

Emotional Intelligence in Caregivers: Enhancing Developmental Support for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Abstract

The core investigation addresses a significant gap in existing research by focusing on the impact that caregivers' emotional management and empathy have on the developmental progress of children with ASD. Understanding this relationship is paramount, as it highlights potential areas for intervention and support that could enhance caregiving practices and, consequently, optimize the developmental trajectories of these children.

The methodology of this research incorporates a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative assessments to provide a comprehensive view of how caregivers' emotional intelligence correlates with developmental outcomes in children with ASD. This methodological choice allows for a nuanced exploration of the dynamic relationship between caregivers' EI and children's well-being. By emphasizing the critical role of caregivers' emotional intelligence, this study contributes significantly to our understanding of effective caregiving strategies. It underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training within educational and therapeutic practices tailored for ASD, offering valuable insights that could lead to improved support mechanisms for both caregivers and children. This research not only advances our knowledge in the field of ASD care but also proposes actionable strategies for enhancing the emotional and developmental support provided to children with ASD.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence- Autism Spectrum Disorder- Developmental Progress- Caregiving Strategies- Emotional Intelligence Training- Mixed-Methods Approach- Psychological Well-being- Educational and Therapeutic Interventions- Enhancing Caregiving Practices- Dynamic Relationship between Caregiver and Child

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الذكاء العاطفي لدى مقدمي الرعاية: تعزيز الدعم التنموي للأطفال المصابين باضطراب طيف التوحد

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ملخص:

في هذه الدراسة، نستكشف بعمق الدور الجوهري الذي يلعبه الذكاء العاطفي لمقدمي الرعاية في تأثيره على التطور التنموي للأطفال المُشخصين باضطراب طيف التوحد. من خلال توظيف منهج مختلط الأساليب في بيانات متنوعة، بما في ذلك المنازل ومراكز الرعاية المتخصصة، تهدف هذه المقالة إلى تقصي كيفية تأثير قدرات مقدمي الرعاية العاطفية - وتحديداً قدرتهم على التعرف والفهم والتحكم في مشاعرهم ومشاعر الأطفال الذين يعتنون بهم - على قدرات الأطفال في التفاعل الاجتماعي، ومهارات التواصل، والصحة النفسية بشكل عام.

يُعالج هذا المقال فجوة ملحوظة في الأدبيات البحثية الحالية من خلال التركيز على كيفية تأثير إدارة المشاعر والتعاطف من قِبَل مقدمي الرعاية على التقدم التنموي للأطفال ذوي اضطراب طيف التوحد. الفهم العميق لهذه العلاقة بالغ الأهمية، إذ يبرز المجالات المحتملة للتدخل والدعم التي يمكن أن تُحسّن من ممارسات الرعاية وتُعزز بدورها مسارات التطور للأطفال.

تستخدم الدراسة نهجاً مختلطاً للأساليب، مجمعة بين المقابلات نصف موجهة والمقاييس الكمية، بهدف توفير رؤية شاملة لكيفية تأثير الذكاء العاطفي لمقدمي الرعاية على نتائج التطور لدى الأطفال المصابين بالتوحد. يُمكن هذا الاختيار المنهجي من استكشاف دقيق للعلاقة التفاعلية بين الذكاء العاطفي لمقدمي الرعاية ورفاهية الأطفال.

من خلال تسليط الضوء على الأهمية القصوى للذكاء العاطفي لدى مقدمي الرعاية، تُسهم هذه الدراسة بشكل ملحوظ في تعميق فهمنا لاستراتيجيات الرعاية الفعّالة. كما يبرز المقال أهمية دمج التدريب على الذكاء العاطفي ضمن الممارسات التعليمية والعلاجية الموجهة لاضطراب طيف التوحد، مقدماً بذلك رؤية قيمة قد تسهم في تحسين آليات الدعم لكل من مقدمي الرعاية والأطفال. يعزز هذا البحث ليس فقط معرفتنا في مجال رعاية التوحد، بل يُقدم أيضاً استراتيجيات عملية لتحسين الدعم العاطفي والتنموي المُقدم للأطفال المصابين بالتوحد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء العاطفي - اضطراب طيف التوحد - التقدم التنموي - استراتيجيات تقديم الرعاية - الرفاه النفسي - التدخلات التعليمية والعلاجية - تعزيز ممارسات تقديم الرعاية - العلاقة الديناميكية بين مقدم الرعاية والطفل.

