



FACT SHEET

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PROJECT ACCESS

Missouri's educational
 leader in autism support

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention

The evidence-based practice of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) is used by teachers, caregivers, and therapists. It has been proven evidence-based for individuals with ASD from ages 6 to 22 years of age. It focuses on helping learners examine and reflect on their own thoughts and emotions and identify strategies to change their thinking in hopes to change their behavior.

What is the concept behind CBI? Learners with ASD often demonstrate difficulties understanding their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, and the way they are connected. CBI seeks to address skills such as repetitive thoughts and behaviors, irrational thoughts and fears, social anxiety, depression, and anger.

Children with ASD often have difficulty generalizing new skills to different contexts. For example, have you ever taught a child how to keep their body in the group during academic time, only to hear of them struggling to stay in the group during their special classes like art and music? Or maybe, as a parent, you have taught them the importance of trying to look towards their friends when talking, but notice that they don't seem to understand that everyone finds this social skill important, not just their peers? The idea here is to teach them in broader terms. Teach them to interpret thoughts, emotions, and context, so they can adjust their behavior accordingly in all environments.

What activities can I do at school?

- Be sure the learner has the needed prerequisite skills to participate in CBI with fidelity. This includes average or above intelligence, and average or above expressive *and* receptive language abilities.
- Conduct a functional behavior assessment to determine the behavior that is truly interfering with their success socially.
- Work closely with families to incorporate cognitive behavioral strategies that are specific to the learning characteristics of the student.

What activities can I do at home?

- Keep in good communication with your child's teachers and therapists as they introduce new concepts and language to your child. Let them know their learning style and things they find reinforcing. This information is key in helping them determine the best intervention strategies for your child.

- Develop consistent routines to practice and reinforce your child's attempt at the strategies you are targeting. For example, if they are working on body language, make sure you reinforce their efforts to look toward their communication partner at home, at the grocery store, at basketball practice, and all the places in between. Reinforcement is what is going to help your child solidify the behavior change you are hoping for!
- Be open and aware of this EBP, and dig deeper into ways you can apply it at home and in the community.

Like many of the evidence-based practices in the field of ASD, two or more work in combination provide maximum results. When considering which EBP's to use with Music-mediated instruction, consider the use of prompting, reinforcement, and modeling.

Resources to help you get started are listed below:

Apps:

KidConnect-Connecting Behavior to Emotions by The Connections Model, LLC (\$11.99 + in-app purchases from \$17.99)

Books:

Garcia-Winner, Michelle (2007). Thinking about you thinking about me. Think Social Publishing Inc.

Gaus, V. (2007). Cognitive-behavioral therapy for adult Asperger syndrome (Guides to individualized evidence based treatment series). The Guilford Press.

Websites:

Anderson, C. (2012). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Autism Spectrum Disorders. Ian Community. Retrieved on February 15, 2017 from:
https://iancommunity.org/cs/simons_simplex_community/cognitive_behavioral_therapy

Chasson, G. (2011). Parent Tips: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Pathfinders for Autism. Retrieved on February 15, 2017 from:
<http://www.pathfindersforautism.org/articles/view/parent-tips-cognitive-behavioral-therapy>

Creed, T. (2015). An Introduction to CBT for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Beck Institute. Retrieved on February 15, 2017 from: <https://www.beckinstitute.org/an-introduction-to-cbt-for-people-with-an-autism-spectrum-disorder/>

Gilmore, H. (2016). Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Psych Central. Retrieved on February 15, 2017, from <https://pro.psychcentral.com/child-therapist/2016/01/cognitive-behavioralinterventions-for-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/>

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Mussey, J., Dawkins, T., & AFIRM Team. (2017). *Cognitive behavioral intervention*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder, FPG Child Development Center, University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/cognitive-behavioral-intervention>

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