Atypical Child

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**Introduction**

**Case Scenario**

The psychological evaluation of an atypical child will be done on the bases of the movie character Patrick "Po" from the movie "A boy called Po." Po is an 11-year-old boy who lives with a single parent. His mother recently passed away and the boy is a gifted yet challenging child. Po is a Caucasian lean child, who seems healthy but has bruises on his body due to bullying in school. He has brown hair and eyes, and studies in the 6th grade. Po’s mother passed away due to cancer and his father is a struggling engineer (Asher, 2017). Due to Po being different he faces bullying in school on a daily basis which sends him in a state of trance, zoning out as his father would like to call it. Further, through this paper, the symptoms, causes and diagnosis of Po's mental health will be done. Additionally, to strengthen the symptoms, causes and diagnosis a keen observation of the child's daily behavior will be done.

**Discussion**

**Behavior/Symptoms**

There are certain things that are very evident in Po’s behavior. He does not like to make eye contact with people, his body language is quite different, and he flaps his hands when he is distressed. Additionally, Po is not very attached to his father, he does not seek his father for comfort and still sometimes seeks his mother and asks about her. Po never really got the closure that he needed because his father did not take him to his mother’s funeral (Asher, 2017). Po’s speech is also different from other children and at times he struggles to talk fluently. Po is also seen throwing tantrums at home when his father scolds him, but they are not very aggressive and he calms down quickly. It is also seen that Po cannot differentiate between things that can be dangerous to him. Further, one of the most significant trait that Po suffers from is that he zones out. It is seen countless time in the movie that he puts a cloth on his head and drifts into a fantasy world, where things are more to his liking. From a psychological perspective, Po drifts away so he can feel safe and be in his comfort zone. All the bullying that he faces in school has pushed him into creating this safe place for himself. Even when Po is bullied it is seen that he hardly shows any aggression, but he gets very scared. He even at times try to justify to the other kids that he is not a freak, but the way kids bully him both with word and physically have made him very scared (Hobson, 2016). All and all, Po’s father is facing a lot of difficulty in handling him. He does not realize the fact that Po needs extra care, love, help and therapy.

**Causes/Interpretation**

Po's behavior is caused by many factors. It is clear that he has a mental condition, to begin with but it is getting worse by time. The reason behind that is that the poor child's mental needs and issues are mismanaged. The father is struggling to figure out what to do with his child and due to his lack of understanding of his son’s need, Po is taken away from his father. Po's father is not a bad person and he is trying, but the society is making it hard on him. The school is one of the biggest factors that the child is getting worse, they need to take action against the bullying that Po is facing. It is literal physical assault that the child goes through on a daily basis. All of this is confusing the father and adding to the struggle (Hobson, 2016). When Po drifts away, it is also seen that he does enjoy the company of a friend and later his father as well. His fantasies also involve his mother that clearly state that Po is, in fact, a very creative, bright yet a misunderstood child. Further, the people around Po's father are also trying to help him figure out his child, but it is a sensitive matter and not easy for any parent.

**Diagnosis**

It is evident by the symptoms that have been mentioned above that Po has been suffering from “Autism Spectrum Disorder.” The children who suffer from autism usually face difficulty in trying to understand what other people are trying to say. Same is the case with Po. These children have difficulty showing emotion and trying to tell that in what manner a question or statement has been asked or made (Masi, DeMayo, Glozier & Guastella, 2017). For instance, a child who has autism cannot tell the difference if a person tells them to "come here" in a happy or sad mood. This fact can be confusing, that is why the parents of children with autism at times get confused.

**Conclusion**

**Treatment/Recommendations**

Unfortunately there is no cure for Autism, however, there are certain plans and treatments that can be followed and taken help from by the parent. Po’s father should seek help from The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The treatment that Po will be getting will entirely base on the individual needs that he has. It is a fact that autism is different for everyone. Po will benefit well from the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). ABA is often used in clinics and even schools to help children learn positive behaviors and lessen negative ones. Further, Po’s father needs to spend more time with him and carry out different activities with him (Rodgers, Hodgson, Shields, Wright, Honey & Freeston, 2017). For this; Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-Based Approach (DIR) can be used. Po’s father will have floor time with his son in this treatment. This will help Po learn skills and communicate his emotions better. Further, to help Po differentiate between what is dangerous and what is not; Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication-handicapped Children (TEACCH) can be given. This will help Po function like other kids in daily routine. Additionally, Po can also benefit from The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). In this kind of treatment, the child is taught symbols that they can use to communicate better. At the end of the day, children with autism are just kids who need extra love and care.

**References**

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