

3q29 Deletion Syndrome

Dating & Interpersonal Relationships

September 10, 2021

Amanda Platner, PsyD, ABPP

Holli Abernathy, MS, APC

Overview: In the Research

- In 3q29 deletion syndrome, there is an increased likelihood of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as anxiety, ADHD, and schizophrenia
- In the general ASD population, males outnumber females 4 to 1; this ratio is reduced to 2 to 1 for ASD diagnoses in the 3q29 group
- Overall, even individuals who did not meet criteria for comorbid ASD still have higher scores for **social challenges** and **anxiety**.
- Average profile was distinct from the general picture of autism spectrum disorder, in that people with 3q29 deletion tended to have high scores for **restricted interests** and **repetitive behaviors**, but only mild impairment in social motivation.
- This means that individuals with 3q29 deletion **were motivated to have peer relationships, yet aside from social motivation, they often lack other skills with which to form those relationships.**

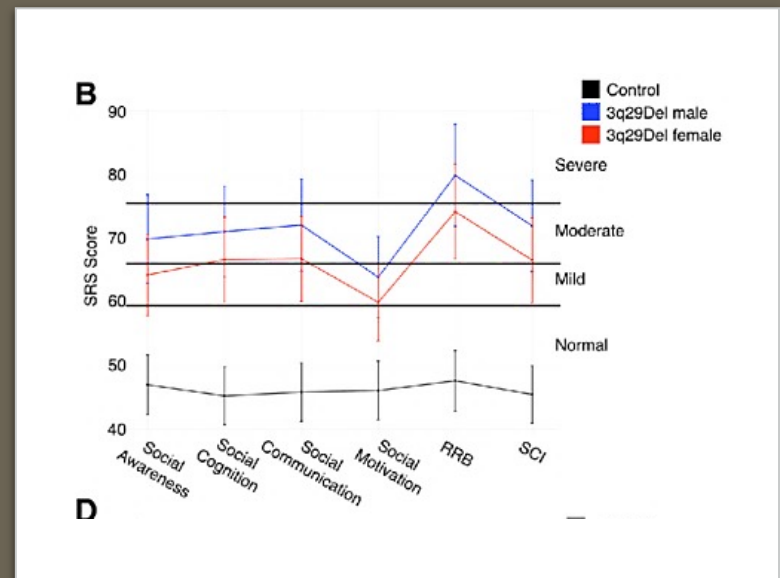
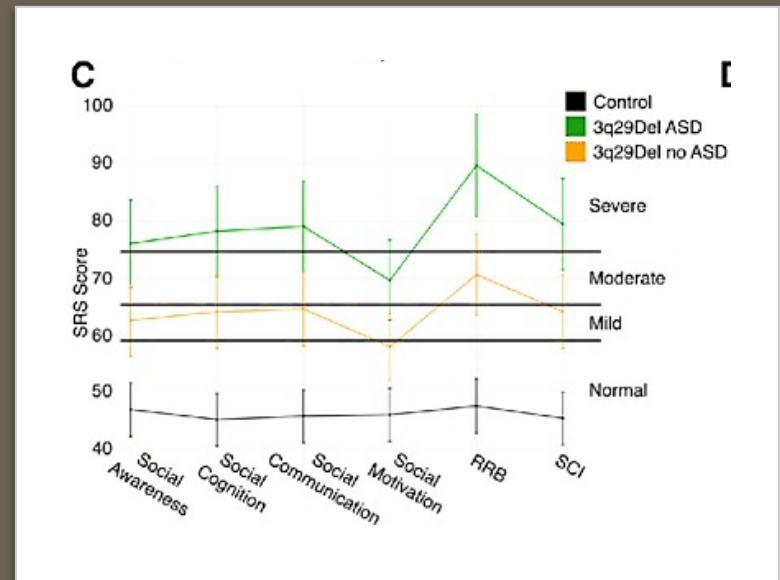
3q29 Deletions: *ASD Presence & Sex*

ASD Presence:

- Examined subscale scores separately for 3q29Del individuals reporting a diagnosis of ASD and those not reporting a diagnosis of ASD.
- As expected, 3q29Del participants with ASD scored significantly higher on all sub-scales than 3q29Del participants without ASD; however, **3q29Del participants without ASD still scored significantly higher than controls on all sub-scale.**

Sex:

- Examined profiles of male and female 3q29 deletion carriers separately.
- **The social disability in 3q29Del is not qualitatively different between males and females**



Bottom Line:

- Although each individual is different, overall, social deficits in individuals with 3q29 are similar to those with ASD and other neurodevelopmental disorders regardless of comorbid diagnosis

Summary of Challenges that may Impact Dating & Interpersonal Relationships

- Social Deficits
- Anxiety/Social Anxiety
- Restricted Interests
- Repetitive Behaviors

Support for
Resolving/Understanding
Challenges that
Impact Dating
& Interpersonal
Relationships

- Evaluation of co-occurring conditions (i.e. ASD)
- Cognitive/Behavioral Therapy
- Social skill building groups such as PEERS
- Disability-specific online dating and/or dating and recreational events

How to approach these topics:

- Respect
- Choice
- What do you know, what do you want to know?

