

Case Vignette 1

Name: Emily

Age: 8

Gender: Female

Background: Emily comes from a supportive family consisting of both parents and an older sibling. She attends a primary school where she is in Year 3. Her teachers have noted concerns regarding her behaviour and attention span in the classroom.

Presenting Concerns: Emily's parents have noticed that she has difficulty staying focused on tasks, both at school and at home. She often seems restless and fidgety, unable to sit still for extended periods. Her grades are below average despite her obvious intelligence. Emily frequently interrupts others during conversations and activities, and she struggles to follow instructions. Her impulsivity has led to social difficulties with her peers, as she sometimes blurts out inappropriate comments or acts without considering the consequences.

Assessment: Emily undergoes a comprehensive assessment conducted by a child psychologist, including interviews with her parents and teachers, behavioural observations, and standardized tests. The assessment reveals a pattern of symptoms consistent with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), predominantly inattentive presentation. Emily meets the criteria for ADHD based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

Treatment Plan: The psychologist recommends a multimodal treatment approach for Emily, involving medication, behavioural therapy, and accommodations at school. Emily's parents agree to pursue treatment and work closely with her healthcare providers and teachers to implement strategies to support her needs. Emily begins taking medication to help manage her symptoms, and she participates in weekly behavioural therapy sessions to learn coping skills and strategies for improving her attention and impulse control. The school implements accommodations such as preferential seating, breaks, and modified assignments to support Emily's academic success.

Nature-Based Play Plan:

Case Vignette 2

Name: Jacob

Age: 5

Gender: Male

Background: Jacob comes from a loving family consisting of his parents and two younger siblings. He attends a local preschool where he is enrolled in a mixed-ability classroom. His parents have noticed some differences in his development compared to other children his age.

Presenting Concerns: Jacob's parents have observed that he has difficulty with social interactions and communication. He rarely makes eye contact and prefers to play alone rather than with his peers. Jacob has a limited repertoire of spoken language and often repeats phrases or words he hears without using them in context. He becomes easily upset by changes in routine and exhibits repetitive behaviours such as hand-flapping and rocking back and forth. His parents have also noticed that he is highly sensitive to sensory stimuli, particularly loud noises and certain textures.

Assessment: Jacob is referred to a developmental paediatrician for a comprehensive evaluation. The assessment includes interviews with Jacob's parents, observations of his behaviour in various settings, and standardized assessments of his developmental milestones. The evaluation reveals a pattern of symptoms consistent with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), characterized by deficits in social communication and interaction, as well as restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities.

Treatment Plan: The developmental paediatrician works with Jacob's family to develop a personalized treatment plan tailored to his specific needs. The plan includes early intervention services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and applied behaviour analysis (ABA) therapy. Jacob's parents receive education and support to help them better understand and support his unique challenges. The preschool also implements accommodations and modifications to support Jacob's participation and learning in the classroom.

Nature-Based Play Plan:

Case Vignette 3

Name: Sarah

Age: 10

Gender: Female

Background: Sarah comes from a stable and supportive family environment. She lives with her parents and older sister in a urban neighbourhood. Sarah is enrolled in a primary school where she is in Year 5. Despite her loving family and academic success, Sarah struggles with persistent feelings of anxiety and worry.

Presenting Concerns: Sarah's parents have noticed that she is often irritable and withdrawn. She frequently complains of physical symptoms such as stomach-aches and headaches, especially in situations that trigger her anxiety. Sarah is a perfectionist and puts excessive pressure on herself to excel academically and socially. She worries about making mistakes and being judged by others. Sarah's anxiety interferes with her ability to sleep at night, and she often experiences nightmares.

Assessment: Sarah's parents seek help from a child psychologist to better understand and address her anxiety symptoms. The psychologist conducts a thorough assessment, including interviews with Sarah and her parents, as well as standardized measures of anxiety and related behaviours. The assessment reveals a pattern of symptoms consistent with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), characterized by excessive worry and physical symptoms of anxiety that significantly impair Sarah's functioning and well-being.

Treatment Plan: The psychologist collaborates with Sarah's parents to develop a comprehensive treatment plan for managing her anxiety. The plan includes cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) to help Sarah identify and challenge irrational thoughts and beliefs that contribute to her anxiety. Sarah learns relaxation techniques and coping strategies to manage her symptoms effectively. Additionally, the psychologist recommends consultation with a psychiatrist to discuss the potential benefits of medication, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), to alleviate Sarah's anxiety symptoms.

Nature-Based Play Plan:

Case Vignette 4

Name: Alex

Age: 15

Gender: Male

Background: Alex comes from a challenging family background characterized by parental conflict, substance abuse, and neglect. He lives with his single mother and two younger siblings in a low-income neighbourhood. Alex has a history of academic underachievement and behavioural problems both at home and at school.

Presenting Concerns: Alex's mother and teachers have expressed concerns about his aggressive and disruptive behaviour. He frequently gets into fights with peers and has been involved in bullying incidents at school. Alex has a disregard for rules and authority figures, often skipping classes and engaging in risky behaviours such as substance abuse and vandalism. He shows little empathy or remorse for the harm he causes to others and lacks insight into the consequences of his actions.

Assessment: Alex's school refers him to a child psychologist for a comprehensive assessment of his behavioural problems. The assessment includes interviews with Alex, his mother, and his teachers, as well as standardized measures of behaviour and psychological functioning. The evaluation reveals a pattern of symptoms consistent with Conduct Disorder, characterized by persistent aggression, rule violations, and disregard for the rights of others.

Treatment Plan: The psychologist works with Alex and his family to develop a structured treatment plan aimed at addressing his behavioural difficulties. The plan includes individual and family therapy sessions to help Alex develop insight into his behaviour and learn alternative ways of coping with stress and frustration. Alex's mother receives parenting support and guidance on setting clear boundaries and implementing consistent consequences for his actions. Additionally, the psychologist collaborates with school personnel to implement a behaviour management plan and provide support for Alex's academic and social success.

Nature-Based Play Plan: