

Autism Case Study Format:

Presentation/Topography of the Issue: What does the situation/behavior that is causing trouble in the student's life LOOK like. Observable terms, please.

Avoid leading the team through 'admiring the problem' for too long (2-3 minutes).

Strategies that have helped me:

- The facts and just the facts.
- We have x amount of time; let's spend x amount on labeling the problem and the rest of the time on the solution.
- It will help me to listen and organize around all of your useful information if I can ask you questions. Is that alright with you?

*If staff needs/requires emotional processing, how and where can we discuss that? Supporting the student is our primary function, addressing the emotional needs of the team will come secondarily.

Team Hypothesis:

As a team, develop a hypothesis of what is going on with the student neurologically.

Given all we know about this student and autism neurology, this is our best guess as to what the function of the behavior is; how the behavior is a solution for the student.

We ask ourselves:

- Is there an issue of how information is registering, being processed, stored, or retrieved?

Frequent Culprits:

- Proprioceptive malfunction/Sensory
- Stuck processing/Fluidity
- Predictability

Share out of Hypothesis:

Challenge yourself to tie the behavior to your hypothesis as you share out. For instance: It is our hypothesis that the behavior of falling to the floor is the solution for a malfunctioning proprioceptive sensory processing system. Because the student is not getting accurate information of where his/her body is in space, s/he cannot access motor movement and the body falls to the floor to get as much in contact with a hard surface as possible. The 'behavior' of falling on the floor, resulting in the body's contact with a hard surface, which thus provides proprioceptive input the body needs.

Team Recommendations:

As a team, develop a few key recommendations that we can do to support the student's neurology.

Answer: How are we supporting the neurology around this function?

Cheat sheet: Usually we start with a discussion about internal and external regulation. Internal regulation is around sensory regulation (including emotional). External regulation refers to organizing the external world in such a way the student can access skills needed in real time, for each activity of the day. Internal regulation strategies tend to be sensory in nature, and include mindfulness, yoga, etc. External regulation strategies tend to be visual in nature, preferably digital in format and displayed on a device.

Using the above example, the recommendations might be to support the internal regulation by providing proactive proprioceptive input for the student, on a schedule, and to provide additional information visually about the daily schedule.

Does the team need any coaching for these supports/recommendations?

Team Emotional Processing:

Reassure team that dysregulation is not personal. Determine how and where they can decompress. Determine healthy modes of decompressing.