

Using The Decider Skills with ASD

We are often asked if The Decider Skills can be used with individuals with ASC/ASD.

Our approach is for clinicians and teachers to learn the skills so that they can then pitch their teaching to suit their client or student needs.

If you are a teacher, you will know how best to pitch your teaching because you know your student. It means that the skills can be taught to children, young people and adults, even if they have different presentations.

The manual is not rigid. We give you the 'tools' and you then decide how to adapt the teaching to suit them and to make it a creative, individualised, person centred approach to learning the skills. It is a collaborative way of working which enables clinicians and teachers and empowers clients and students.

This is especially important for people with autism, as there is no 'one size fits all'.

For a person with an ASC/ASD, the teaching and practising of the skills may take more time – and bear in mind the recommended adaptations below.

CBT Adaptations for ASD - adults (*Spain et al 2015*)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1750946714002608>

- Increased number of sessions (10-17)
- More visual cues and written material
- Avoid colloquialisms
- Experiential tasks
- Increased compliance with homework

Other recommendations (links below):

- Use written and visual information
- Use concrete, simplified techniques for cognitive strategies
- Use special interests
- Involve parents and carers throughout
- Shorter sessions
- Use variety of media and technologies
- Evidence based - use of "scientific mind"
- Multiple strategies - physical, behavioural, social
- Enjoyable
- Right development level
- Focus on practical and visual learning
- Extra time
- Therapist flexibility and creativity

The Decider Skills include all the above suggestions and can be adapted to suit each individual.

The most important factor is YOU ! Your need to be flexible and creative, to make the skills understandable and meaningful and to bring the skills alive for your clients.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10942-019-00335-1/tables/3>

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/bacp-children-young-people-and-families-journal/september-2016/creative-cbt-with-autism-spectrum-disorder/#:~:text=Their%20suggested%20adaptations%20of%20CBT,be%20applied%20in%20therapy%20settings.>

<https://network.autism.org.uk/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/CBT%20for%20people%20with%20autism.pdf>

<https://www.altogetherautism.org.nz/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-modifications-for-those-on-the-autism-spectrum/>

Using The Decider Skills with ASD

Tony Attwood's recommendations for CBT for Anxiety & Depression in people with ASD

<http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/>

Tony Attwood's 6 themes of Making Sense of ANXIETY	Corresponding Decider Skill
Wish to belong and feel connected to others	Values, Reflect, Opposite Action, Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills
Ambivalent and delicate relationship to help	Values, SELF Care
Internal pressure and self-criticism	SELF Care, Thinking, Fact or Opinion, Balance
Taking life steadily or spiralling into meltdown	PACE & PLAN, The FIZZ, Name the Emotion & Opposite Action, Balance, Build Positive Experiences
The mediating effect of sensory environments on anxiety	Soothe
Using fantasy and role-play to escape	Distract, Do One Thing, Focus

Tony Attwood's recommended strategies for Coping with ANXIETY	Corresponding Decider Skill
Domestic terrorist (need for carer to be assertive etc)	All Interpersonal Effectiveness skills
Routines & Rituals	PACE & PLAN, Soothe, Breathe, Do One Thing, Balance, Build Positive Experiences
Thought Blocker	DISTRACT, Do One Thing, Focus, DRIFT
Explosion or Meltdown	All Distress Tolerance skills
GPS (redirect the emotion)	Distract, Do One Thing, Turn the Mind, Soothe
Physical Activity Tools	Distract, Do One Thing, Name the Emotion & Opposite Action, PACE & Plan
Relaxation Tools	Distract, Soothe, SELF Care Breathe, This Moment, Right Now
Social Tools	Balance, Distract, Wise Mind, Values, all Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills
Thoughts & Perspective Adaptive Thinking	Thinking, Fact or Opinion, Observe Sieve or Sponge, Wise Mind
Special Interests - using to soothe, distract, focus, enjoy	STOPP, Distract, Focus, Soothe
Sensory Tools	Soothe, Right Now, SELF Care
Medication	SELF Care

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Tony Attwood's recommended interventions for DEPRESSION	Corresponding Decider Skill
Assessment: identifying why we feel sad	STOPP, The FIZZ Name the Emotion, Reflect
Who I Am Book	The FIZZ, Reflect Values, Lifejacket Metaphor??
Energy Accounting	Build Positive Experiences (The Battery), PACE & PLAN Balance, SELF Care
Balancing the Books	Balance, Build Positive Experiences PACE & PLAN, SELF Care
Self-affirmation Pledge	Keep Calm & Carry On, SELF Care
Appreciation	Build Positive Experiences
Helpful Tools	SELF Care
Safety Plan for Depression Attack ("implosion")	STOPP + any other skills