

Executive Summary

Course Title:

Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Screening, Diagnostic Assessment and Working with Families and Schools

Outline of Training:

This workshop will train mental health professionals to screen for early signs of autistic spectrum disorders with particular emphasis on differential diagnosis in situations also involving early neglect, abuse or trauma. The process of diagnostic assessment and the service delivery system alternatives associated with diagnoses in the autistic spectrum will be outlined. Working with families as they face a diagnosis of autism and serving as an advocate for the child with regional center and schools will be topics of in-depth focus. The presentation will be based on Dr. Siegel's latest book 'Getting the Best for Your Child with Autism' (Guilford Press, 2008).

Target Audience:

This workshop is designed for counselors, probation officers, court personnel, case workers, case managers, supervisors, and licensed clinical staff working with families with a child suspected of autism or a related neurodevelopmental disorder.

Outcome Objectives for Participants:

As a result of attending this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify children at high risk for autistic spectrum disorders.
- Understand the links between diagnostic assessment and which individual treatments are likely to be most effective for a particular child.
- Understand the service delivery and funding mechanisms that families with autistic spectrum disorder children can access.
- Understand how receiving the diagnosis of autism is a major life stressor, how it precipitates a grief response--and how to recognize and treatment any signs of a parent's inadequate coping with this new stressor.
- How to support parents in advocating for their child in the service delivery systems of regional center and schools.

Ways that Supervisors can support the Transfer of Learning from the classroom to the job...

BEFORE the training

Supervisors can support the learning process by attending this workshop, by reviewing the executive summary or course announcement with interested staff. Staff members who have children or adolescents with known or suspected autistic spectrum disorders, intellectual disability or language disability with significant behavioral challenges should be encouraged to attend.

AFTER the training

Staff members can be asked to present an overview of the training or share the handouts with co-workers. Staff members can be encouraged to bring patient education handouts from the training and discuss with supervisors the appropriateness of how to implement these therapeutic and supportive activities with families.