

**Brenda L. Bierdeman, PsyD**

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

27 S. Platt Street

Albion, NY 14411

585-589-2315

**PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**Cassidy Anne Felerski**

**DOB: 1/22/2000**

DOE: 7/8/2014

Cassidy Anne Felerski was referred for an evaluation in order to assess the nature and extent of any existing psychopathology and to clarify her diagnosis. Cassidy has a long history of developmental delays, and speech, emotional, academic and social difficulties. She was home schooled until fifth grade, when she returned to the Holley School District. Her parents reported that they fought for years to get her evaluated, and to get her the assistance that she needs. She was finally granted an Individualized Education Plan after the family filed grievances with the NYS Department of Education and obtained an attorney. Cassidy spent fifth, sixth and seventh grades in Holley school and as reportedly just been accepted to the Norman Howard School for her eighth grade year.

Current symptoms include difficulty understanding and complying with societal norms, impulsivity, problems transitioning, cognitive inflexibility, and difficulties appropriately giving and reading non-verbal cues. She has also displayed risky, socially inappropriate behaviors, and left home without parental knowledge or permission on more than one occasion. Past diagnoses have also included anxiety and depression.

Records were reviewed, and Cassidy completed a clinical interview, projective drawings, Berry-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Berry VMI), and a NEPSY-II Theory of Mind Subtest. Cassidy's mother, Caroline Felerski, completed an Autism Spectrum Rating Scales, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Second Edition, and Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile. A Childhood Autism Rating Scale 2-Standard Version (CARS2-ST) was also completed by the examiner from parent reports and observations.

Cassidy's projective drawings revealed significant emotional issues. Her figure drawings were drawn in an Anime style, which is typical of a child who has an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Her Person had a very large head, which was even more

emphasized by the dark shading on her hair. This finding suggests possible obsessive thinking or anxiety, and some sexual preoccupation. Her Person-In-The-Rain was totally covered in rain, and lacked the details present in the Person drawing, suggesting that under stress, Cassidy sort of fades away, withdraws, and essentially loses her sense of self as she becomes overwhelmed by the stressors. Her drawing of a tree suggested difficulty in deriving satisfaction from her environment and hesitancy in reaching out.

Berry VMI was administered to ascertain her exact level visual-motor functioning. Findings indicate that Cassidy's visual-motor abilities fell at the eight years, four months old level.

The Autism Spectrum Rating Scales is used to quantify observations of a youth that are associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Results indicate that Cassidy has significant elevations across all scales, suggesting that Cassidy has more difficulty than age-mates with verbal and non-verbal communication to initiate, engage in and maintain social contact, peer and adult socialization, self-regulation, social and emotional reciprocity, use of atypical language, behavioral rigidity, attention, and sensory sensitivity. Her overall ratings on the DSM-IV-TR Scale suggest that her symptoms significantly match those for an Autism Spectrum Disorder with a T score of 85. These findings support a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Cassidy also displayed significant difficulties with Theory of Mind, as evidenced by her responses on the NEPSY-II. On this measure, her score of 21 fell below the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile. This finding suggests that Cassidy has significant problems understanding that others may have different thoughts and feelings than herself. This finding is very typical of children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Results of the Vineland II Adaptive Behavior Scale are outlined below:

	<u>Adaptive Level</u>	<u>Age Equivalent</u>	<u>Standard Score</u>
<b>Communication.....</b>	<b>Low</b>		<b>64</b>
Receptive	Low	1:6	
Expressive	Low	6:4	
Written	Moderately Low	10:0	
<b>Daily Living Skills.....</b>	<b>Low</b>		<b>66</b>
Personal	Low	5:10	
Domestic	Low	7:0	
Community	Moderately Low	12:0	
<b>Socialization.....</b>	<b>Low</b>		<b>54</b>
Interpersonal Skills	Low	3:8	

Play & Leisure Time	Low	2:2
Coping Skills	Low	3:10

**Adaptive Behavior Composite.... Low ..... 60**  
**Maladaptive Behavior Index.....Clinically Significant**  
 Internalizing.....Clinically Significant  
 Externalizing.....Elevated

On this measure, Cassidy displayed significant difficulties in all areas of Adaptive Functioning, Communication, Daily Living Skills, Socialization, and Adaptive Functioning. Her skills ranged from a high of 12 years of age in the Community area of Daily Living Skills, to a low of an age equivalent of 1 year, 6 months of age in the area of Receptive Communication Skills. All areas of Socialization were significantly Low with skills averaging in this area between an age-equivalent of two to three years old. In addition, her Maladaptive Behavior Index was clinically significant for internalizing and elevated in for externalizing, suggesting that Cassidy may tend to withdraw into herself in order to adjust or adapt to situations and changes in her environment. If withdrawing doesn't work, however, she might then act out into her environment.

Results of the Sensory Profile suggest that Cassidy had difficulties in several areas of sensory processing. In general, she is similar to most people in Sensation Seeking and Sensation Avoiding, but has less Low Registration than most people and more Sensory Sensitivity than most people. These findings indicate that Cassidy experiences more sensory processing difficulties.

On the CARS2-ST, Cassidy scored a 43 which places her in the range of Severe Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder. She demonstrated mildly to severely abnormal responses in all areas of functioning, including the areas of relating to people, imitation, emotional response, body use, object use, adaptation to change, visual response, listening response, taste, smell and touch response and use, fear or nervousness, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, activity level, and level and consistency of intellectual response. There were no areas in the average or age-appropriate range without any evidence of difficulty.

In summary, findings suggest that Cassidy is suffering from an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Cassidy meets the criteria criterion for 299.00 Autism Spectrum Disorder according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-Fifth Edition of the American Psychiatric Association, with a total of 7 symptoms as follows:

- A.1. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
2. Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction

3. Deficits in developing and maintaining relationships
- B.1. Stereotyped or repetitive speech, motor movements, or use of objects
  2. Excessive adherence to routines, ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior, or excessive resistance to change
  3. Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
  4. Hyper-or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of environment

Symptoms have been present since early childhood and they both limit and impair her everyday functioning.

It is recommended that the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder be specifically added to her IEP and that she continue to receive supportive, rehabilitative, and therapeutic services appropriate to this diagnosis.

Given the fact that Autism is a lifelong disorder, it is likely that Cassidy will continue to need ongoing support and accommodations in order for her to live and function independently throughout her life.

It is further recommended that Cassidy be allowed to pursue her academics in the least restrictive, and most supportive environment possible, such as the Norman Howard School.

Please feel free to contact me, with proper consent, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Brenda L Bierdeman, Psy.D.  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
NYS #012329-1