Learning Objectives

MedBridge
Selective Mutism: Assessment and Intervention Strategies
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Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Describe the major characteristics present in children with selective mutism
- Summarize current evidence regarding etiology
- Conduct assessment procedures to differentiate selective mutism from other developmental disorders
- Implement a desensitization treatment approach to resolve the problem
- Educate parents and other professionals regarding selective mutism

Chapter 1: Background Information
An early form of selective mutism was identified in 1877, but it wasn’t included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders until the fourth edition, published in 1994. This chapter will discuss the evolving definition of selective mutism, presumed causes of the disorder supported in the research, and major characteristics in the disorder profile.

Chapter 2: Assessment Procedures
Evaluating a child who is refusing to talk can be a bit intimidating and challenging, but can be managed in a professional manner that results in qualifying a child for services. This chapter will present informal and formal procedures that can be conducted in a variety of settings. The child’s level of engagement (verbal and/or nonverbal) will influence the extent of assessment procedures that will be possible.

Chapter 3: Treatment Options
Treatment strategies are varied, based on the professional discipline involved in coordinating the therapy and presumed etiology. This chapter will overview the major treatment approaches and then focus on the common component in almost all of the treatment options – decreasing the individual’s anxiety through gradual and controlled exposure to speaking situations.

Chapter 4: Communication Desensitization Treatment Program
This chapter covers a communication desensitization treatment program that has four phases: nonverbal, ghost/whisper, motor/voice, and generalization.