

Case Study: Challenging ASD Cases

Name: D. B. (male)

D.O.B.: November 27, 2000

Age: 16 years, 11 months

Height: 5'10

Weight: 165 lbs

History:

D.B. was diagnosed with moderate to severe autism (ASD) at the age of 3 yrs 5 mths.

He has received some ABA intervention since the time of his diagnosis. He currently attends a highschool vocational program which is preparing him for the transition to adulthood.

At almost 17 years of age, he lives at home with his mother. He has no siblings. His father and mother divorced when he was 12. His father continues to have a relationship with him. D.B. spends every other weekend with his father.

D.B. is vocal but his communication skills are limited to expressing his basic needs. He does not use any other AAC devices.

D.B. has had significant sleep issues (quality and quantity) since his parents separated 5 years ago.

D.B.'s mom describes persistent issues with head banging, self injury, screaming and "anxiety." At times, D.B. has required stitches due to his self injurious behaviour. These behaviours have increased in frequency and intensity during his teen years.

D.B.'s anxiety and self injurious behaviours are evident, to a greater or lesser extent, in all environments. However, D.B.'s mother readily admits that his behaviour and anxiety seem to be most problematic when D.B. is with her during the evening after school and prior to bedtime. There are periods (weeks – months) of relatively low levels of problematic behaviour followed by periods of increased rates and intensities of these behaviours.

No specific function(s) of the self injurious behaviours has been identified. Triggers and antecedent events include a lack of sleep, disruption to usual routines, and what D.B.'s mother describes as "frustration."

A complete physical reveals no underlying medical concerns or issues.

Medications:

D.B.'s mother agreed to use medication as a last resort. Medications have not resolved the issues with D.B.'s anxiety and self-injurious behaviour. D.B. is currently taking the following:

20 mg of Citalopram AM for anxiety

100 mg of Trazodone before bed to help with sleep issues

0.5 mg of Lorazepam PRN for anxiety attacks