



Specialist Assessment

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER REPORT

Name: BRANDON SCOTT HOLE

MRN: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 20th August 2001

School: [REDACTED]

Date of Assessment: 22nd June and 30th June 2015 (Speech & language
assessment)

20th June 2015 (Parental interview)

05th July 2015 ([REDACTED])

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Assessment Tools Used:

Parental Interview

Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS)

Speech Pathology Assessment

ADOS 2

Date of Report:

[REDACTED]

Background Information

Brandon is a 14-year old adolescent who was referred by the student support services officer following concerns raised by the school about Brandon accessing web content deemed to be inappropriate. The information provided below is based on that provided by Brandon's mother, [REDACTED], by Brandon himself and from care team meetings. Developmental history was provided by Brandon's mother and is thought to be limited by Mrs Hole's recall, especially of Brandon's early developmental achievements.

Developmental history

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] No concerns during early years about development, and reports [REDACTED] Brandon crawled and then started walking without assistance after 1 year. There were no issues with toilet training or personal hygiene growing up

Speech

[REDACTED] reported there was a speech delay and attributed this to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Made baby sounds, then babbling at appropriate ages. Brandon started speaking at 8-9 months, expressing 'proper' words after 1 year. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Teacher reported no concerns about his speaking or behaviour in class, although [REDACTED] was concerned about Brandon speaking differently to other kids and being shy. [REDACTED] reported Brandon was shy "for 1-2 days", then improved from there. Described as a "chatterbox" in school, often in trouble in class for talking. With other people, and at school, Brandon is a 'chatterbox' with teacher and other friends have reported this. When with other children, he gets along with them 'ok,' takes some time before he feels comfortable with new people, although if there's adolescents of the same age, he's able to play with them

Dressing/hygiene

Currently needs help getting dressed, Mom needing to decide what he wears. Brandon is able to dress himself, and [REDACTED] denied there being any issues in early years about getting dressed. He prefers loose clothing, with [REDACTED] reporting that he does not like jeans, nor named brands. Prefers to wear the same shirt days on end. Brandon later described, "...Sometimes I just forget, ignore it' when it comes to doing up buttons...". He doesn't get changed as regularly as most people, Brandon accepting 'A bit, sort of', states it's only with t-shirts, denied any issues with changing underwear. He will change when Mom says that it's smelly. Brandon doesn't like wearing denim, even if its loose, due to being uncomfortable, "I find it a bit impractical, doesn't help against the warmth or the cold", and agrees that it feels 'scratchy'. He doesn't like clothes with tags on the back and will remove tags. Brandon always wears a singlet/t-shirt under his school shirt; he states that it's because, 'I can't be bothered to take the t-shirt off... I don't want to waste time taking it of...', and in warm weather, 'I still wear it, because I want to preserve time'. He doesn't like wearing bright clothes, as he doesn't want to stand out. He reiterated that he doesn't like combing his hair, although will do so. His reason is not liking to waste time. Brandon leaves his shoelaces loose a lot saying, 'can't be bothered to tie them'. He denied any issues with the manual dexterity involved in doing these tasks, reflecting that 'it's just a hassle' He told us he showers daily and eats regularly.

Diet

Brandon described his diet: 'I only eat a few things, just snacks'. He eats chips and strawberry ice cream. He denied being a fussy eater though, he, only really likes deep fried food. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] There are no concerns about food textures, and is happy for food to be mixed

on the plate. He will eat things like vegetables.