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of emotional intelligence

The caregiving of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) heavily relies on emotional intelligence (EI), a key component in understanding and managing emotions for both oneself and others. According to Peter Salovey and John Mayer, emotional intelligence encompasses the accurate perception, evaluation, and expression of emotions, as well as the comprehension of emotional knowledge and regulation of emotions for personal and intellectual advancement. Daniel Goleman further emphasized the importance of recognizing emotions, self-motivation, and emotional management in relationships.

For caregivers of children with ASD, possessing high emotional intelligence is essential for fostering positive interactions and handling challenging behaviors effectively. Caregivers with elevated emotional intelligence levels can establish trust and connection with autistic children by employing communication strategies that cater to their unique needs and sensitivities. Their ability to regulate emotions and navigate stressful scenarios is pivotal in cultivating a nurturing environment that supports the overall well-being of children with autism.

Studies suggest a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being in caregivers of children with ASD. Caregivers who demonstrate higher emotional intelligence levels tend to experience improved psychological well-being, which enhances their effectiveness in providing care for their children. By focusing on developing skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills, caregivers can enhance their capacity to support children with ASD across various developmental domains.

In sum, emotional intelligence plays a critical role in the caregiving journey for children with autism spectrum disorders. By honing their emotional intelligence skills, caregivers can establish a supportive environment conducive to the social-emotional growth of children on the spectrum. This not only benefits the child but also enhances the overall well-being and efficacy of caregivers in their caregiving role. See references: (acer, 2023, pages 1-5)^[2], (Jani et al., 2023)^[4].

1.2. Explanation of autism and its challenges

Autism presents a complex neurodevelopmental challenge that brings about unique obstacles in emotional growth for individuals on the spectrum. Emotional growth involves acquiring and comprehending emotions, expressing them appropriately, and establishing healthy emotional connections with others. Nonetheless, individuals with autism often struggle with recognizing and understanding emotions, expressing feelings in socially acceptable ways, and navigating the complexities of their emotional landscape.

A primary difficulty faced by individuals with autism is the struggle to recognize and understand emotions within themselves and others. This struggle arises from differences in

processing social and emotional cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. Consequently, individuals with autism may find it challenging to interpret emotions accurately, leading to difficulties in empathizing with others and identifying their feelings. Despite these hurdles, it is important to acknowledge that individuals with autism do experience emotions like everyone else but may display them in unique ways.

Furthermore, individuals on the autism spectrum may encounter challenges when it comes to expressing their emotions. Communication difficulties can result in frustration and misinterpretations of feelings. Additionally, the diverse emotional profiles observed in autism underscore the varied nature of the disorder, where some individuals may have heightened emotional sensitivity. In contrast, others struggle to recognize and express their feelings effectively.

Recognizing these obstacles is crucial for caregivers of children with autism as it offers insights into the distinct emotional needs of individuals on the spectrum. By recognizing these challenges, caregivers can tailor their support methods to assist children in navigating their emotions successfully. By expanding emotional vocabulary, fostering a nurturing environment that encourages social interaction and communication skills, and promoting emotional regulation and coping strategies, caregivers can aid children with autism in their journey toward emotional development.

In essence, acknowledging the difficulties that individuals with autism face in emotional growth is vital for providing effective assistance and encouraging healthy emotional expression. By addressing these specific needs through strategies that enhance emotional intelligence and understanding individual emotional profiles, caregivers can improve the well-being of children on the spectrum. See reference (Emotional Expression in Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[3].

