Managing Anxiety Symptoms
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A.M.B.E.R. clinic
Albuquerque Multidisciplinary Behavioral Evaluation for Recovery and Resiliency

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Overview

• Diagnostic considerations
• Putting on the brakes v Increasing awareness
• Medications have limitations
• Strategies and caveats working with multiple providers
Dx Considerations

• Anxiety is NORMAL and USEFUL
• except when it isn’t...
• Often difficult to see it!
Dx Considerations

• Purpose
  • Look for extent of dysfunction

• Habitual response (PTSD; Avoidance)
  • Awareness may be low
  • 2\textsuperscript{nd} reporters may have accommodated

• Rationalization
  • Anticipation
Brakes v Awareness

• Prevention of dangerous outcomes: risk assessment
• Increase rigidity of behavior and routines
• OCB, OCD, …psychotic proportions
Brakes v Awareness

- Scanning for danger;
  - hyper-vigilance
- Defensive, reactive, quick
- PTSD, Panic disorder, GAD
  - over-generalization
  - impatient irritability
Clinical significance

• Degree of impairment = limitations
  • clinician has to assess severity and risk to estimate time frame for therapeutic intervention

• Daily activities
• Functional routines?
• Risk to others…
Medications...

- Acute treatment; require changes in mental function (attribution and motivation)
- SSRI
  - increase serotonin
  - ? disengage emotional connection
Medications...

• Tricyclics
  • mixed receptor blockage
  • suppress REM

• Benzodiazepines
  • quick; effective; habit-forming
  • disinhibition
Medications...

• Vascular blockers
  • decrease physiologic messages
• Antipsychotics?...
• ECT, TMS, DBS...
• Drugs of abuse/dependence
  • MJ, Alcohol, opioids
Multidisciplinary Approach

• Behavioral Supports & Transformations
  • CBT
  • DBT
  • Exposure therapy
  • Group therapy
  • Individual psychotherapy
  • Sobriety maintenance
Multiple providers

• Communication
  • Independent verification of effects, progress, setbacks
• Keeping common goal
• Adjust medications; adjust psychological pressure
• Focus on long-term (independent) functioning
Challenges

• Difficult to recognize some forms of dysfunction
• Side effects of other treatments may contribute to symptom exacerbation
• Have to preserve a functional anxiety
Summary

• Anxiety is universal
• Dysfunctional anxiety can be treated
• Multiple modalities support a balanced return to function
• Medication trials need to be logged
• Patient/support team must be active participants in maintenance of recovery