Trauma Syndromes:
Common Differential Diagnoses to Consider

Anxiety Disorders

Similarities: Fear response, physical arousal, avoidance, irritability, and worry
Key differential features of anxiety disorders: Symptoms are not exclusively associated with a traumatic event or set of experiences

Anxiety and trauma syndromes often occur comorbidly

Major Depressive Disorder

Similarities: Low mood, irritability, negative beliefs, anhedonia, trouble with cognitive functioning, trouble with executive functioning
Key differential features of MDD: There are no intrusive symptoms and no avoidant symptoms

MDD and trauma syndromes often occur comorbidly

Personality Disorders

Similarities: Interpersonal troubles and difficulties with attachment in relationships
Key differential features of a personality disorder: The nature of their interpersonal troubles aligns with a personality disorder and they present with the other constellation of symptoms associated with personality disorders. There are no intrusive symptoms, and for those who experience a Criteria A type-trauma, interpersonal troubles were present before exposure to trauma.

Personality disorders are often associated with histories of trauma and may occur comorbidly

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders

Similarities: Intrusive, unwanted thoughts
Key differential features of OCD: Intrusive thoughts fit the definition of an *obsession* and often have compulsions present. In a trauma syndrome, the intrusive thoughts specifically have to do with the trauma.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Similarities: Both can occur after a traumatic event and can result in difficulty with concentration, irritability, memory problems, sleep concerns, dizziness, and headaches
Key differential features of a neurocognitive disorder: Persistent disorientation and confusion are unique to a TBI. TBIs do not have re-experiencing or avoidance symptoms

Trauma syndromes and TBIs can occur comorbidly

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Psychotic Disorders

Similarities: Flashbacks can present similarly to hallucinations, illusions, or other perceptual disturbances

Key differential features of psychotic disorders: In a trauma syndrome, flashbacks are specifically related to a trauma and a re-experiencing

Bipolar Disorders

Similarities: Mania or hypomania can have similar symptoms of impulsive behaviors, irritability, or marked emotional dysregulation

Key differential features of bipolar disorders: Mania and hypomania occur episodically and in distinct periods of markedly different emotions, while these symptoms in a trauma syndrome are not as distinctly episodic and often have a trigger related to a traumatic experience

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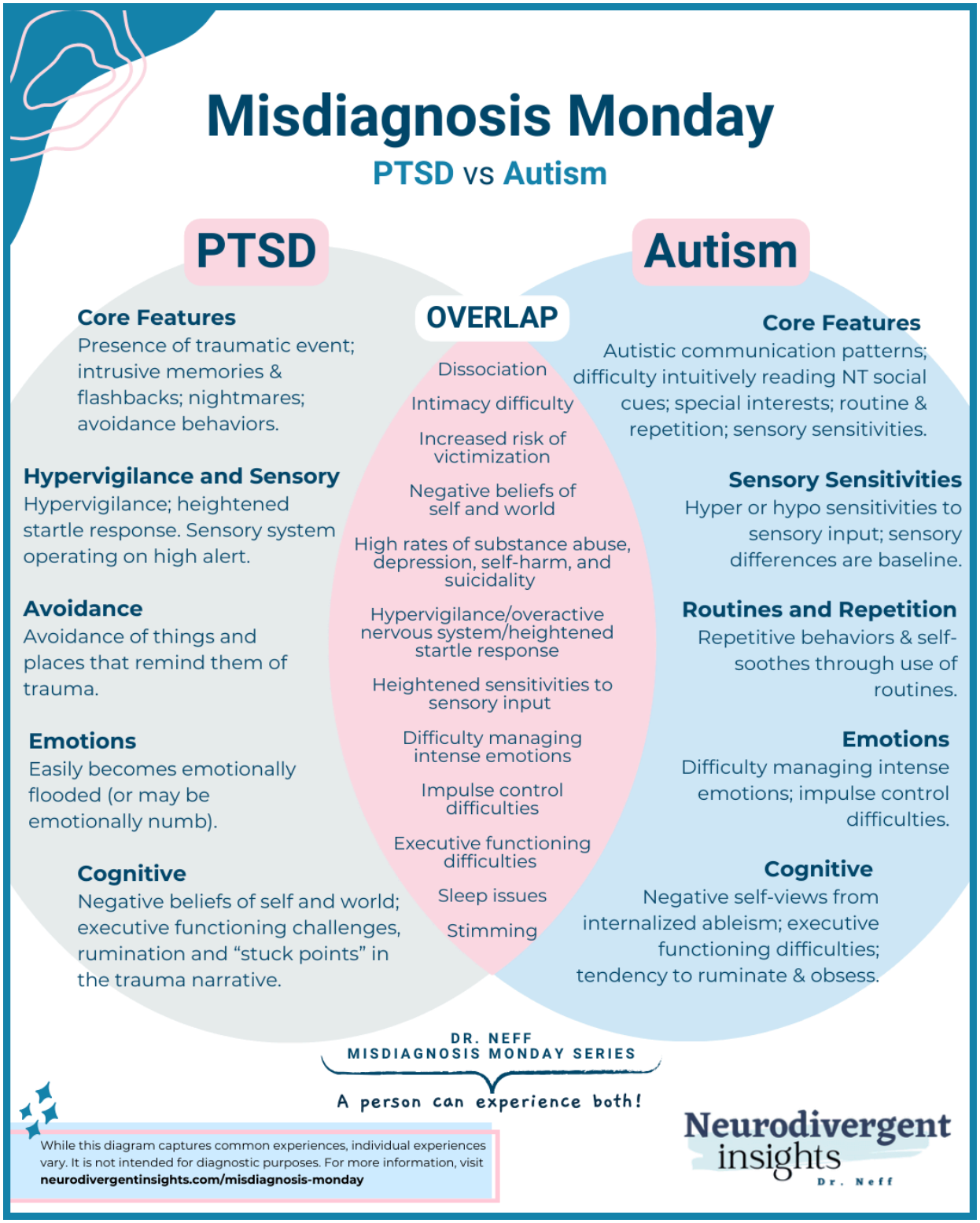

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