1.3. Importance of emotional intelligence in caregiving for children with autism

Caring for children with autism requires a deep understanding of emotional intelligence, also known as EQ, which is essential for establishing positive connections and addressing the challenges that arise when supporting these individuals. Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to identify, comprehend, and regulate emotions effectively, along with demonstrating empathy and strong communication skills - all crucial components in the care of children with autism.

Caregivers of children on the autism spectrum face various hurdles that demand emotional intelligence. These obstacles include adapting behaviors and attitudes, communicating effectively with the children, fostering constructive interactions, and managing their emotional well-being. Drawing support from immediate social circles, accepting the condition, and maintaining a positive mindset are vital elements in navigating the complexities of raising children with ASD.

Research has indicated that caregivers of children with ASD often experience heightened levels of stress, which can negatively impact their emotional responses towards the children. Uncontrolled emotions may contribute to low self-esteem in children and isolation from their surroundings. However, caregivers who possess strong emotional intelligence can mitigate these adverse effects by effectively handling their emotions and reactions.

Moreover, emotional intelligence is closely linked to caregivers' psychological well-being when caring for children with autism spectrum disorders. Studies have emphasized that the mental health of caregivers is significantly influenced by the stress associated with looking after individuals with ASD. Thus, honing emotional intelligence skills is crucial in promoting mental well-being and ensuring psychological health across various life stages.

By acknowledging the significance of emotional intelligence in caregiving for children with autism, caregivers can establish trust and rapport with autistic children more successfully. Through nurturing emotional intelligence abilities such as guiding emotions and recognizing emotions within themselves and others, caregivers can create a supportive atmosphere that encourages positive interactions and emotional regulation in both themselves and the children under their care. See references: (acer, 2023, pages 6-10)^[2], (Jani et al., 2023)^[4].

2. Understanding Emotional Intelligence

2.1. Components of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence stands out as a crucial aspect of caregiving, particularly when it comes to supporting children with autism. It includes a variety of essential elements that contribute to effective emotional management and interaction. Self-awareness serves as the cornerstone of emotional intelligence, involving the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions. Caregivers who possess self-awareness can better regulate their responses and create a stable environment for children with autism. By staying in touch with their feelings, caregivers can exemplify healthy emotional expression and coping mechanisms for the children under their care.

Self-regulation represents another vital facet of emotional intelligence, empowering caregivers to handle their emotions during challenging situations. This skill enables caregivers to stay calm and composed when confronted with difficult behaviors or circumstances. By regulating their own emotions, caregivers can establish a sense of safety and security for children with autism, leading to a more positive caregiving experience.

Empathy plays a crucial role in emotional intelligence, enabling caregivers to comprehend and connect with the emotions of others. Caregivers who exhibit empathy towards children with autism can build trust and rapport, nurturing a supportive relationship. By empathizing with the unique experiences and challenges faced by autistic children, caregivers can offer tailored support and encouragement, ultimately enhancing overall well-being.

Social skills also play an integral part in emotional intelligence within caregiving for children with autism. Effective communication and interpersonal interactions are key to fostering relationships and encouraging social growth. Caregivers who possess strong social skills can create opportunities for social engagement, peer interaction, and activities that promote skill development, thereby enhancing the child's social competence.

In summary, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in caring for children with autism by promoting self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Caregivers who nurture these components of emotional intelligence can deliver compassionate care that nurtures the emotional well-being and growth of children with autism. See references: (Selby, 2023)^[4], (Jani et al., 2023)^[4], (Fostering Emotional Intelligence in Children: A Guide for Parents ' Autism Center of, 2024)^[6].

| Outcome | Baseline | 7 days | 14 days | 21 days | <i>p</i> |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Psychological Distress (HADS)^a | 9.2 (3.9) | 8.3 (3.6) | 8.2 (4.3) | 7.7 (3.9) | < .01 |
| Cognitive Empathy (OS)^b | 21.4 (2.7) | 22.1 (3.0) | 23.2 (2.9) | 23.2 (2.6) | < .01 |

