

Emotional Wellness

Supporting Individuals with Anxiety, Anger, or Aggression

☀️ Why It Matters

Emotional wellness depends on successfully addressing all other needs in the hierarchy and ensuring the individual's mental, neurological, and psychological health are well supported. This includes trauma desensitization, managing medication side effects, and ensuring emotional stability through comprehensive support, including behavioural and medical interventions.

💡 Why somebody behaves the way they do may not necessarily be one of the four functions of behaviour (i.e. attention-seeking, access to tangibles, avoidance, sensory seeking) but rather their behaviour could be a trauma response, or possible response to a side effect of medication.

🧠 Mental and Neurological Health

Individuals with autism or developmental disabilities seem to receive limited psychiatric and neurological support due to a shortage of specialists. Supporters must collect accurate data to help physicians make informed dual diagnosis decisions. Collaboration among primary care, psychiatry, naturopathy, and nutrition is essential for comprehensive mental health care. Addressing environmental stressors and biomedical issues (i.e., sensory concerns and GI health) is vitally important for an accurate mental health diagnosis and effective treatment.

❤️ Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Many people supported experience trauma that manifests as anxiety, panic, or aggression. Supporters can best support a person's experience of trauma by identifying and avoiding triggers, implement calming strategies (e.g., BB-ABC protocols), and work with trauma-informed professionals (i.e., EMDR therapists). Mindfulness and body awareness practices help both supporters and individuals expand their window of tolerance and restore calm.

💚 Psychological Well-being

Beyond managing disorders, supporters must promote self-worth, belonging, and positive communication. Encouragement, inclusion, and respect help individuals replace limiting beliefs and improve emotional stability. Mindful communication and calm emotional presence are essential for positive outcomes.

💊 Medication and Side Effects

Antipsychotics and antidepressants are widely used but often overprescribed. Supporters should track side effects such as akathisia, anxiety, and fatigue, and promptly report changes to healthcare providers. Monitoring ensures safety and prevents misdiagnosis or unnecessary medication increases.

✿ ABA & Behavioural Interventions

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies can help reduce challenging behaviours by teaching coping and communication skills. When integrated with biomedical and emotional supports, ABA can contribute to sustained emotional wellness.

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Core Tools for Supporters

Focus Area / Challenge	Optimal Solutions
Managing Triggers & Trauma	Identify trauma triggers early. Use BB-ABC calming protocols, mindfulness, and environmental adjustments to maintain emotional safety. Engage trauma-informed professionals, as needed.
Promoting Psychological Well-being	Encourage positive communication, inclusion, and emotional expression. Model calm behaviour and provide consistent reassurance and support.
Building Self-Worth & Belonging	Offer encouragement, acknowledgment, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully. Recognize strengths and celebrate progress.
Monitoring Medication Effects	Track mood, movement, and physical changes. Document side effects such as akathisia, anxiety, or fatigue and report promptly to healthcare providers.
Encouraging Emotional Regulation & Calm	Model emotional regulation through mindfulness and empathy. Provide structured routines, sensory supports, and affirmations of safety and control.

Key Takeaway

Emotional wellness arises when mental health, trauma, and medication needs are addressed through integrated, compassionate, and data-informed support. Calm, mindful supporters foster resilience and emotional growth for those they support.