

## **Behavioral therapy**

### **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**

ABA is the most well supported intervention for ASD and is based on research. ABA is the use of scientifically based behavioral principles in everyday situations. ABA Therapy works towards goals that help to increase or decrease different behaviors. For example, a family may want to increase their child's food intake, while also decreasing head banging. Which behaviors are most helpful to target will depend on the specific situation. All ABA programs share similar components, including specialized teaching, parent involvement, and teaching skills that can be used at home, school and other settings. ABA should be playful and motivating for children.

- ABA can help build skills so a person can function at a higher level in everyday life. ABA is often used to increase skills in the area of language, play, behavior, attention and being able to learn.
- People of all ages can benefit from ABA, although some research suggests that the earlier this approach is used, the better.
- ABA is a treatment that is used for all kinds of behavioral needs, not just those experienced by people who have ASD.

The following approaches are also grounded in the science of ABA:

- Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)
- Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT)
- Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)
- Floortime or Developmental Individual Difference Relationship (DIR)
- Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication (TEACCH)
- Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)

## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT refers to a group of well-researched techniques that are effective in treating difficulties experienced by children and adults. CBT works well for treating anxiety and mood disorders, teaching stress and anger management, and improving interpersonal skills. The goal of CBT is to help people learn how emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are related. CBT teaches people how to identify unhelpful beliefs and how to develop more positive patterns of behavior. Treatment is typically skills-based, and involves active family participation for children.

- CBT is helpful for individuals with ASD who have sufficient verbal skills and the ability to think about their thoughts and behavior.
- The use of visual aids and the incorporation an individual's special interests into therapy activities is often helpful.
- Licensed mental health professionals may provide CBT, including psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatrists, and professional counselors.
- CBT may be done individually or in groups. CBT is often a large part of therapeutic Social Skills Groups aimed at improving social communication and social thinking.

The following treatment approaches effectively incorporate aspects of Cognitive-Behavioral Theory:

- Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Mindfulness-based CBT

