
Abstract

Collaborative/therapeutic assessment for autism spectrum disorder with complex trauma

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This study explored the effectiveness of collaborative/therapeutic assessment for clients with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder and complex trauma using a case study approach. The client, an adult woman, had endured multiple traumatic experiences related to the stigma of autism spectrum disorder, leading to a significant decrease in self-esteem due to the adoption of excessive social camouflage behaviors. Amidst an array of symptoms associated with complex trauma that included disturbances in self-organization, dissociation, and emotional flashbacks, collaborative/therapeutic assessment facilitated self-understanding and stabilization. This, in turn, enabled the client to safely and successfully transition into the trauma processing and integration phases. By implementing collaborative/therapeutic assessment within the framework of neurodiversity and trauma-informed care and coupling it with psychoeducation tailored to the unique characteristics of autistic spectrum disorder and social adjustment patterns enables the establishment of a safe bridge for trauma processing and integration. This was thought to lead to a stronger therapeutic relationship.

Keywords: autism spectrum disorder, complex trauma, collaborative/therapeutic assessment, neurodiversity, trauma-informed care