Table 1: Means and standard deviations for psychological distress and cognitive empathy for all time points. (source: reference (Seeing it my way: A perspective-taking intervention alleviates psychological distress in caregivers of autistic children, 2023)^[4])

3. Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Caregiving

3.1. Building rapport and trust with autistic children

Establishing a strong connection and trust with children on the autism spectrum is crucial for delivering effective care and support. Studies focusing on emotional expression in autism emphasize the pivotal role of therapists and specialists specializing in autism in promoting emotional growth. These professionals possess the necessary skills to work with individuals with autism and address their specific emotional requirements. They conduct personalized assessments to identify particular emotional challenges and provide tailored interventions aimed at enhancing emotional regulation, expanding emotional vocabulary, and fostering social-emotional learning.

A common misconception about individuals with autism is that they lack emotions or the desire for social interaction. Contrary to this belief, many individuals with autism experience a wide range of emotions and seek social connections. Hence, caregivers need to acknowledge and facilitate emotional expression in autistic children. Recognizing the diverse spectrum of emotional expression in autism enables caregivers to implement effective strategies to help these children navigate their emotions and communicate effectively.

Research also underscores the impact of emotional intelligence on the well-being of parents of children with autism. Studies have identified a substantial correlation between emotional intelligence and the quality of life of mothers raising children with autism. Enhanced emotional intelligence can enhance the quality of life for these mothers by assisting them in managing stress and providing better care for their children.

Moreover, bio-social feedback plays a critical role in helping children comprehend their emotions through verbal and nonverbal cues. Caregivers' responses to these cues offer valuable learning opportunities, aiding children in understanding their emotions, recognizing triggers for negative emotions, and developing strategies for emotion regulation. This process is fundamental for fostering emotional intelligence in children with autism.

Furthermore, attachment contributes significantly to social-emotional development by establishing a foundation of trust and confidence in infants towards their caregivers. This attachment enables infants to seek comfort through emotional communication during times of stress even before acquiring language skills. The emotional regulation acquired during this early stage can have a profound impact on later life success beyond just cognitive abilities.

In conclusion, developing rapport and trust with children on the autism spectrum involves acknowledging their emotions, implementing targeted interventions, nurturing attachment through basic trust, and facilitating emotional expression through bio-social feedback. Caregivers must recognize the importance of emotional intelligence in caring for children with autism to create supportive environments that promote their social-emotional growth. See references: (Emotional Expression in Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[3], (Emotional Expression In Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[5], (2001_v5_1.pdf, 2014, pages 16-20)^[6], (Marwaha & Malik, 2022)^[9].

