



Methods of treatment of neuroses in children.

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ABSTRACT

Neuroses in children represent a significant challenge in pediatric mental health, impacting their emotional well-being and overall development. This article explores the various methods of treating neuroses in children, ranging from psychotherapy to pharmacotherapy and complementary approaches. Drawing from current literature and research findings, this paper discusses the efficacy, limitations, and implications of different treatment modalities. By understanding the complexities of neuroses and implementing appropriate interventions, healthcare professionals and caregivers can better support children in managing and overcoming these challenges.

Keywords:

Neuroses, children, treatment, psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, complementary medicine.

Neuroses in children encompass a spectrum of psychological disorders characterized by excessive anxiety, irrational fears, obsessive thoughts, and compulsive behaviors. These conditions can significantly impair a child's quality of life, academic performance, social interactions, and familial relationships. Recognizing the importance of early intervention, this article aims to provide insights into the diverse treatment options available for addressing neuroses in children. Current literature highlights a multifaceted approach to treating neuroses in children, encompassing various therapeutic modalities tailored to individual needs and preferences. Psychotherapy, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), play therapy, and family therapy, stands as a cornerstone in the treatment of childhood neuroses. CBT, in

particular, has shown promising results in helping children identify and challenge maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors. Pharmacotherapy also plays a significant role, especially in cases where symptoms are severe or resistant to psychotherapeutic interventions. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are commonly prescribed to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression in children, although cautious monitoring for potential side effects is essential. Complementary approaches, such as mindfulness-based techniques, relaxation exercises, and dietary modifications, offer additional avenues for managing neuroses in children. While research on the efficacy of these interventions is ongoing, anecdotal evidence suggests their potential benefits in

reducing stress and promoting emotional regulation.

The methods employed in treating neuroses in children vary depending on the specific diagnosis, severity of symptoms, and individual preferences. A comprehensive assessment conducted by mental health professionals is crucial for formulating an appropriate treatment plan tailored to the child's unique needs. This assessment typically includes clinical interviews, standardized assessment tools, and collaboration with caregivers and educators to gain a holistic understanding of the child's functioning.

Treating neuroses in children typically involves a combination of psychotherapy, behavioral therapy, and sometimes medication. Here are some common methods:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT helps children identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors contributing to their neuroses. It teaches coping strategies and problem-solving skills.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a widely used therapeutic approach that focuses on identifying and modifying negative thought patterns and behaviors. It's highly effective for children dealing with various neuroses or mental health issues. Here's a breakdown of its key components:

Identifying Negative Thought Patterns: CBT helps children become aware of their negative thoughts and beliefs, often referred to as cognitive distortions. These may include catastrophizing (expecting the worst), black-and-white thinking (seeing things in extremes), or personalization (blaming oneself for external events).

Challenging Negative Thoughts: Once identified, CBT teaches children to challenge the accuracy and validity of their negative thoughts. This involves questioning evidence for and against these thoughts, considering alternative explanations, and evaluating the realistic outcomes of situations.

Behavioral Activation: CBT encourages children to engage in activities that bring them joy or a sense of accomplishment, even when they don't feel like it. This helps counteract the

tendency to withdraw or avoid activities due to negative emotions.

Learning Coping Strategies: CBT equips children with practical coping skills to manage distressing emotions and situations. These may include relaxation techniques, problem-solving strategies, assertiveness training, and effective communication skills.

Gradual Exposure: For children with anxiety disorders or phobias, CBT often involves exposure therapy. This technique gradually exposes them to feared situations or objects in a controlled manner, helping them confront and overcome their fears.

Homework Assignments: CBT often includes homework assignments between sessions to reinforce learning and practice new skills. This may involve keeping thought records, practicing relaxation exercises, or gradually facing feared situations.

Parental Involvement: In the case of younger children, parental involvement is crucial in CBT. Parents are often taught strategies to support their child's progress, reinforce positive behaviors, and create a supportive environment at home.

