AFFECT REGULATION & CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

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Objectives for today

- Describe the basic neurobiology of attachment and affect regulation
- Describe the DBT framework of affect regulation
- Create a framework to teach affect regulation skills
- Practice and utilize at least 4 play and expressive arts strategies for affect regulation
Neurobiology of Attachment and Affect Regulation

- Impact of trauma on a sensory and cognitive level in the brain
  - Brain remembers emotions, images, feelings and physical sensations and produces a physiological response
  - Limbic System
  - Prefrontal Cortex
Neurobiology of Attachment and Affect Regulation

Trauma impacts healthy attachments by impairing:

- Trust
- Safety and security
- Positive sense of self
  - Distorted view of self as “used goods”
  - “Different” from others
  - Fragmented and/or “Bad”
- Ability to feel connected to the community and others
Emotion Regulation and Attachment

Distress signals release of epinephrine and norepinephrine

Caregiver’s response signals serotonin and other neurotransmitters

Results in child’s ability to regulate emotional state and become adept at managing stressful situations in healthy ways
DBT Biosocial Theory of Affect Regulation

Biological predisposition to emotion dysregulation

- High sensitivity to emotional stimuli
- Very intense response to emotional stimuli
- Slow return to emotion baseline
Emotion modulation is the ability to:

- Inhibit inappropriate behavior related to strong negative or positive emotions
- Organize oneself act in a way that is not mood dependent
- Self-soothe any physiological response to strong emotion that was induced
- Refocus attention while still experiencing strong emotion
DBT Biosocial Theory of Affect Regulation

- **Social**
  - Invalidation from environment typically in response to the high emotion vulnerability and reactivity of the child
  - Environment respond in ways that are erratic and inappropriate to the needs of the child
  - Environment overreacts or under-reacts
  - Invalidation does not teach the child to label and modulate arousal, tolerate distress or trust one’s own emotional experiences
What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy?

- **Dialectical Thinking**
  - More than one way to view a situation
  - All people have unique qualities and different points of view
  - Two things that appear (or are) different can both be true
  - Honor the truth on both sides of a conflict to avoid Black & White Thinking

- **Skills building focus**

- **Focus on Acceptance & Change**
Primary & Secondary Targets

- Life Threatening Behaviors
- Therapy Interfering Behaviors
- Life Interfering Behaviors
DBT Skills

What Skills
- Observe
- Describe
- Participate

How Skills
- Don’t Judge
- Stay Focused
- Be effective

Emotion Regulation
- ABC PLEASE
- Ride Wave Skills
- Check the Facts & Problem Solving
- Opposite Action

Distress Tolerance
- Distract with Wise Mind
  - ACCEPTS
- Self-soothe
- IMPROVE the moment
- Pros & Cons
- TIPP

Interpersonal Effectiveness
- GIVE
- FAST
- THINK
- DEAR MAN
Mindfulness interventions

Deep breathing with bubbles

Yoga Pretzels
Distress Tolerance interventions

Self-soothe:
- Glitter bottles
- Water play
- Sorting beans

IMPROVE the moment:
- Imagery:
- Safe Place drawing
- Remote control to “change the channel”
Emotion Regulation interventions

Ride the Wave: Mindfulness of emotions:

Color My Feelings

Feelings Mandalas
Thanks for playing!

Questions?

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