



Case Study: Asperger's Syndrome

Kamil is a ten year old boy who has recently received a diagnosis of Aspergers's Syndrome from the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). His mother explains that she first noticed Kamil's difficulties in the first year of his life as he was reluctant to go to sleep, any eye contact he made was very fleeting and he had poor reciprocal interaction and was slow to respond to 'tickle games'. Kamil began to talk when he was two years old but as he got older it was clear he had comprehension difficulties and would take things literally. He also had difficulties with the pragmatics of language, understanding what he should not say to others such as telling his teacher her hair was like Elvis Presley's. Kamil had very little interest in toys or engaging in imaginative play, he preferred to amuse himself with continually spinning objects. Kamil is hypersensitive to sound, he does not like raised voices, the sound of a vacuum cleaner and at home insists on having the TV on at full volume in order to block out other sounds.

Kamil is now in Year 5 of his local primary school. He displays high levels of anxiety when his mother leaves him each morning and shows this by pulling her hair and hitting himself on the head. Kamil reports that he does not like school because the other children do not conform to his way of playing and then he feels very wronged. Kamil does not understand that the other children do not like his rules. At playtimes Kamil likes to observe and referee football matches which is sometimes tolerated by his peers but they can become very angry if he shows red and yellow cards to people and shouts, 'You're off.' At other times he walks around the playground by himself often clapping his hands in a football chant style. If he is reprimanded by an adult for being naughty or touching another child roughly he will become very angry, which is obvious from his facial expression, shout and then cry.

Kamil's class teacher describes Kamil's difficulties in listening to and following instructions. On one occasion Kamil and his class were walking back from the library and he was the leader of the pupils at the front of the line but refused to take heed when staff asked him to slow down, wait or stop. Kamil does not like being told that his behaviour is not acceptable in school. On two occasions Kamil has shouted at a member of staff because he is confused and he does not know what is going to happen next. Kamil's sensory needs mean that he finds the noise of classroom discussions too high for him to concentrate. High noise levels and sudden noise like bells or fire alarms and less-structured environments raise his anxiety levels and when he becomes anxious Kamil is harder to engage in learning activities.



Case Study: Asperger's Syndrome (Cont)

Kamil has stated, 'I am worried about fire alarm tests because they are really loud and I never know when they are going to happen. I get scared inside. It would help if they took the fire alarms down and I had ear muffs. I get scared having to go up to the stage if my name is called out in assembly for a certificate.'

Kamil has significant difficulties with numeracy but he is confident and happy to work within the areas of the subject that he has been able to memorise such as times tables, number bonds and simple adding and subtraction. Kamil finds tasks that require him to use a sequence of operations to calculate the answer much harder and is very resistant to them.

Kamil has a special interest in computers and, left to his own devices, would spend all day on them. He has a computer at home and his mother has said that when he is playing on the computer he becomes far more relaxed.

His teacher finds it difficult to achieve a balance between managing Kamil as an individual and also ensuring that he is an active member of the class.

