand mindfulness.** Have them name three things in the room, two things that they hear and one thing that they feel and have them describe each one. This will help them to focus on the moment.
- 10. Make time for exercise,** outside in a natural setting if possible. Do not let homework or screen-time monopolize all of the individuals time after school or work. AD/HD individuals who exercise regularly have better performance at school and work.
- 11. Simplify the environment to minimize distractions.** Remove excessive amounts of toys and clutter. The less distractions the better.
- 12. Help parents learn relaxation techniques.** Parents may benefit from learning stress-management techniques to increase their own ability to deal with frustration, so that they can respond calmly to their child's behavior.
- 13. Make certain the career they are pursuing is what they desire.** A recent study found that AD/HD individuals were happier once they were out of school. Active work may be better than college for a particular person.

Sexual Disorders (including Paraphilias)

Helpful Hints

- 1. Understand your triggers.** Love is not always the topic that starts an individual thinking about sex. Sometimes pure boredom begins an automated response that eventually leads to thinking about sex. There are a number of triggers that precipitate problematic sexual behavior. If they can identify the triggers, they can change their tendency to veer into thinking about sex. Stress, for example, is a huge trigger for sex and thinking about sex. Boredom and arguments with partners is a trigger for accessing pornography. What can they do instead?
- 2. Develop self-control.** If they truly want to stop thinking about sex, they need to make a commitment to stick with it. They need to actively think of something else or physically engage in an activity which will change their thoughts. For example, one individual shared that he called his grandmother to change his thoughts because he could not think sexually when he spoke to his grandmother.
- 3. Safety Plan:** When the risk comes up, how will you address it? Lets see the plan, written out.
- 4. Understand that there is nothing wrong with thinking about sex.** It is entirely natural to think about sex. However, it is essential to develop healthy sexual thoughts and not ruminate on sexual desires. For example, when they see an attractive person, they can simply think “good for them” and continue on their business rather than ruminating over it.
- 5. Get active.** Find ways to stay occupied. They need to actively do something to change their thoughts, rather than simply hoping the thoughts go away. They might try working out, reading a book, or taking a walk. Have them spend some time with friends, watch a show, play an instrument, cook a meal, play a video game, or work on their car. If people who struggle with paraphilias committed the time they spent accessing pornography to education or playing an instrument, they would be an expert. The time wasted is time that could have been spent developing relationships with real people.
- 6. Avoid giving in to temptation.** Try not to objectify an individual by staring at their body parts. Avoid looking at pornographic images and reading erotic writing. Pornography changes the way people think about others and makes them hypersexual.
- 7. Talk about it with a healthy person.** As terrifying as this may sound, it is one of the most powerful and effective approaches. Part of developing healthy relationships involves open and honest communication. It is surprising how much less compelling these thoughts appear when brought into the light of day and how less powerful they become. If the person really wants to change, they will be honest with someone about their struggle. Once they are honest, they now have a greater commitment to actually following through with change.
- 8. Do something kind for someone.** Try to turn negative thoughts into reminders to engage in positive behavior.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Helpful Hints

- 1. Keep in mind that this is an anxiety disorder, and the person has shame over their behavior.** Approach it from the perspective of, “How can I help you work through this?” Agree to help distract them through periods of obsessional thought. Help them understand, “This is just your OCD. It is just thoughts. It will be okay if you do not respond.”
- 2. Encourage them to exercise.** Being active will help them release some of their anxious energy and help them relax.
- 3. Spend time helping them problem solve life issues.** You can share, “This is what I might do in that situation...” They benefit from hearing others logically problem solve.
- 4. Depending on their functioning level, you may need to find them a positive hobby.** While I do not like the concept of “positive addictions,” some individuals need to be refocused to a healthy activity. For example, researching healthy foods or exercising is not going to create the same problems as smoking or cutting. Their tendency to over-focus can be beneficial if harnessed. When I first started work as a therapist, I asked a psychiatrist about what to do with an intelligent child who obsesses. His response was, “Send them to med school.” I believe intensity exists in varying degrees in all of us. Knowing that you may be more intense indicates the importance of avoiding some issues and indulging in others. Intense people do well in school and can be great workers, but need to avoid substance use, gambling, pornography, and workaholism.

Self-Injurious Behavior

Helpful Hints:

- 1. Guide the individual in learning to communicate their emotions in a responsible, assertive, and gentle (but honest) manner.** Review with them, “How can you respond without offending others?” “I feel...,” statements can help, as opposed to making judgments such as, “You are ...,” statements.
- 2. Review behaviors they can engage in when hurt.** Art is an emotional expression, so drawing, writing, or playing an instrument are all good choices. If they are going to listen to music, it has to be music which does not draw them to Self-Injury. Give them credit for making it through a difficult situation without Self-Injury.
- 3. For individuals who engage in Self-Injury for stimulation, have them give themselves foot rubs or hand rubs with lotion when those feelings emerge, or elicit back rubs from others.**
- 4. Help them plan out their week and discuss with them what they will do if things do not go exactly as planned.**
- 5. Encourage them to talk about friendships and relationships.** Do they get to be the best version of themselves in their relationships? In a great relationship, people get the opportunity to be at their best. They do not have to deny aspects of themselves, such as their spirituality. Explore where they could meet healthier people. Take them there.

