Neurodiversity, quality of life, and autistic adults: Shifting research and professional focuses onto real-life challenges

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Abstract

This article examines challenges to the quality of life experienced by autistic adults. The author, who is an autistic researcher, first shares how a neurodiversity perspective offers an important alternative to the deficit model of autism. Whereas the deficit model portrays autistic people as ill, broken, and in need of fixing, the neurodiversity perspective portrays it as a form of human diversity with associated strengths and difficulties. The article’s discussion then shifts to presenting Schalock’s (2000) quality of life framework as a neurodiversity-compatible lens through which domains of quality of life can be viewed. The article analyzes in detail these core domains in relation to the lives of autistic adults. The author suggests that a collaborative approach between professionals/researchers and autistic adults is needed to develop meaningful solutions to these challenges, and he presents possibilities for collaboration.

Keywords

Autism, Neurodiversity, Quality of life, Autistic Adults

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Neurodiversity, quality of life, and autistic adults: Shifting research and professional focuses onto real-life challenges. Disability Studies Quarterly, 30(1). Rutter, M., Bailey, A., & Lord, C. (2003). Social Communication Questionnaire. Western Psychological Services. Vidal, V. (in prep) Getting in Sync: Exploring and supporting interpersonal communication in autistic children. The other adults appeared to increase their use of direct prompting for peer interaction after the clinician's first supports phase, increasing from an average frequency per 10 min/session of 0.3 during the first baseline to 3.2 during the second baseline.

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