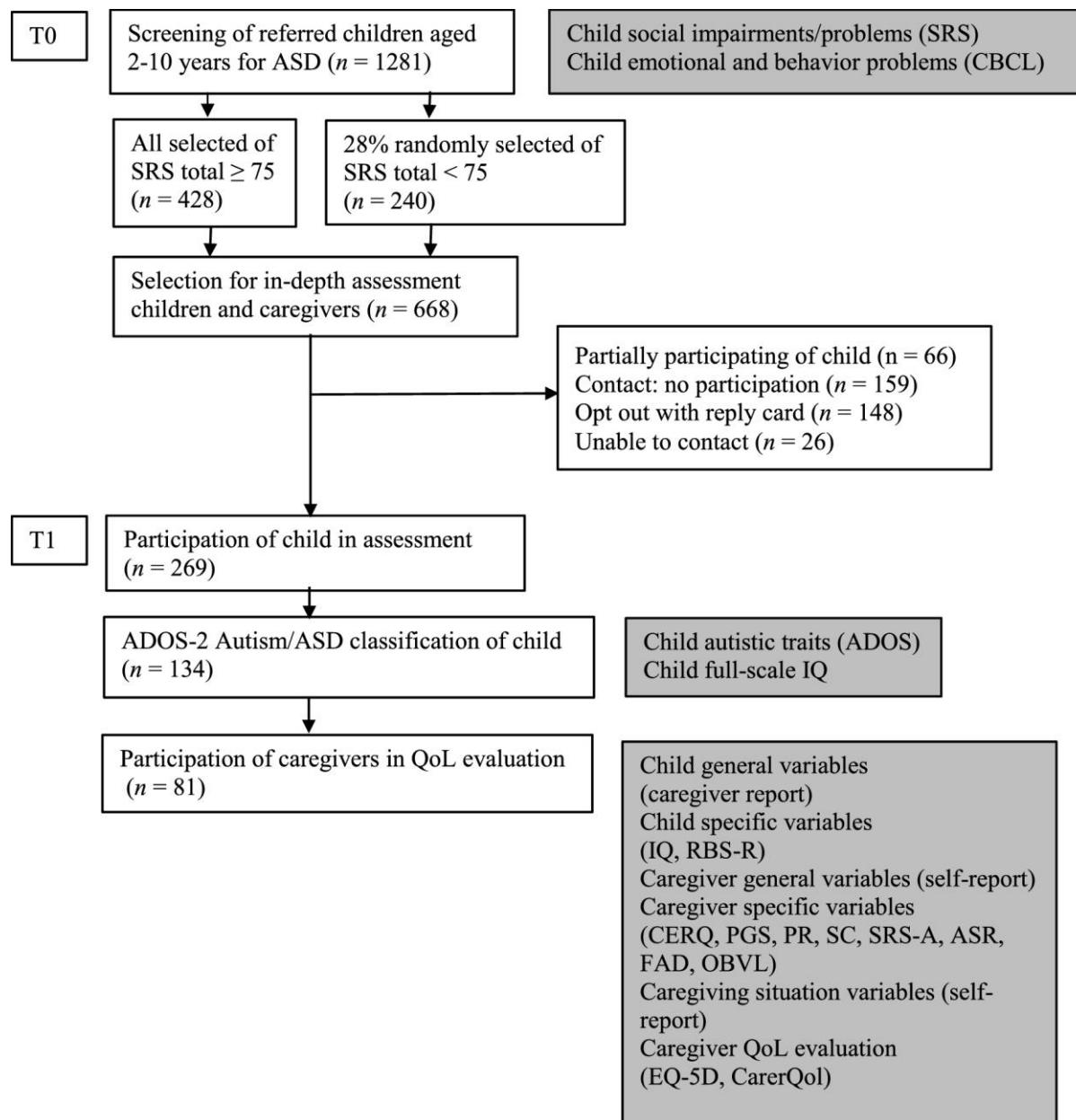


Figure 1: Flowchart of the study design with instruments at each time point. ASD autism spectrum Disorder, SRS social responsiveness scale, CBCL child behavior checklist, ADOS autism diagnostic observation schedule second edition, IQ intelligence quotient, RBS-R repetitive behavior scale-revised, CERQ cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire, PGS personal growth scale, PR partner relationship, SC social contacts, SRS-A social responsiveness scale-adults, ASR adult self-report, FAD family assessment device, OBVL opvoedingsbelasting vragenlijst [Parenting Stress Questionnaire], EQ-5D EuroQol five-dimensional quality of life questionnaire, CarerQol care-related quality of life questionnaire (source: reference (Duvekot et al., 2022)^[15]).

3.2. Effective communication strategies

Establishing effective communication is vital for caregivers of children with autism to build connections and meet their emotional needs. It is a common misconception that individuals with

autism lack empathy or emotions, but research shows that they feel emotions just like anyone else. Caregivers must pay attention to non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, eye contact, and tone of voice to understand the emotional state of autistic children. They should also respect individual preferences regarding eye contact while finding other ways to connect and communicate effectively.

In addition to non-verbal cues, using alternative communication methods can help individuals with autism express their emotions. By incorporating these methods, caregivers can bridge communication gaps and enhance emotional well-being in children with autism. Interventions in educational settings that focus on verbal and nonverbal emotional expression can improve emotional intelligence over time.

