

Sander Begeer, PhD
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Theory of Mind and Autism: Tests and Treatments

Deviant perspective taking or Theory of Mind (ToM) skills are a central feature of autism. However, the literature is unclear about specific strengths and weaknesses of individuals with autism. This is partly due to the way ToM is measured. Moreover, many treatments for children with autism involve attempts to 'train' ToM skills, while the evidence base for these treatments is generally poor. In the current presentation, different ways of testing ToM, and the effects, and moderating effects, of training ToM in children with autism will be discussed. The difference between conceptual and applied ToM skills is highlighted, and the question is raised whether ToM is a proclivity, rather than a capacity.