

# Case Study

**How Autism Spectrum Disorder  
May Present**

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# Overview

- Background Information
- Referral Pathway
- Purpose of Assessment
- Concerns
- Assessment Process
- Outcome
- Recommendations



# Background Information

- 15 year old, Male.
- Offence: Sexual abuse of 4 boys.
- Been in the care of the HSE/Tusla since he was 3 years of age.
- Has diagnoses of ADHD, Attachment Disorder, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.
- Was living in a special residential unit, with all females.
- Attending a school for children with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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# Referral Pathway

- Was referred for assessment by his Social Worker due to ongoing concerns regarding his behaviour and emotional development.

# Purpose of Assessment

- *Does he present with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?*
- *Would a specialised forensic unit in the U.K. be an appropriate placement for him?*

# Concerns

- Sexualised behaviour, needs to be fully supervised.
- Poor social skills, no friends.
- No understanding of boundaries.
- Lacks empathy, lacks understanding of consequence of his actions.
- Very challenging at times for staff to manage.
- Can become easily anxious.
- Obsessive behaviours (titanic, money).
- Facial expressions were very flat.
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# Assessment Process

*What had been done to date?*

- File Review
  - Previous Psychology
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Speech and Language Therapy Assessment and Reports
- Interview with social worker
- Interview with residential staff
- Interview with teacher
- Assessment = Specifically ASD Assessment

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# ADOS-2™

- The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2™ (ADOS-2™) is a semi-structured assessment of communication, social interaction and play or imaginative use of materials for individuals suspected of having autism.
- It is a play based assessment and consists of standard activities that allow the examiner to observe the occurrence or non-occurrence of behaviours that have been deemed important to the diagnosis of ASD.



# Administration of the Assessment

- Administered during school hours.
  - Administered on school grounds – needed to liaise with school and staff.
  - Male member of staff had to be present during assessment.
  - Examiner
  - Observer
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# Difficulties Noted

- Eye-contact was observed to be reduced.
- Conversational difficulties: He struggled to move off topics of interest and would continue to go back to them.
- Little reciprocal conversation.
- He had significantly reduced insight into his emotions and the emotions of others.



# Difficulties Noted

- Difficulty explaining relationships and understanding his own role in relationships.
- He demonstrated reduced imaginative play/ideas: when presented with the creative story task he commented 'I won't be good at this'.
- He was over familiar with the clinicians.



# Triad of Impairment



# Outcome

- Concluded that he presents with a combination of behaviours consistent with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- From this assessment it is clear that he has difficulty recognising and understanding the thoughts, feelings and actions of others.
- He has limited insight into the impact of his behaviour and lacks understanding of the impact his actions can have on others.
- These combined indicate that moving forward he requires specialist services developed for young men with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder.



# Recommendations

- Specialised forensic unit in UK would not be an appropriate placement for him.
  - Difficulty accessing such a program given his difficulties with social interaction skills.
  - Difficulties with insight into relationships, feelings and thoughts of others would impact on his ability to access the program content.
- Individualised, specialised program is warranted given his diagnosis.

# Recommendations

- Referral to a MDT service with an expertise in working with young men with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Future placements (i.e. educational/residential) need to take into account his diagnosis of ASD.
- A sexuality and relationship programme needs to be accessed and this programme must be aware of his difficulties and be tailored to his profile.



Thank You

