

‘Grave set of circumstances’: Investigating connection between autism and depression

[People with autism] are four times more likely than neurotypicals to experience depression over the course of their lives, although scientists are unsure why.

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The consequences for many autistic people are dire. Major depression can severely impair their independence; their coping, daily living and social skills; and their communication — all things they may already find challenging. Depression can also [trigger suicidal thoughts](#).

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Despite this grave set of circumstances, there is little hope available. There are no studies on which screening measures are most useful or which treatments work best to ease depression among autistic people. It is not known, for example, whether depressed autistic people respond differently to psychotherapy than others do, or how best to adapt treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy for them.

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Some researchers are exploring ways to modify CBT to treat depression in autistic people. [Psychiatrist Carla] Mazefsky says clinicians could follow a predictable session routine and structure, incorporate a client’s strengths and talents, repeat concepts often and make abstract concepts more concrete via visual aids and worksheets. They could also put greater focus on emotion recognition. Mazefsky has also found that incorporating mindfulness training can help autistic clients improve their emotional awareness.

Read full, original post: [The deep emotional ties between depression and autism](#)