Play

As a child, loved playing with cars, and lined up the cars by colour. He sometimes would push each car individually to have a race, other times would redo the line. His father reported, 'Everywhere he went, he had a car in hand, and brought up example of bringing it into the toilet'. Brandon reflected that if [REDACTED] disrupts his line of cars, he would get angry, and stated 'it's embarrassing, I'd get so angry over a car'. He did get excited at cars on the road, with Brandon stating 'sometimes I would just point at the car, and shout it's the car', around the ages of six to nine. When he stopped fixating on cars, he developed a 'new obsession', as reported by [REDACTED], Lego, particularly Star Wars Lego. He was 'obsessed with Lego pieces, more than colours, similarly got annoyed if [REDACTED] broke up something he made...he loved building things.' As a child, he would collect random items, such as lolly wrappers, which he would put in his pocket, though would eventually put it in the bin. Brandon picked up rocks, and would throw them at concrete, at the creek, '...I just thought it was cool, throwing rocks'. Brandon finds board games 'irritating...it's just a hassle' and reflects that he doesn't like complicated games, 'if I was going to play something, it would be a card game...Uno'

Interests

Brandon likes to talk about games, music, TV. He is particularly interested in *Call of Duty*, and previously was into *Minecraft*, *Lego Star Wars*, *Binding of Isaac* and *Halo*. He played with other people on the internet, 'I didn't really care that I was playing with other people, I just played the game, did my own thing'. When playing *Binding of Isaac*, he feels 'better' afterwards; he described getting 'pumped up' when playing the game, but denied getting aggressive whilst playing the game; no spill over of aggression once gaming has ceased. Brandon would play for a couple of hours at a time, Brandon tends to stop himself 'sometimes I'm aware I played a lot, so I stop, I get bored'. He also likes watching *Anime* movies, and listening to music in foreign languages, '...old German and Russian songs' despite not understanding the languages. He described a particular interest in "Fashwave"...music associated with 'the right side of politics, associated with WW2'.

In social interactions

Brandon reported, 'I get scared, I don't want to talk to them...I don't want to waste my time, I've got better things to do'. He still doesn't want to talk with people. When asked Brandon about why he uses eye contact, he replied, 'to show interest, to not seem rude.' He went on though, 'I try not to make eye contact, because they know I'm not interested, and I don't want them to keep talking'. He will talk with his parents about his schoolwork primarily, and agrees that he does ask other people how their day was. When asked how he shows his disinterest 'I pretend to keep listening' and acknowledged that 'It would be rude to just walk away.' Sometimes, Brandon tries to end the conversation by trying to raise another topic or doing something else. He sometimes misinterprets what people say, raising an example of a friend joking 'I want to tell you off' and then in response, Brandon gets angry and tells his friend off, and only afterwards realises that the friend wasn't being serious. Brandon finds he sometimes struggles to be able to realise the emotion people are feeling by looking at them 'I could, but it takes some time'. He also sometimes misses anger in his friends. [REDACTED] but 'I don't really like talking to strangers, but I have to

do it, so I do it' When raised Brandon's poor eye contact in session, he agreed, generally doesn't make good eye contact, 'I just try to get the conversation done as quickly as possible'

Concrete thinking

Brandon is able to understand metaphors, and answered the appropriate meaning of 'raining cats and dogs' and 'pull up your socks'. When asked about his sense of humour, Brandon said that he enjoys 'jokes you wouldn't tell with normal people' and likes dark humour. He seems to enjoy slapstick humour too, 'we just do really dumb things, joke about the dumbest things'

Changes and routines

Brandon reported he has no issues with minor changes. His mother said Brandon has a routine at home, tries to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He sometimes goes to sleep extremely late due to being unable to sleep. He is not particularly fussed about using a specific plate, cutlery, seat etc.

Friends

Brandon has a best friend, his name is [REDACTED]; he has known him since he started high school. 'We just talk about random things, kind of annoy other people together.' 'When I was younger, I talked to a lot of kids, now I only talk to 4 of my friends'. [REDACTED] reflected that Brandon had a big group of friends whilst growing up. Brandon spoke about having a falling out with a friend group, 'I'm not exactly sure why, but I'm kind of glad about it, don't have to worry about them' with one friend that he misses out of the group 'he'll still occasionally say hi'. Brandon doesn't want to see friends outside of school, only at school, with the exception of one or two best friends. He denied getting bullied, although when it did happen, it would be [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] If he meets someone outside of school, Brandon reported, 'I try to not speak with them, can I get away from them, worry how are we here at the same place, at the same time'.

