Anxiety in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
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Session Description:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a common neurodevelopmental condition with a reported prevalence of 1 in 36 (CDC, 2023). Anxiety disorders frequently co-occur with ASD, with approximately 70% of autistic children experiencing symptoms of anxiety. This highlights a critical need for mental health support in the neurodiverse community. This seminar will discuss the overlap in ASD and anxiety, demonstrate the unique ways that anxiety may present in youth with ASD, and introduce basic evidence-based intervention strategies. The strategies we present can be readily implemented in home, school, or community settings to effectively support autistic children with anxiety.

Learning Objectives:
1. Identify key characteristics and rates of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and anxiety disorders
2. Recognize signs of anxiety in children with ASD
3. Develop a toolbox for intervention strategies for individuals with ASD and anxiety

Sylvia J. Acosta, PhD is a licensed psychologist and Professor at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). She trained as a child psychologist at Colorado State University. She gained additional clinical experience in the assessment and intervention of childhood mental health conditions at Children's Hospital Los Angeles for her predoctoral internship and fellowship. At the CDD, her clinical work has focused on serving children and families with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), particularly those families who are culturally and linguistically diverse and those with co-occurring mental health conditions. Dr. Acosta conducts ASD diagnostic evaluations and is the manager of the CDD's Parent Home Training and Project ImPACT intervention programs. She is also the director of UNM CDD's psychology training program, where she enjoys teaching and supervision of future psychologists. She is a native New Mexican who provides bilingual (English/Spanish) services.

Sunny Olsen, EdS, NCSP is a School Psychology PhD Candidate at Texas A&M University. She is a psychology intern in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Track at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). She completed training in the assessment and intervention of children with neurodevelopmental differences, including ASD, at CHRISTUS Children's Hospital/Morgan's Multi-Assistance Center in San Antonio, TX and the Texas A&M Counseling and Assessment Clinic. Before doctoral studies, she worked as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist in Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and Moriarty-Edgewood School District (MESD). She is committed to advancing the training experiences of

future school psychologists in culturally responsive diagnostic and intervention practices and improving the wraparound collaborative services between the schools, the home, and medical professionals.

Emily Pomichter, MA is a Clinical Psychology PhD Candidate at the University of Vermont. She is a psychology intern in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Track at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). She completed training in assessment and intervention for children and adults with neurodevelopmental differences and behavioral health concerns across a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, and outpatient clinics. She will be continuing her training in neurodevelopmental psychology with a postdoctoral fellowship at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire this fall. She is originally from Vermont and is committed to providing and training others to provide high-quality and culturally responsive assessment services throughout rural New England.