Session Title: Navigating the Mental Health Needs of Autistic College Students

Description: As the number of Autistic students on college campuses increases, the gap between the needs of those students and current resources becomes evident. Autistic students readily experience barriers to receiving appropriate levels of support resulting in lagging graduation rates compared to non-Autistic peers. One factor contributing to these attrition rates is undertreated mental health symptoms. Approximately 70% of Autistic college students present with a comorbid psychiatric disorder, with the most common conditions reported as ADHD, anxiety, and depression. However, UCCC directors report that despite an increase in Autistic students seeking services at their centers over the last 5 years they face inadequate staff training and expertise in supporting these students. This webinar aims to provide an understanding of the mental health needs of Autistic students, an overview of treatment approaches tailored to Autistic student needs, and training resources available to increase staff competence.

RESOURCES:

STAFF TRAINING AND INFORMATION:
- Asperger/Autism Network – Professional Resources
- College Autism Network - Trainings Page
- College Autism Spectrum – Media, Books, & Publications
- Drexel University Life Course Outcomes Research Program – National Autism Indicators Reports
- Student Affairs Training - BIT, SOC, CARE Teams, Title IX and Students with Autism
- Bolourian, Y., Zeedyk, S. M., & Blacher, J. (2018). Autism and the University Experience: Narratives from Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, *48*(10), 3330–3343. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3599-5
- Laugeson, E.A. (2017). *PEERS for young adults: Social skills training for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other social challenges*. Rutledge.
  - PEERS ROLE PLAY VIDEOS
- Scarpa, A., White, S. W., & Attwood, T. (2013). *CBT for children and adolescents with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Wolf, L., Thierfeld Brown, J., and Bork, R. (2009). *Students with Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for College Personnel*. Overland Park, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

FINDING HELP OFF-CAMPUS:
Autism Source Database: The Autism Source Database is a comprehensive list of treatment providers vetted by the Autism Society.
Autism NJ - Find a Referral Database: Database of providers throughout NJ. Search for similar options in your state.

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK A NEW OFF-CAMPUS THERAPIST:
1. What are your session fees? What insurances do you accept?
   Ask the provider to review their policies regarding missed appointments, billing for insurance, in-between session support/availability during crisis, etc.

2. How often are you available to see me? How long are sessions?
3. Do you offer any group therapy?
4. How long do you anticipate it will take before I see improvement? How do you measure progress?
5. What is a typical session like? Do you assign between session homework? If so, can you give me some examples of typical homework you assign?
6. What is your approach to therapy? Is it evidence-based?
*Research indicates that Autistic individuals have best outcomes with CBT.
7. Have you worked with other Autistic individuals before? Have you worked with individuals with similar concerns?
8. What are common goals you work on in therapy with other Autistic clients?
9. How do you stay current on research and best practices in the field?
10. Are you willing to collaborate and consult with others who are working with me? For example, your school, psychiatrist, a previous therapist, etc.

APP RECOMMENDATIONS:

Calm
A mindfulness app targeting sleep, stress, and anxiety

Forest
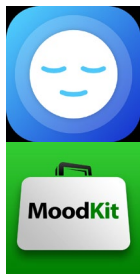An app that helps you stay focused on the important things in life

Habitica
Habit building and productivity app that uses gamification to motivate.
Collect points for completing good habits and avoiding bad habits.

Headspace
A guide to everyday mindfulness

Mind Shift
An interactive tool to help you reorient your thinking, and behavioral strategies to help you take action and make lasting positive changes

Mood Kit
A self-help tool to help you take action to improve your life, feel better by changing how you think, and develop self-awareness and healthy attitudes

Nod
Empowers students to break the cycle of disconnection and form more satisfying relationships

Self-Control
A computer-based application that lets you block your own access to distracting websites

Sleepio
A sleep improvement program teaching you how to overcome poor sleep

SuperBetter
A game-based app designed to help build resilience and work towards achieving goals