Self-soothing

Brandon chews his nails 'most of the time it's boring for me, so I bite my nails'. He chews his shirt, and sometimes the string of a jumper.

Aggression/violence

'Physically I wouldn't really waste my time doing anything violent' although Brandon acknowledges when he gets extremely angry at [REDACTED], he can push his [REDACTED] around; '...the only person I'd really hit.' Brandon denies getting into any fights at school. He said he did not raise when he was getting bullied by another student as he didn't want to cause trouble. He denies becoming aggressive when playing games. Brandon acknowledged having aggressive thoughts to things that annoy him and has never thought of killing someone. He said he does not have a history of violence towards furniture, aside from poking a pen into the couch when he has been 'just bored'. Later in the interview, Brandon reported that he had used a baseball bat/stick to 'whack the wall because I was bored' but denies it has to be due to being worked up; if this were the case, he said he would play a videogame.

Brandon denied any prior contact with police.

We raised the content that he's been watching and those reportedly found on his laptop; Brandon responded, 'I just don't really like anyone' and stated that his views have changed, 'I realised I was doing something wrong...being blatantly racist, I had to stop'. He stated that, '...it's unethical, so I changed things, now I just got over it, I try to stay unbiased now'. Brandon denied that it has to do with the police becoming involved and their investigation, claiming to have changed his views because of himself. We asked Brandon a question about how he would react if he saw someone of obvious Jewish ethnicity on the street; 'I'd just look at them, don't see many of them around here, maybe say hi'. This was in response to allegations of him being antisemitic.

Brandon has no access to guns; he said he has access to the 'kitchen knife, but you have to be able to cut bread somehow'.

Regarding web content that Brandon has been accessing

Brandon reported that he was 'interested in the back-story', why the perpetrators had engaged in such acts... 'I feel bad for the victims, the families... Sometimes, I spend hours in [REDACTED] just reading articles' but denies listening to podcasts. He went on, 'the only thrill I get, is if I found something rare.' He went on to describe he would search were to uncover some information or photograph which would not have been seen in the popular media, he would be excited. He denied any sado-masochistic interest from watching the content, rather the gratification of finding the content.

We asked Brandon if he could think about putting himself in the shoes of the perpetrators, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] don't want to waste my time doing something like that, it's a hassle'. He reflected that he wouldn't want to cause the families trauma 'nah, I don't think like that at all'. He said he only shares memes and occasional jokes about it with his friends. We wondered aloud how the victims would feel if they saw the memes he posts; he seemed able to empathise with the victims. He said he likes organising the content very well.

Brief Systems review

Mood & Anxiety

Describes his mood over the past few months being a bit 'stressing' and having put a lot of pressure on himself to [REDACTED]. 'Before I got caught, I still had a lot of pressure' and didn't want to delete it because 'I did a lot of research'. Denies feeling sadness. Brandon acknowledged that he gets anxious, and agrees that he is someone who worries a lot 'sometimes for no reason, I just have the feeling of worry for nothing'. He denied having any phobias.

Psychotic symptoms

Brandon reported that he frequently has the feeling of *deja vu*, in particular in reference to things in his dreams. He has 'some vague feelings' of people wanting to harm him, and spoke in reference to people he's had bad interactions with, in the past. 'Sometimes I run to my house at night, even if there's no one around'. He denied any paranoia, aside from someone may be looking at him through his webcam, 'I get really worried if someone is looking at me'. He denied any delusional beliefs or other perceptual abnormalities. He denied ideas of reference.

Self harm/Suicidal ideation

Brandon reflected that he did have thoughts of suicide, then 'I felt dumb, it felt cringy'. He only has

suicidal thoughts when he's under extreme stress, and the best way of getting through it, is to finish what he needs to do (such as whatever activity he is engaged in). He went on, 'Sometimes the thoughts are reassuring'; Brandon denied ever having planning how to die by suicide, and has never attempted to kill himself. Brandon told us he has cut his wrist once with glass, as he 'wanted to see if it was as bad as people said' - scratched himself just to see what it was like. 'Only time I'd ever do it is boredom'; gave an example of being in recess and bored, then might impulsively do it. Brandon did not have much to say regarding his father, who committed suicide while he was an infant, stating he did not remember or know much about him.

