

Autistic Spectrum Disorders:

ASD Guidelines for Effective Interventions

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT'S DIRECTOR

I am pleased to launch our new ASD Project Newsletter...

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform interested persons of the development and progress of the California Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) publication ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions. The newsletter is formatted so that it can be easily downloaded and photocopied to allow for widespread distribution to interested colleagues. We will continue to add new information to the ASD website (<http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/asd>), where you can download updated newsletters. We encourage dissemination of this newsletter and welcome your reactions, feedback, and suggestions.

Steve Lohrer, Ph.D.
ASD Project Director

About the DDS Project: ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions

Overview:

The overarching goal of the California Department of Developmental Services' Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Guidelines for Effective Interventions Project is to produce a document that describes effective evidence-based interventions for persons with ASD as well as the processes that contribute to effective interventions. The content of the document will follow an evidence-based approach for determining the present levels of scientific merit for interventions typically used for children and young adults diagnosed with ASD.

The ASD Guidelines are intended to serve as a practical

guide and source of information concerning interventions for persons with ASD for parents and professionals. The publication will be drafted and formatted in an easy-to-utilize and user-friendly manner. The scope of the guidelines will include reviews of interventions for children and adults diagnosed with ASD and will include examination of psychological/educational and medical/bio-behavioral interventions.

Please visit our website at <http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/asd> for additional information about the ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions.

DDS's ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions Project and National Standard Project Agree to Form Collaborative Relationship

Over the past several months, communication between our California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions Project and the National Autism Center's (NAC) National Standard Project (NSP) has

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culminated in a cooperative agreement between Sonoma State University's California Institute on Human Services (SSU/CIHS), the contractor for the DDS Guidelines Project, and the NAC, a non-profit organization founded by the May Institute. For the past year, both groups have expressed an interest in conducting a current, evidence-based review of educational and behavioral interventions for persons with ASD. A decision to collaborate with the National Standards Project was based on several factors. A primary consideration was for both DDS and the NSP to avoid issuing two separate documents and duplication of effort in this important area of work. Moreover, if two documents were issued concurrently this may serve to confuse the field rather than provide clarity and direction. Through the cooperative agreement, the organizations agree to work together to conduct the evidence-based review of educational and behavioral interventions for persons with ASD.

Specifically, DDS's Project Methodologist, Dr. Sam Odom, and the Project's Oversight Committee (OC) are working with the NSP in several capacities including a review and testing of the NSP evidence rating system. Dr. Odom and his colleagues will assist in a preliminary review (pilot test) to assess the application of the rating system through a review of selected articles. Following final revisions to the rating system, Dr. Odom and his team, along with additional members of our Project Oversight and Advisory Committees will assist in conducting the review of empirical literature. As a result, both DDS and the NSP will use the same evidence-based review of educational and behavioral interventions for persons with ASD.

The review of empirical literature is expected to be completed in Spring of 2007. Dr. Odom and his team will be responsible for drafting relevant sections of the DDS guidelines and to assure that the findings are presented in a clear and user-friendly language. Although both the DDS and NSP documents will present findings from the NSP evidence-based review of educational and behavioral interventions, the DDS document will differ from the NSP document in critical ways. One primary feature distinguishing the projects involves an evidence-based review of medical/biomedical/health-related interventions to be conducted by the DDS Project. This review is described below in further detail.

Efforts are underway to ensure continued effective communication and collaboration between the DDS and NSP Projects:

- Several members of the Professional Advisory Board of the National Autism Center and the National Standard Project's Expert Panel are also members of the DDS Project's Advisory Committee (AC).
- Dr. Sam Odom has been invited to serve as a member of the NSP Expert Panel.
- Several members of the DDS Project's Advisory Committee will be involved in the review of empirical articles relating to interventions for persons with ASD.
- Dr. Gina Green, a member of the NAC Advisory Board, has joined the DDS project team and will contribute to writing elements of the document bridging the evidence-based review and the field of practice (research to practice).

Update on the Review of Medical/Biomedical/Health-Related Interventions



To initiate this review, outreach efforts were conducted to solicit potential qualified methodologists with expertise in reviewing medical research. After consideration of a number of submitted proposals, a research team from Stanford University was selected in July to undertake this review of the medical/biomedical/health related interventions. This team will be headed by Lynne Huffman, MD, and colleagues Heidi Feldman, MD, PhD, and Trenna Sutcliffe, MD.

In addition to educational and behavioral interventions, the California Department of Developmental Services' ASD: Guidelines for Effective Interventions Project will also include a review of medical/biomedical/health-related interventions. Significant effort has been underway to refine and clarify the content for this review with input from several of the medical representatives of the Advisory Committee.