Understanding the unique challenges faced by individuals with autism in expressing emotions and connecting with others allows caregivers to develop successful communication strategies that support their emotional needs. Through careful observation of non-verbal cues and the use of alternative communication methods, caregivers can encourage emotional expression in children with autism and establish meaningful connections. See references: (Emotional Expression in Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[3], (Emotional Expression In Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[5].

3.3. Managing challenging behaviors with emotional intelligence

Handling difficult behaviors with emotional awareness is essential for caregivers of children with autism. Studies suggest that individuals on the autism spectrum may struggle with regulating their emotions, both their own and those of others. For example, children with autism may find it hard to react to emotional cues from others, even if they recognize them. This lack of responsiveness can pose challenges for caregivers trying to help children deal with emotional distress or navigate conflicts (Gaigg, 2012; Yirmiya et al., 1992; Loveland et al., 1994).

Caregivers of children with autism often encounter daunting situations like meltdowns, tantrums, and demanding behavior from their children. These ongoing difficulties can significantly impact the mental well-being of caregivers (Lee et al., 2017). To tackle these obstacles, caregivers must hone their emotional intelligence to effectively handle negative thoughts and emotions. Emotional intelligence empowers caregivers to enhance mental well-being by managing emotions such as anger, anxiety, and joy in themselves and their children (Mehmood & Gulzar, 2014; Ruiz-Robledillo & Moya-Albiol, 2013).

Furthermore, grasping emotional intelligence elements like recognizing emotions and regulating emotions is crucial for successful caregiving of children with autism. Caregivers should accurately perceive the child's emotions and adeptly manage their reactions to challenging behaviors. By cultivating these abilities, caregivers can cultivate a supportive environment that nurtures the emotional growth of children with autism (Schutte et al., 1998; Bowman, 2010).

In summary, handling challenging behaviors with emotional intelligence is paramount for caregivers of children with autism. By enhancing their emotional intelligence skills, caregivers can

establish rapport and confidence with autistic children, communicate effectively, and successfully address difficult behaviors. Ultimately, this fosters a more supportive atmosphere that benefits both the child and the caregiver. See references: (acer, 2023, pages 6-10)^[2], (Trevisan et al., 2021)^[2], (Behaviour problems of children with ASD and perceived stress in their caregivers: The moderating role of trait emotional intelligence?, 2016)^[11].

4. Supporting Children with Autism Through Emotional Intelligence

4.1. Creating a nurturing environment

Establishing a supportive atmosphere for children with autism is vital for their emotional well-being and holistic growth. This nurturing environment requires a deep understanding of each child's specific requirements and the implementation of tailored interventions to foster emotional development. By utilizing strategies that encourage emotional expression and comprehension, caregivers can facilitate the emotional flourishing of children with autism.

A fundamental aspect of creating a nurturing environment is offering avenues for emotional expression. Given that children with autism may struggle with verbalizing their feelings, caregivers must pay close attention to non-verbal cues and create a safe environment where children feel comfortable expressing themselves. Through validating and acknowledging their emotions, caregivers can establish trust and nurture a sense of security within the child.

Moreover, fostering social interactions and building connections with peers can enrich the emotional growth of children with autism. Encouraging social engagement and facilitating group play can aid in developing crucial social skills and forming relationships. By providing opportunities for positive social experiences, caregivers play a pivotal role in supporting the emotional well-being of children with autism.

Additionally, promoting emotional regulation and coping mechanisms is integral to cultivating a nurturing environment for children with autism. Caregivers can impart strategies to help children manage intense emotions, such as practicing breathing exercises or utilizing calming techniques. By modeling self-regulation methods and offering guidance during challenging moments, caregivers empower children to effectively regulate their emotions.

In essence, establishing a nurturing environment for children with autism entails comprehending their individual needs, encouraging emotional expression, facilitating social interactions, and teaching coping strategies. By prioritizing emotional development and delivering consistent support, caregivers equip children with autism to navigate their emotions confidently and develop resilience. See references: (Emotional Expression in Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[3], (Emotional Expression In Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[5], (Clark, 2023)^[13].

