

Child Psychology ***Case Study: Depression***

Depression and anxiety disorders can be diagnosed in teenagers and even children. You will read a case study about a (real) 11-year-old girl who received a diagnosis of depression/General Anxiety Disorder. In the case study, you will find an interview with the girl and her mother, a description of family history, and the test results from psychological assessments (with a discussion of the relevant literature). After reading through a sampling of background literature, you will make recommendations for treatment/support in the case.

Instructions

In-class on Wednesday: Choose your group of 4 classmates, and divide the research areas below among your group.

For Friday: First, write your individual response to question #1 in the packet. Each member should then read the case study, research their area, and prepare a 1-page handout for their group members (include an APA citation, and identify any direct quotes with pg #s).

In-class on Friday: You will meet with your group and discuss what each of you found in your research (sharing samples). You can start discussing questions #2-6 together.

For Monday: Finish writing your responses to the questions.

Research Areas

Psychological assessments: The Achenbach checklists

Look up the Achenbach rating system online (find their website). Read through sample forms (all the ones used in this case), as well as all the “about” sections, and any other information that you find relevant. How does the Achenbach system work? Why are there three separate forms?

Family origins of depression

Read the Cicchetti & Toth (1998) article cited in the case study. Focus especially on the sections from “homeostatic and physiological regulation” through “the development of a secure attachment relationship”, and the section on “the exosystem”. How do parenting and other family characteristics contribute to depression in children? Which of these are evident in the case study?

Peer rejection and depression

Read Reijntjes, Stegge, & Terwogt (2006)* on coping with peer rejection. Focus on the description of “Coping strategies” (p. 93-94), and the “Discussion”. How do depressed children react differently from their peers to peer rejection? What better strategies can be taught?

Empirically supported treatments for anxiety

Read the Ollendick & King (1998) article cited in the case study. Focus especially on the introduction, “Cognitive behavioral procedures”, and everything following “Anxiety Disorders” (less on the section about phobias). What treatments are described? What evidence do we have for their efficacy?

* Reijntjes, A., Stegge, H., & Terwogt, M.M. (2006). Children's coping with peer rejection: The role of depressive symptoms, social competence, and gender. *Infant and Child Development, 15*(1), 89-107.

Initial Response

1. Before reading case study

How do you think depression/anxiety might manifest at age eleven – what symptoms might this young girl have? Think about what symptoms might lead you to seek out a psychologist (as opposed to assuming regular preteen angst). Also, what treatments might be available at this age, and which would you be inclined to try first? *Explain the basis for your answers (textbook, experience, etc.).*

2. Psychological assessments: The Achenbach checklists

What are the Achenbach checklists (what do they measure and how)? Why are there three forms (how do multiple informants help)? In this particular case, what consistencies and inconsistencies exist across the form results, and what do they suggest about Shirley's actual symptoms?

3. Family origins of depression (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998)

In what ways may aspects of Shirley's home life have contributed to her depressive symptoms? (Discuss 2-3 findings from the article that may be operating in her specific case, and give details from the case study to support your claims.)

4. Peer rejection and depression (Reijntjes, Stegge, & Terwogt, 2006)

How do depressed children tend to react differently to peer rejection (as compared to non-depressed children)? What better alternative coping strategies can be taught to them?

5. Empirically supported treatments for anxiety (Ollendick & King, 1998)

What treatments are available for children with anxiety disorders (describe)? What evidence do we have for their efficacy?

6. Final Recommendations

Now that you have read the case study and background literature, what tentative suggestions could you make? Suggest one treatment that might be effective for Shirley, and also make one suggestion for her mother and another for her teachers to help her through this difficult period. In all three recommendations, refer back to details of the case, the articles read, and any relevant background course information (use APA citation).