Sexuality and pornography access

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Substance use

Denied any marijuana or alcohol use, adamantly denied abusing prescription medications. However, when asked about utilizing other household items (such as cough syrup and spray paint) his eye contact and engagement became poor. These inquiries were also met with denial.

Medically

Doesn't take any medication, no operations, no allergies

'Sometimes I get heartburn, when I'm laughing, and it hurts, but I can't stop laughing'

Summary of Previous Assessments

Speech Pathology

A comprehensive assessment of Brandon's language was undertaken by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Brandon was found to have average receptive and expressive language skills in line with age norms.

Formal assessment of his verbal social problem solving indicated his overall skills to be within the average range, however he had mild difficulties with questions that probed his ability to problem solve social situations, interpret other people's perspectives and transfer insights to different situations. Informal assessment and responses on the Pragmatic Profile revealed Brandon has difficulty interpreting and reading social situations. It showed that Brandon has difficulty understanding how context affects the way situations are interpreted. Brandon finds it hard to grasp that people can communicate subtle messages using nonverbal cues, such as changing their facial expressions and body language. This will make social interactions with peers and unfamiliar people more challenging. Brandon struggled to engage in reciprocal conversation, name more nuanced emotions and use expected eye gaze.

Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS)

The SRS-2 is a screening questionnaire which assists in identifying children with social deficits across the following domains: Social Awareness, Social Cognition, Social Communication, Social Motivation, and Restricted Interests & Repetitive Behaviours. [REDACTED]

“How old were you?” and [REDACTED]. He did once enquire about the examiners opinion by asking why they do not like art galleries, however, this response was delayed, making the exchange somewhat stilted. He found it difficult to initiate to conversational leads and only did so on one occasion, providing the examiners with some factual information. Overall the examiner had to work hard to maintain a conversation and this led to a somewhat one-sided and occasionally stilted conversation. Brandon struggled to answer questions about emotions. He rarely spontaneously commented on the emotions of others, but was able to identify the emotions portrayed in pictures and cartoons when prompted. When asked to describe the physiological experiences of emotions, Brandon struggled to identify and explain how he physically experiences emotions and tended to focus on the cognitive impact (e.g. “happy is when I can sit down without thinking of work”). He was, however, able to describe the physiological experience of anxiety and said he feels anxious in “areas with a lot of people and socialising with others at school”. Brandon said he does not really feel sad or angry, “I just feel disappointed”.

Brandon appears to have a less sophisticated understanding of relationships than expected for his age and language abilities. He seemed to have a basic understanding of relationships, describing a friends by saying “we talk a lot” and “we do activities together”. He was able to develop this further when prompted by saying “we can rely on each other” and “we help each other”, however he described feeling “kind of glad” following a breakdown in some friendships recently as “I got them off my back”. Brandon said “I try not to have conversations with people” but did identify 4 close friends. Brandon said he understands why others want to get married because “they love each other” but felt that “it is a waste of time” mostly due to having to manage a child and plan a wedding. Brandon said he does not see being lonely as a bad thing, but did acknowledge that other people want to be around people even though he doesn’t. Brandon also demonstrated some insight by saying “sometimes I feel I’ve been alone for too long” and he will seek interactions with his family to counter this.

Communication

Brandon used some relatively complex language in conversation with the clinician today. However, his descriptions and reporting of events often lacked context and during all discussions he was reliant on the clinician to ask questions in order for him to provide all of the relevant information. For example, he started describing a picture of a resort by saying “it is 50% green stuff and 50% blue stuff” and required a lot of prompting before he described what the people were doing. Brandon had a noticeably formal way of speaking. He often answered questions literally, for example when asked “Are you at school?” he replied “No, I am here”. Brandon also used sayings in a novel way, for example describing the end of a friendship as a “loss of weight” which he clarified as meaning it had “taken a weight off my shoulders”.