Overall, CBT provides children with the tools and strategies they need to effectively manage their emotions, cope with challenges, and lead happier, more fulfilling lives. It's a structured and goal-oriented approach that can be tailored to meet the unique needs of each child.

- **Play Therapy:** Especially effective for younger children, play therapy allows them to express their thoughts and emotions through play, helping therapists understand their concerns and providing a safe space for emotional processing.

Play therapy is a form of psychotherapy that's particularly effective for younger children, typically between the ages of 3 and 12, although it can be beneficial for individuals of any age. It operates on the understanding that children may not have the verbal skills to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences as adults do, but they can communicate symbolically through play.

In a play therapy session, a trained therapist provides a safe and supportive environment

where children can freely express themselves through various forms of play, such as drawing, storytelling, role-playing, or using toys and games. The therapist observes the child's play and interactions, gaining insights into their inner world, emotions, struggles, and strengths. Play therapy offers several benefits:

Emotional expression: Children can use play to act out their feelings and experiences, helping them process and make sense of complex emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, or confusion.

Communication: Through play, children can communicate their thoughts and experiences more comfortably and naturally than they might in traditional talk therapy. This can be especially helpful for children who are shy, anxious, or have difficulty expressing themselves verbally.

Problem-solving and coping skills: Play therapy provides opportunities for children to explore different solutions to problems they encounter, develop new coping strategies, and practice social skills and conflict resolution in a safe environment.

Building trust and rapport: By engaging in play activities with a supportive therapist, children can develop a trusting relationship and feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings, which is essential for effective therapy.

Trauma processing: Play therapy can be particularly useful for children who have experienced trauma or adverse life events. Through play, children can revisit and make sense of traumatic experiences in a way that feels safer and less overwhelming.

Empowerment: Play therapy empowers children by giving them a sense of control over their environment and allowing them to make choices within the therapeutic context. This can boost self-esteem and confidence.

Overall, play therapy offers a developmentally appropriate approach to addressing children's emotional and behavioral challenges, promoting healing, growth, and resilience. It recognizes the innate language of play as a powerful tool for understanding and supporting children's mental health and well-being.

- **Family Therapy:** Since family dynamics often play a role in childhood neuroses, involving the family in therapy can be beneficial. Family therapy helps improve communication, resolve conflicts, and create a supportive environment for the child.

Family therapy can be incredibly beneficial when addressing childhood neuroses or any mental health challenges a child may be facing. Here's why:

Understanding the Root Causes: Family therapy allows everyone involved to explore the underlying issues contributing to the child's struggles. Often, these issues are deeply intertwined with family dynamics, communication patterns, and past experiences.

Improving Communication: Effective communication is essential for healthy family relationships. Family therapy provides a safe space for family members to express themselves openly, listen to each other, and learn constructive ways to communicate.

Resolving Conflicts: Conflicts within the family can exacerbate a child's neuroses or mental health issues. Family therapy helps address these conflicts by facilitating dialogue, promoting empathy, and teaching conflict resolution skills.

Creating a Supportive Environment: A supportive family environment is crucial for a child's emotional well-being. Family therapy helps families cultivate empathy, understanding, and support for each other, which can significantly benefit the child's recovery and long-term mental health.

Developing Healthy Coping Mechanisms: Through family therapy, families can learn and practice healthy coping mechanisms together. This not only benefits the child directly but also strengthens the family unit as a whole.

Overall, involving the family in therapy can lead to more comprehensive and sustainable improvements in the child's mental health and overall family functioning.

- **Relaxation Techniques:** Teaching relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or mindfulness can help

children manage anxiety and stress associated with their neuroses.

- **Exposure Therapy:** This involves gradually exposing children to situations or stimuli that trigger their anxiety or fear in a controlled and supportive environment. Over time, repeated exposure can help reduce anxiety responses.
- **Medication:** In some cases, medication may be prescribed to manage symptoms of anxiety, depression, or other underlying conditions contributing to the neuroses. However, medication is usually considered only when other therapies have not been effective or when symptoms are severe.

