

Dr Luke Beardon.txt

Question:

Is it possible for children to display different behaviours at home compared to school?

Answer:

It is very clearly documented that many children with autism (though not all) will display considerably different behaviours in different settings. This can be as a result of a wide range of reasons, from central coherence abilities, to environmental factors, to differing levels of stress in different situations.

A reasonably common pattern in terms of school/home behaviour is that the child may appear to present with no problems at school, but at home there can be major issues in terms of behaviour. Often, the result is that either school simply do not believe that the child they see at school can be displaying the reported behaviours at home, or that school erroneously believe that because the behaviours are only seen at home then the causing factors for the behaviour must also be situated there. This is not always the case, and it is of imperative importance that all parties involved recognise the serious nature of high levels of distress, and recognise that all aspects of the individual's life may be a contributory factor towards high arousal – which, in turn, may manifest in behavioural issues.

This can lead well into adulthood – for example I support several people whose behaviour at work demonstrates no problem at all, whereas the reality is that they are in high states of anxiety and stress, to the point of self injury at home, and, in some cases, anxiety and depression to the point of suicide.

This demonstrates just how important it is that all concerned recognise this reasonably common autistic behaviour as early as possible, in order to support the child well. Just because a child has the ability to 'mask' their autism at school does not mean that they are not severely affected by their autism on a daily basis.

I hope this answers your query – do not hesitate to forward this email onto anyone you feel may benefit from it. I have attached my CV in case that is helpful in terms of credibility in my answer.

Best wishes,

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