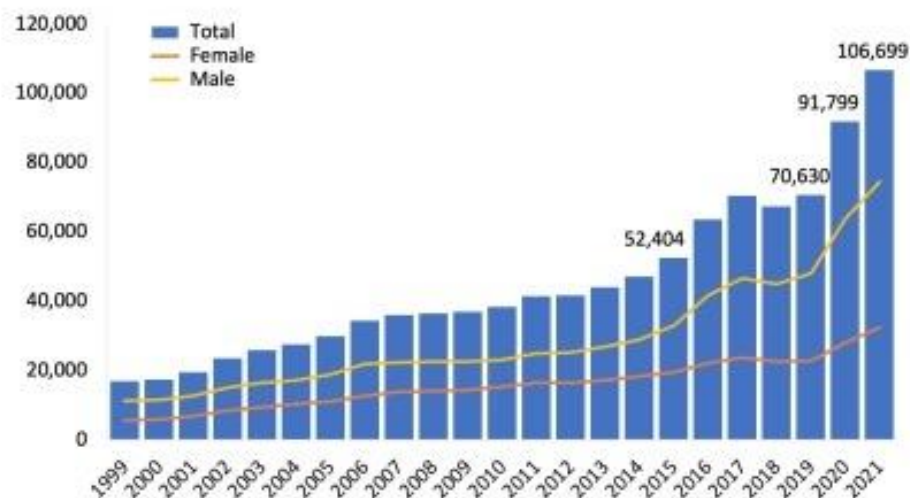
Substance Dependence

Helpful Hints

- 1. Intensity can be a good thing.** People with addictions overdue problematic behaviors. I try to point out that intensity, when harnessed, can make a person outstanding at work or become an outstanding musician, chef, etc., but even this positive behavior needs to be controlled. Overdoing anything is problematic. Individuals can learn to use their intensity to become better skilled and informed. However, there are things people with this personality style need to stay away from, including alcohol, drugs, gambling, and pornography. I try to point out that their personality style can be a gift if they can learn to harness it.
- 2. Find a new routine.** Individuals struggling to stay sober need to find a healthy behavior to engage in when they would be using. Sometimes it may be as simple as creating a new reward for a hard day's work. For example, one individual I helped used to make an elaborate mixed drink every night when he got home from work. Today, he still gets out the blender and, with fresh strawberries, makes himself a smoothie every night.
- 3. Connect with a sober support person upon entering an environment.** This is a reminder that you are choosing to live a sober lifestyle. Look around and identify who is sober. Introduce yourself. This practice can help an individual remain sober while continuing to be involved in amateur sports or other situations where people use. If you are in college, force yourself to find a sober support group on campus and find sober friends.
- 4. Accept the addiction.** It is okay. Acceptance is freedom to be honest. When someone says, "You look like you could use a beer," you say, "I could use a dozen and that's why I can't have one." Remember you are not alone. Many people have overcome addiction and are now enjoying a better life. It can be done. If you move to a new neighborhood, introduce yourself to your neighbors as a sober person, so they know not to offer you alcohol. This is acceptance.
- 5. Express love and concern.** Do not wait for them to "hit bottom." You may be met with excuses, denial or anger, but be prepared to respond with specific examples of behavior that worries you.
- 6. Offer your support.** Talk to the person about your concerns, and offer to go with them and get help or take them to a meeting. Like other chronic diseases, the earlier addiction is treated, the better.

- 7. Parents play a key role.** Problems are typically apparent in the family setting first. Parents and siblings can play a significant role in preventing and dealing with alcohol and drugs. Talk openly and honestly and encourage responsible behavior. Fostering the development of positive interests, and showing children that their opinions and decisions matter, are ways to help prevent the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. Do not allow underage individuals to use in your home. If someone in your home struggles with alcohol abuse, do not keep alcohol in your home. Be assertive. Have family celebrations that do not involve alcohol.

Figure 1. National Drug-Involved Overdose Deaths*, Number Among All Ages, by Gender, 1999-2021



*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40–X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60–X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10–Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999–2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 1/2023.

Deaths by numbers in 2021:

<u>Total</u>	<u>Per 100,000 people</u>
45,404 motor vehicle traffic deaths	(13.7)
48,830 firearm deaths	(14.7)
106,699 Americans died from drug overdoses or poisonings.	(33.7)

The Vietnam War, which totaled 58,200.

AIDS-related deaths in the worst year of the HIV epidemic (1995) totaled 50,628

Peak year of homicides in the United States, (1991) 24,703 people were murdered.

Peak year of suicides (2022) 49,500 people. (Estimated over 50,000 in 2023)

Social Control Theory

Travis Hirshi asked, “Why isn’t everyone deviant?” 4 reasons

1. **Attachment** = A healthy friend or a healthy partner
2. **Commitment** = If you plan for your future, you have more to lost
3. **Involvement** = Work, school, and school activities
4. **Belief** = Morals, beliefs, spirituality, religion

Laugh & “dance like you don’t need the money.”

Frank Weber’s books are available on his website: frankweberauthor.com

Murder Book (2017)

The I-94 Murders (2018)

Last Call (2019)

Lying Close (2020)

Burning Bridges (2021)

Black and Blue (2022)

The Haunted House of Hillman (2023)

Scandal of Vandals (2024)