Medication can indeed play a crucial role in managing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other conditions associated with neuroses. However, it's typically not the first line of treatment. Therapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness-based approaches, and lifestyle modifications are often tried first.

Medication is usually considered when these therapies haven't provided sufficient relief or when symptoms are severe enough to interfere significantly with daily functioning. The decision to prescribe medication is made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as the severity of symptoms, the individual's overall health, and their preferences.

There are different classes of medications that may be used to treat neuroses, including antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, and mood stabilizers. These medications work by affecting neurotransmitters in the brain, such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which play a role in regulating mood and anxiety.

It's essential for individuals prescribed medication to work closely with their healthcare provider to find the right medication and dosage that effectively manages their symptoms with minimal side effects. Additionally, medication is often most effective when used in combination with

therapy and other forms of support. Regular monitoring and adjustments to the treatment plan may be necessary to ensure optimal outcomes.

- **Parental Education and Support:** Educating parents about their child's condition and providing support and guidance on how to best support their child can be crucial for successful treatment outcomes.
- **School-based Interventions:** Collaborating with teachers and school counselors to create a supportive environment at school can help alleviate stressors and improve the child's academic and social functioning.
- **Nutrition and Lifestyle Changes:** Ensuring children have a healthy diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep can also contribute to overall well-being and may help reduce symptoms of neuroses.
- **Art Therapy:** Similar to play therapy, art therapy allows children to express themselves creatively through art, which can help them explore and communicate their feelings in a nonverbal way.

Art therapy is indeed a fascinating approach that utilizes the creative process of making art to improve one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It's not just for children; adults can benefit from it as well. In art therapy, the focus isn't on creating a masterpiece but on the process of creating and the emotions and thoughts that emerge during that process.

Through art, individuals can express thoughts and feelings that may be difficult to articulate verbally. For children, who may not yet have the vocabulary or cognitive ability to express complex emotions, art provides a powerful means of communication. It allows them to externalize their inner world, explore their experiences, and gain insights into their emotions and behaviors.

Art therapy sessions are often facilitated by trained art therapists who provide a safe and supportive environment for clients to engage in

the creative process. They may use a variety of art materials such as paints, clay, collage, or drawing tools, depending on the preferences and needs of the individual.

The benefits of art therapy are numerous. It can help reduce stress and anxiety, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, improve communication and interpersonal skills, and provide a sense of empowerment and control. Moreover, the act of creating art can be inherently therapeutic, promoting relaxation and mindfulness.

Overall, art therapy is a valuable tool for promoting emotional expression, self-discovery, and healing, making it a valuable addition to therapeutic interventions for individuals of all ages.

It's important for treatment to be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of each child, and for therapists to work closely with parents and other caregivers to provide comprehensive support.

The treatment of neuroses in children poses several challenges, including diagnostic complexity, treatment resistance, and the potential for adverse effects associated with pharmacotherapy. Integrating multiple treatment modalities within a collaborative and holistic framework is essential for addressing the diverse needs of children with neuroses.

Moreover, ongoing research is needed to elucidate the long-term efficacy and safety of various treatment approaches, particularly in younger populations. Additionally, efforts to destigmatize mental health issues and enhance access to evidence-based interventions are critical in promoting early intervention and optimal outcomes for children with neuroses.

Conclusions and Suggestions:

In conclusion, the treatment of neuroses in children requires a comprehensive and individualized approach that considers the child's unique strengths, challenges, and contextual factors. Psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, and complementary interventions each have a role to play in addressing the multifaceted nature of childhood neuroses.

Collaboration among healthcare professionals, educators, and caregivers is paramount in providing consistent support and monitoring progress throughout the treatment process. By prioritizing early intervention, promoting mental health literacy, and advocating for accessible and culturally sensitive services, we can empower children with neuroses to thrive and fulfill their potential.

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