4.2. Encouraging social interaction and communication skills

Facilitating social interaction and communication abilities in children with autism is paramount for their all-around growth and welfare. Adopting approaches that stimulate emotional expression and boost social skills can have a significant impact on these children.

One valuable technique involves utilizing visual aids like emotion cards or charts to assist children with autism in recognizing and expressing their emotions visually. By presenting emotions in a visual format, caregivers can aid children in comprehending and conveying their feelings more effectively.

Moreover, incorporating social stories can be advantageous in instructing children with autism on appropriate emotional responses in diverse situations. These personalized narratives can offer guidance on navigating social interactions and expressing emotions appropriately.

Participating in activities centered around recognizing emotions, such as using emotion flashcards or engaging in emotion-based games, can also contribute to promoting social interaction and communication skills in children with autism. By practicing the identification and labeling of different emotions, children can enhance their emotional awareness and improve their understanding of other's emotions.

Additionally, providing tailored social skills training programs designed to address the unique requirements of individuals with autism can enhance their emotional intelligence. These programs focus on fostering emotional awareness, empathy, and effective communication - all vital skills for successful social interactions.

By implementing these strategies to promote social interaction and communication skills in children with autism, caregivers can establish a supportive environment that nurtures healthy emotional development and enriches the overall well-being of these individuals. See reference (Emotional Expression In Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[5].

4.3. Promoting emotional regulation and coping mechanisms

Encouraging emotional self-regulation and coping mechanisms in children with autism is vital for their overall well-being and growth. Developing skills to regulate emotions is crucial for individuals with autism to effectively manage their feelings. Through the use of techniques like visual aids, relaxation methods, mindfulness practices, and tailored social skills training, caregivers can help children with autism navigate their emotions more successfully.

Visual supports, such as emotion thermometers or calm-down charts, can assist children in recognizing their emotional state and implementing appropriate coping strategies. Teaching relaxation techniques like deep breathing exercises or progressive muscle relaxation can aid children in calming themselves when experiencing emotional distress. Introducing mindfulness exercises, such as guided meditation or sensory grounding, can support children in staying present and handling overwhelming emotions. Furthermore, providing social skills training that meets the unique needs of individuals with autism can improve their ability to effectively communicate emotions and seek assistance from others.

Promoting emotional regulation skills not only enables children with autism to cope with difficult emotions but also encourages them to engage in positive social interactions. By nurturing emotional intelligence through these methods, caregivers can help children comprehend and

express their feelings effectively, leading to healthier emotional development and enhanced social relationships. See references: (Selby, 2023)^[4], (Emotional Expression In Autism: Healthy Emotional Development, 2024)^[5], (Madhuleena Roy Chowdhury, 2024)^[10].

5. Training and Development for Caregivers

It is imperative to provide caregivers of children with autism with proper training and development opportunities to enhance their ability to offer effective care and support. The role of emotional intelligence in this regard is crucial, as it allows caregivers to navigate the unique challenges that come with caring for individuals with autism. By gaining knowledge and skills related to emotional intelligence, caregivers can effectively manage their own emotions, establish strong relationships with autistic children, and cultivate a nurturing environment that fosters emotional well-being.

One essential aspect of caregiver training is the cultivation of cognitive reappraisal skills. Cognitive reappraisal involves recognizing negative emotions and substituting them with more positive ones. This approach can be particularly beneficial for caregivers who may experience high levels of stress or frustration when dealing with challenging behaviors exhibited by children with autism. Learning how to reframe negative emotions positively can enhance caregivers' ability to cope effectively in stressful situations.

Moreover, training programs should focus on improving communication strategies with autistic children. Effective communication is key to building trust and rapport, as well as promoting social interaction and emotional regulation. Caregivers can benefit from techniques such as active listening, nonverbal communication, and utilizing visual aids to support communication efforts.

