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Evidence-Based Practice

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Evidence-based practice, or EBP, is the joining of clinical expertise, scientific evidence, and client/caregiver perspectives to provide the highest-quality services to children and adults in all areas of communication disorders treatment. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) stance is that all speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists include the principles of EBP when making clinical decisions. This way, clients receive the most current, effective, and efficient treatment. Clinicians also protect clients' interests, needs, and values when approaching assessment, treatment, and care with an EBP mindset.

Key Steps to EBP Treatment Success



1. Ask the Clinical Question

All answers to clinical problems or questions must include the experience and expertise of clinicians in order to be evidence-based.



2. Find the Evidence

When making a treatment decision, choices should line up with practices the current body of evidence supports.



3. Assessing the Evidence

Consider who published the chosen evidence. Was it produced by a trusted source, or was it funded and produced by an advocacy group? Studies designed using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are most likely to lack bias.



4. Make the Clinical Decision

The fourth and final step in using EBP involves merging clinical expertise, the perspective of the client, and the information gained from the evidence to make clinical treatment decisions about a given client.

How Much Evidence Do I Need?

There is no magic amount of evidence required when making choices clinically. Considering the wants of the client, as well as the cost effectiveness and the possibility for harm of the treatment can be helpful in eliminating some options. Also, it is wise to consider and compare alternative treatment options. Finally, when sifting through several treatment options, it is always best to trust your clinical experience and judgment!

Resources:

ASHA. 2018. "Key Steps in the EBP Process." Evidence-Based Practice. Retrieved January 18, 2018 from <http://www.asha.org/Research/EBP/>.

ASHA. 2018. "What It Is (and What It Isn't.)" Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice. Retrieved January 18, 2018 from <http://www.asha.org/Research/EBP/Introduction-to-Evidence-Based-Practice/>

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