Brandon spoke using an irregular rhythm at the start of his sentences, leading to stilted and jerky speech at the start of each interaction. However his rhythm was more regular when he spoke at length. Brandon spoke in a monotone throughout the assessment, even when discussing preferred activities and interests. He also displayed a neutral affect which made it difficult for examiners to decipher Brandon’s interest in them and/or topics discussed. During the assessment, he did not demonstrate expected eye gaze with the clinicians and would often look to the side of the clinicians head, but he did occasionally make eye contact to check in. However, he watched what the examiner was doing with the ADOS materials.

Brandon used some spontaneous gestures during the session, such as shrugging and nodding. He occasionally used descriptive gestures, however these were minimal movements that did not always assist with giving extra information. For example, When asked to describe or teach a task, Brandon used some gestures that were limited in range and did not help describe the task clearly, e.g. slightly moving his hands to indicate brushing his teeth without his hands being near his mouth. However, in most tasks Brandon kept his hands in the pocket of his hoodie and his gestures were rarely integrated with his speech.

Play and Creativity

Brandon was given an opportunity to create a collaborative story through play. He was provided with a range of figures and objects and asked to play with them for a while. Brandon placed a dinosaur figurine in a box, then appeared unsure what else to do. When the examiner joined in the play and chose a character, Brandon chose to be a plane when prompted to also pick a character. Brandon followed the examiners lead but did not build on the play himself other than to respond to the examiner's questions. Brandon used the objects and characters provided for their intended purpose and not in an imaginary way.

Brandon was also asked to create a story using some miscellaneous items. This was first demonstrated for him. Brandon watched the clinician's story, then made up his own story with a beginning, middle and end, although it was quite difficult to follow in the middle of the story. Brandon used some objects in a creative way, although most were used as they were intended (e.g. the figurine candle was used as a candle).

Restricted Interests, Repetitive Behaviours, Sensory Responses, and Inflexible Thinking

Brandon appeared somewhat agitated throughout the assessment, jiggling his leg under the table, however this did not interfere with the assessment.

No clear sensory interest/sensitivities were observed during the appointment. During the break, Brandon repetitively moved the pin art toy up and down against the table, without exploring this toy further. During the assessment, Brandon provided some additional information about his interests (i.e. researching on Wikipedia, anime, my little pony) but only when asked direct questions by the clinician.

Summary

Brandon is a 14-year old boy who presents with features of an autism spectrum disorder requiring substantial support (level 2) for social communication impairment and substantial support (level 1) for restrictive and repetitive behaviours, as defined in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition, DSM 5.

Recommendations

Further assessments

1. Brandon would benefit from an updated cognitive assessment.

Family

1. Psychoeducative strategies with regards Autism Spectrum Disorder may be profoundly useful for Brandon's guardian. We have provided his guardian with an information kit with suitable references and other educative material.
2. It would benefit Brandon to become engaged with a paediatrician over the long term, to assist with addressing any developmental and health-related issues which may arise.
3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
4. It may be helpful for Brandon to read Michelle Garcia winner's "*Socially curious and curiously social*" and, "*Social fate or social fortune*" books. These books are helpful with the understanding of social concepts.
5. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School

1. With the consent of Brandon's guardian, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
2. Brandon requires an [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Interventions

1. Brandon will benefit from additional support from an allied health professional to support the development of his social skills. Individual support initially, followed by a group intervention, is recommended.
2. Brandon will benefit from engagement with an occupational therapist, addressing Brandon's sensory needs.
3. Brandon will benefit from the support of a psychologist to help him understand his emotions and social communication skills. We would recommend seeking a psychologist with skills in working with young people and children with autism.
4. Engaging in the [REDACTED] maybe a beneficial way of developing Brandon's social communication skills and maintaining relationships with his peers.

Funding

1. Brandon might be able to access support via [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] A letter of diagnosis was provided at the time of Brandon's ASD assessment in order to start this process.
2. Brandon's guardian may be eligible for a government carer's allowance and health care card, which can help with the costs of support or programs for Brandon.

[REDACTED]