Topics Relevant to Dating and Relationships:

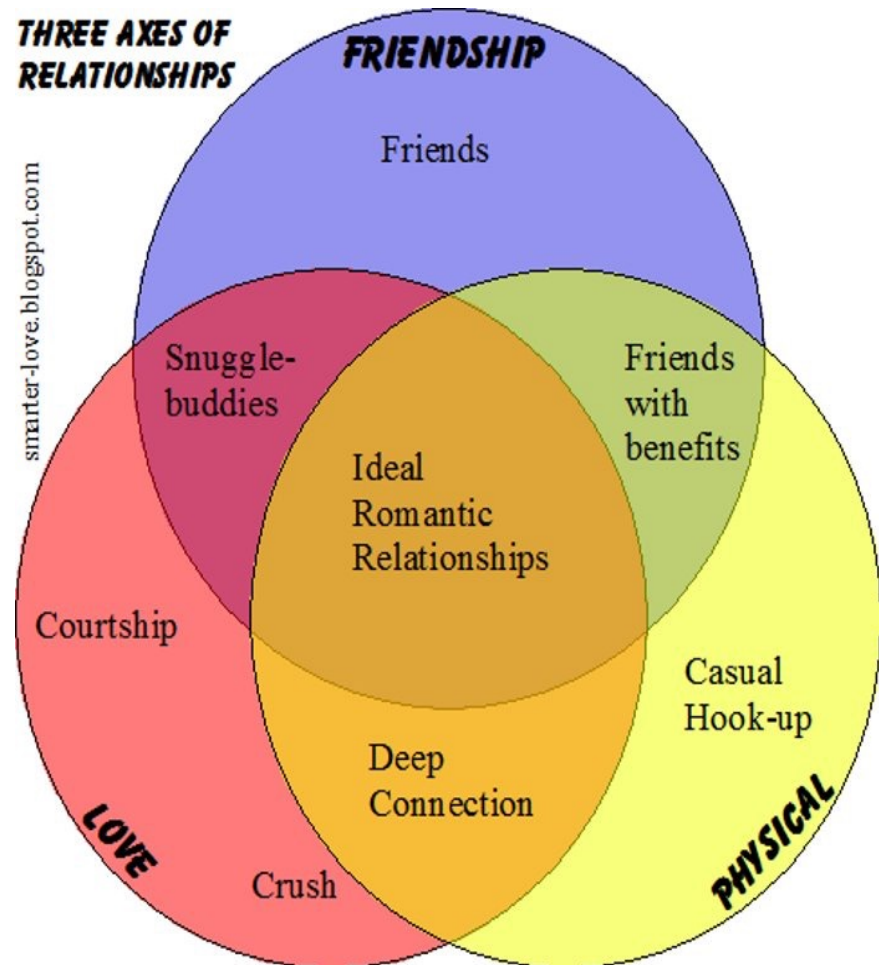
- Types of relationships
 - Relationship goals for yourself
 - Who you can/can't date
 - Where to meet people
 - Online dating-How to's and safety
 - Asking someone out
 - Where to go on dates
 - Before a date checklist
- ▶ During/after a date checklist
 - ▶ Dating Bill of Rights
 - ▶ Emotional & Physical Intimacy
 - ▶ Love Languages
 - ▶ Boundaries
 - ▶ Sex & Safety
 - ▶ Break-ups
 - ▶ Rejection

Learn through:

- Didactic instruction
- Discussions
- Activities
 - Polls and quizzes-how much do you know about yourself, about other topics of interest? What is your love language?
 - Activities
 - who is okay to date?
 - Role Play-how to ask someone on a date
 - Group Practice-Look up online dating sites and share ideas for profiles, share fun and safe date ideas
 - Video Clips from famous movies
 - Practice boundary setting, conversations around consent

Example: Types of Relationships

- Friendships (platonic/non-romantic)
- Family/blood relations
- Workplace relationships
- Acquaintances
- Monogamous vs. Polyamorous
- Dating just one person vs. dating multiple people
- Emotional vs. Physical
- Some people interested in one or the other, some want relationships with both



Neuropsychological/diagnostic Evaluation

Benefits:

