

CASE 2 WEBINAR

A boy of 6 years old diagnosed with ASD. Since he was presented in a seminar, I could observe his behavior in front of others. He did not hesitate to come right on my lap and when I asked him if he wanted to sing something, he took my mike and immediately encouraged the audience to sing with him along. While doing so, I could feel him jumping up and down my lap. Once the song was done he ran away with lightning speed without even looking at his parents who chased him just as quickly as this seemed to be an expected event. His mom told me that she often has to do this at home since he shows no fear to leave the home, and worse, he engages in a conversation with anyone present, even the workers in the street. At the dinner table, he usually eats and walks around the kitchen area or stays standing, holding his plate of food. Often he does not want to eat at all saying he is not hungry. The only time mom can coach him to sit still is when she promises him that he can play a favorite game on the computer. He usually does not eat much at all and avoids meat at all times. But he seems to be always thirsty for large quantities of cold water. Sometimes he complains of headaches which improve by pressure and fresh air.

When he is not allowed to go on the computer he does not hesitate to react violently. The parents are always surprised about his strength in those circumstances as it takes both adults to keep him down. Otherwise he bites, pulls hair, hits bystanders or even his own head. He has a younger sister, who he likes to hit to evoke a reaction of crying. He does not hesitate to kick the cat and finds it funny. Stern voice from mom does not help at all as it increases the anger in him. He wants to do everything fast and usually there are fits of nervous laughing while he climbs on and off furniture, throwing himself on the floor without hurting himself. After the laughter, he is so excited that he starts shrieking. When going on a walk he will try to get loose and run away. Only intense yelling at him will stop him in his track, otherwise he pretends he does not hear anything.

He has trouble at school where he has a total lack of focus and in his frustration he does not hesitate to hit the teacher. He does not

hesitate to get into trouble to gain points with his fellow students or he might encourage his naïve co student to do something stupid: as long as he gets the laughs! Standing in line before going into the class room is torture and he does not care if he gets punished when pushing his way up the line. And he always tries to get very colorful cloths on although he goes to a school where there are required uniforms with black and grey colors: he always tries to sneak in shoes with red or green or blue if his mom was not looking. One time he threw the school uniform in the trash, and of course he played the innocent one. He does a little better at home since he can do his favorite things: computer games, going on a swing, or dancing on fast music. His mom says, he dances like a “monkey,” and wants others to join. And he often hums to himself, the same and same song allover. But doing something else like coloring for 30 minutes, or even sitting on the pot on command, are not in his vocabulary. If mom speaks in a loud voice to him when frustrated about his behavior, he erupts in anger and rage. He responds much better to gentle correcting.

Mom tells me he is very smart. When the ABA therapist comes in for the daily lesson, He will throw some of the pieces of his puzzle away while mom and the therapist are talking. And during the hour long session, he always says, “I have to do pee pee,” “I want to drink something.” Or, “I am sick, I have fever,” as this has worked sometimes in the past. Often he simply refuses to participate in the ABA sessions, not answering the therapist when she asks something, and no threats or punishment will make his mind change. He likes to do things that are forbidden and does them while looking mom straight in the face. He can trick mom in looking at something or going into another room while he reaches for the hidden candy box. Often parents really have to yell at him as it looks like he is deaf: the parents know he is in his own world at that time. He has absolutely no fear for animals but rather hurts them to evoke responses as seen before. When mom reads books to his younger sister, he has found to tear up those books afterwards, always when no one is in sight. When reprimanded, sometimes he just laughs while apologizing. He can be quite possessive of mom. When a stranger comes in the house

he is known to take the stranger by the hand, bring him to the door and say, “bye-bye.” And he will interrupt mom’s conversation and ask for a kiss, or touches her breast. He does not hesitate to use sexual language around her. When that does not work, he loves to take his cloths off as he knows it irritates mom. When mom was breastfeeding the younger sister he would push her away.

His mom also states that she finds him often lying on the floor with his abdomen pushed into the floor, lying there as a stiff board or he would play games with his sister humping her. He wiggles and moves constantly in his sleep, babbles in his sleep and when mom comes to him, he tries to follow her in her bed, something he never does when dad comes to help him at night. He is always with his hands in something he is not supposed to do, at home or in shops. He likes salt more than sweets (from which he aggravates) and can even eat crayons after peeling off the paper. He seems to be curious: when in a book store, he either wants to flip through all the books, or is overly absorbed in an activity to the exclusion of everything else. The only game he wants to do with other children is being chased or chasing others. Only when he can boss others around and be in command of the computer for instance, will he tolerate other children. And if they don’t comply with him, mom can see that he has genuine grief about it, even mourning. But he can just walk aimlessly around in the house, keeping himself busy with non productive things, not lasting more than one minute. Although he really rather wishes to be alone, strangely enough he still wants someone present in the other room; he wants to know where mom is all the time.

His stools are always mushy with undigested particles in them. He can have them three to four times a day and they are not painful.

His speech is mainly babbling or half spoken words or single words. It looks like he jumps from one thought to another and sometimes he rather resorts to sign language. Most often it is very hurried. He likes to be busy and wants one other person always to be busy with him (mostly mom!). When I asked him a question he barely looked at me for one second but the next second he already was busy with something else. In the beginning, when they saw all these jerky

and movements, twitching of the fingers, his parents thought he suffered from epilepsy!

The intra uterine story: This was the first pregnancy. When she heard the news she was pregnant, she was very worried and shocked because when she married, her husband stated he did not want children. But she tricked him by having sex with her husband on the most fertile days of the month. Her first thoughts: “What is my husband going to think? Will he leave me? How will this affect my marriage?” And in fact the husband was so upset that he did not talk about the pregnancy for the first 5 months. And she did not want to say anything either for fear of an unwanted reaction. She loves the child in her and she loved her husband, but there was great doubt about the stability of their marriage. There was a total lack of communication about the pregnancy which make her feel very unhappy throughout this pregnancy. It affected her so much that her conversation changed into a short “yes or no” dialogue, because as she stated, “I felt punished for what should be a wonderful event, as if my child was not worthy to be talked about.” On the other hand, he paid more attention to his friends, changing his home into a fraternity house when they were watching Monday night football. And just before the delivery, the father stated: “It better be a boy, I don’t like to have a girl!”