Additionally, caregiver training should include guidance on managing challenging behaviors with emotional intelligence. Caregivers must understand the underlying emotions driving certain behaviors in autistic children and learn how to respond calmly and compassionately. By employing techniques like positive reinforcement, redirection, and de-escalation strategies, caregivers can help address challenging behaviors while supporting emotional regulation.

In conclusion, caregiver training programs for children with autism should prioritize enhancing their emotional intelligence skills to ensure effective caregiving practices. By providing caregivers with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the complexities of caring for individuals with autism, they can establish a supportive environment that promotes emotional well-being and improves the overall quality of care delivered. See references: (Jani et al., 2023)^[4], (Trevisan et al., 2021)^[7], (Madhuleena Roy Chowdhury, 2024)^[10].

| | Pre-treatment | Post-treatment | Follow-up |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Somatic symptoms | | | |
| Immunological | 8.76 ± 6.18 | 8.29 ± 4.95 | 7.41 ± 5.30 |
| Respiratory** | 9.53 ± 7.70 | 6.29 ± 4.59 | 6.65 ± 6.72 |
| Cardiovascular | 10 ± 7.55 | 6.35 ± 5.55 | 7.65 ± 6.50 |
| Gastrointestinal | 9.59 ± 7.87 | 8.76 ± 7.02 | 8.71 ± 7.43 |
| Neurosensory*** | 8.12 ± 8.44 | 5.24 ± 7.07 | 6.47 ± 8.14 |
| Genital-urinary* | 7.35 ± 7.21 | 5.35 ± 4.60 | 4.71 ± 5.34 |
| Muscular | 13.53 ± 10.01 | 11.24 ± 8.91 | 12 ± 9.63 |
| Dermatological | 11.18 ± 8.13 | 10.06 ± 6.91 | 10.65 ± 8.89 |
| Total symptoms* | 78.05 ± 53.16 | 61.58 ± 39.78 | 64.23 ± 45.91 |
| Burden* | 67.52 ± 12.50 | 61.58 ± 12.73 | |

Table 2: Scores (mean and standard deviation) in Somatic Symptoms and Burden in Pre- and Post-treatment and One Month Follow-up for Caregivers. (source: reference (Albiol & Ruiz-Robledillo, 2015)^[16].

6. Conclusion

In summary, the significance of emotional intelligence in caregivers of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders cannot be understated when it comes to promoting mental wellness and providing effective care. Research findings underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence elements like emotional understanding, emotional facilitation, and emotional perception. These elements are vital for establishing trust and connection with autistic children, implementing successful communication techniques, and handling challenging behaviors with empathy and insight.

Caregivers who demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence are better prepared to create supportive environments, stimulate social interaction and communication abilities, and encourage emotional regulation and coping strategies in children with autism. The capacity to comprehend and manage emotions not only benefits the children but also contributes to the overall well-being of the caregivers themselves. Studies indicate that caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders face elevated levels of stress, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in promoting mental health throughout their lives.

Moreover, interventions designed to enhance the quality of life for individuals with ASD should take into account both child and caregiver attributes. By integrating caregiver viewpoints into outcome assessments and concentrating on enhancing emotional intelligence in caregivers, interventions can positively impact the well-being of both children with ASD and their families.

Further investigation is necessary to explore the connections between child characteristics, caregiver outcomes, and caregiving attributes to develop more efficient support strategies for families affected by autism spectrum disorders.

By nurturing emotional intelligence through structured methods such as monthly themes for social-emotional learning (SEL), caregivers can improve their capacity to foster the overall well-being and success of children. Implementing these approaches can result in long-lasting advantages in the development of emotional intelligence among individuals with autism spectrum disorders. It is crucial for caregivers to continually seek out resources and activities that promote social-emotional learning to effectively cultivate emotional intelligence. See references: (Selby, 2023)^[1], (acer, 2023, pages 6-10)^[2], (Hillegers et al., 2020)^[12].

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