

How may a health care professional address the parent's questions and concerns regarding their son?

There are a variety of strategies that may be used, by a health care professional, to address the parent's questions and concerns regarding their son, including the ones found below.

Remain professional - remaining professional is often essential to addressing parent's questions and concerns regarding their child's potential for ASD. Remaining professional may help set a tone for a parent/patient discussion that can help foster effective communication and ensure the adequate transmission and receipt of vital information.

Remain calm and composed - a potential ASD diagnosis may be difficult for some parents/patients to handle, thus, they may react in a dramatic manner when presented with ASD-related information. With that in mind, it is important for health care professionals to remain calm and composed in situations where parents/patients react dramatically to ASD-related information. Much like with remaining professional, remaining calm and composed can help foster effective communication and ensure the adequate transmission and receipt of vital information. Furthermore, remaining calm and composed may help deescalate any volatile situations that may arise.

Clearly answer questions - many questions may arise in a parent/patient discussion regarding ASD. It is important health care professionals clearly answer questions that may develop in an ASD discussion to help avoid confusion among parents and/or patients.

Provide ASD-related educational information - parents/patients may not be familiar with ASD. Thus, health care professionals should consider providing parents/patients ASD-related educational information to help address any questions and concerns that may arise. Health care professionals should note the following when providing ASD-related educational information: it is important not to overwhelm a parent/patient with ASD-related educational information. Finding out a child may have ASD can be overwhelming in it of itself. Thus, health care professionals should not further overwhelm parents with copious amounts of information. Health care professionals should observe parents/patients to ascertain their response to ASD-related educational information and provide subsequent information accordingly.

Outline the ASD diagnosis process - outlining the ASD diagnosis process to a parent or a patient may help in addressing any future questions or concerns that may arise.

Outline ASD treatment options - some parents and/or patients may initially ask questions regarding ASD treatment options. Therefore, it may be appropriate, in some

cases, for health care professionals to outline ASD treatment options. Health care professionals should note the following: when reviewing ASD treatment options, health care professionals should include both non-pharmacological and pharmacological therapies, when applicable.

Provide information regarding the "next step" for parents/patients - much like the parents highlighted in the case study, parents and patients may not know how to proceed with obtaining further ASD-related health care. Providing clear information regarding the "next step" for ASD-related health care can be both informational and comforting for parents and patients.

What other strategies may be used to address parent's and/or patient's questions and concerns regarding ASD?

Conclusion

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may refer to a complex developmental disorder that affects how an individual behaves, interacts with others, communicates, and learns. The major symptoms of ASD fall into the following categories: social skill symptoms, communication symptoms, unusual behavior symptoms, and "other" symptoms. The diagnostic process for ASD typically involves two major stages or steps, which include developmental screening and a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation. The physical and mental-health conditions typically associated with ASD include the following: epilepsy, ADHD, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorders, and avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder. Non-pharmacological treatment options for ASD include: nutrition, physical activity, physical therapy, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, joint attention therapy, and support groups. Pharmacological treatment options for ASD include the following medications: Risperdal, Abilify, Celexa, Prozac, Ritalin, Adderall XR, Concerta, Vyvanse, and Depakene. Finally, health care professionals should possess insight into ASD as well as ASD treatment options to best serve patients with ASD.

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