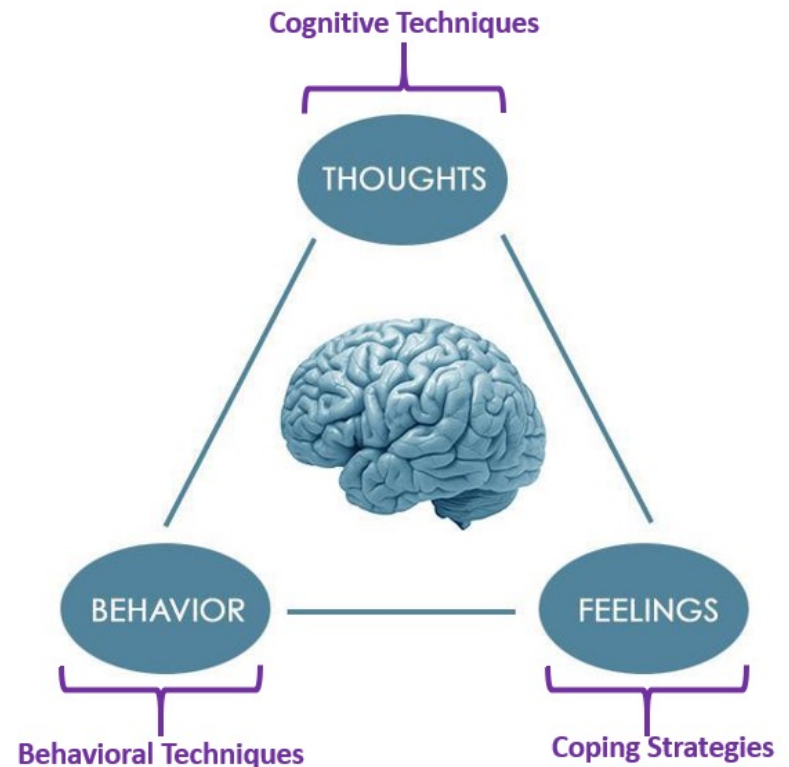
- Determine cognitive strengths and vulnerabilities and their functional impact
- Gain access to specific groups (i.e. ASD specific programs) or programs
- Helpful for teaching skills related to dating and to give individuals insight

How do they work:

- Clinical interview, standardized tests, feedback

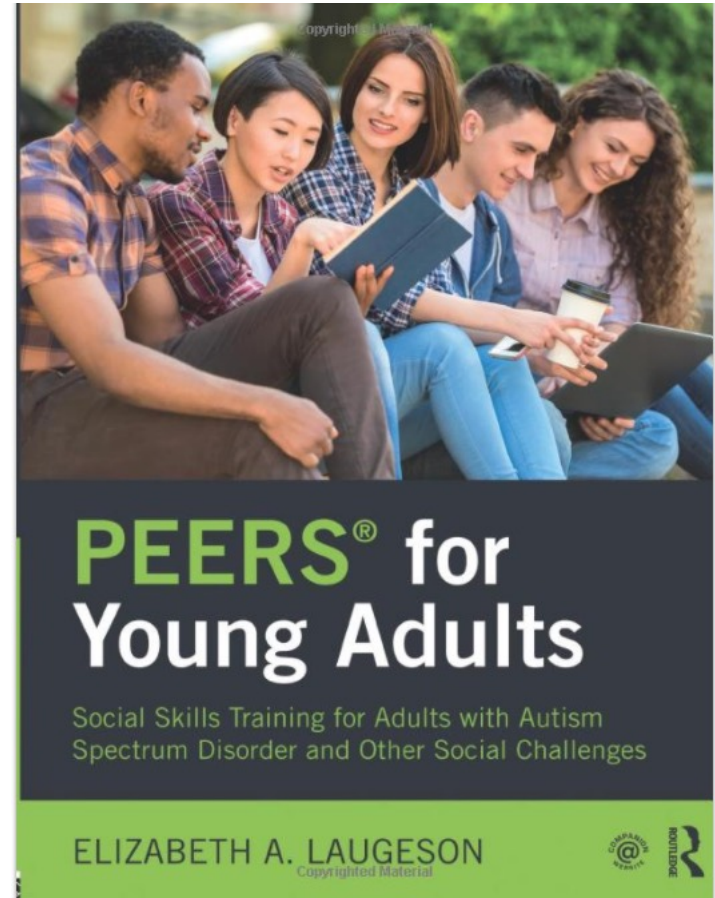
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- CBT is the most researched form of psychotherapy, and no other form of psychotherapy has been shown to be systematically superior to CBT
- Highly structured and strategy oriented
- Appropriate format for direct instruction of social skills and emotion & behavior management
- Provides frequent opportunities to model, practice and deliver feedback in a safe setting (i.e. role playing).
- Depending on ones cognitive functioning and abilities for social understanding, Behavior Therapy may be recommended rather than CBT



PEERS Curriculum & Other Social Skill Building Groups

- PEERS evidence-based group treatment program for young adults with neurodevelopmental disorders and social challenges.
- Provides effective behavioral interventions in the form of 16 engaging group session outlines.



Disability-specific online friendship/ dating apps and/or community events

- 3q29-specific Facebook groups
- Hiki
- Autism Date
- Autistic Dating
- Aspie Singles
- Glimmer
- Disability matching

*We are not endorsing any of these specific groups or apps