

Autism and overlapping mental disorders

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Obsessive-compulsive disorder:

- AS individuals characteristically rely heavily on routines and rituals.
- Easily fixate on a specific activity or subject.
- Possible distinction in perceived significance of act
 - In OCD, commonly perceived as matter of *safety*.
 - In autism, may be seen more rationally as matter of *comfort*
 - Priority for intervention should be to make sure behavior does not lead to self-injury, damage to property or inappropriate behavior in public. Don't put excessive pressure on an autistic person to stop a behavior that causes none of these problems.

Attention Deficit Disorder:

- May manifest either as “comorbid” disorder or as secondary effect of autism
- In typical “public” settings (classrooms, stores, etc, etc.) “attention deficit” symptoms are likely to manifest simply as a result of sensory stress
- Ritalin may be beneficial

Schizophrenia:

- Characterized by hallucinations, delusions *and* disordered thought and behavior.
- Autistics may have comorbid schizophrenia (believed to be rare) or experience

some symptoms (esp. hallucinations) without being diagnosably schizophrenic

- Significant distinctions based on response to hallucination.
 - Rejects hallucination= not delusional
 - Responds logically to *perceived* reality= not disordered
 - An individual who is delusional but still “rational” represents the greatest potential threat to self and others

“Delusional Aspie”: Zaratustra

- Is very sensitive to light, but oblivious to pain.
- Obsessive-compulsive tendencies
- Recounts what he considers real encounters with angels and demons.
- Bases his actions, including participation in sophisticated criminal enterprises, on these perceived encounters.
- Responds to hallucination/delusion in calm and highly organized ways
 - Ex. Shoots at demons, keeps accurate count of how much ammo is left!
- Motivations seem bizarre or wholly incomprehensible to others.
- Is obviously intelligent, and usually articulate.
- Is often violent, but these actions are consistently “cold-blooded” in nature.

David N. Brown is a semipro author, diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome as an adult. Previous works include the novels *The Worlds of Naughtenny Moore*, *Walking Dead* and *Aliens Vs Exotroopers*, and the

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