

Max

Max was 7 years old when his family emigrated to Canada. He was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome 14 months later, primarily due to difficulties with socialization, communication, and atypical behaviours in school. Parley met Max when he was 20 years old, living in an apartment with his parents and brother. He was attending college and actively seeking employment. Max was referred to Parley Services for behaviours that hindered his vocational success. He was experiencing high levels of anxiety, particularly with performance expectations, impacting his ability to participate in daily living skills as well as community participation. He experienced difficulty initiating actions, managing time efficiently or following through effectively with requests. Personal hygiene was affected by behaviour, and he had never learned many life skills such as cooking or budgeting. As well, Max was feeling generally depressed over his lack of friendships and the challenges he faced maintaining relationships. He reported feeling either anxious about expectations or depressed when there were none. He frequently threatened self-harm or destroyed family property.

After a functional analysis of Max's behaviour, it was discovered that Max was demonstrating passive aggressive actions as a way of responding to long term mistreatment. Noncompliance through avoidance allowed him to exercise choice and control, and to escape from expectations that were unclear, demanding or harsh.

Max was meeting once a week with a community support worker who reported challenges with motivating Max to seek employment and exercise good life skills. Max was lacking accommodation for ASD in his school environment. A Positive Behaviour Support plan was provided to both the teachers and the worker to better facilitate opportunities of growth and success that would accommodate for Max's disability and performance anxiety.

Max successfully built resilience and self-efficacy behaviours over time by establishing self-soothing behaviours and healthy daily routines to help him to feel good and sleep better. Max learned problem solving techniques that reduced his reactivity to typical challenges he encountered. When he was exercising the new skills well, Max participated in meta-cognitive teaching to modify his thoughts and behaviours to help maintain and generalize what he was learning. He increased participation in self-management of general life skills, and he was increasingly more social and less avoidant.

Max demonstrated improved functional communications with social skills teaching, focusing on reciprocity toward others and initiating interactions. Max had found expectations within relationships confusing and overwhelming, until he learned to better discriminate who was a close friend and who was just an acquaintance and how to interact differently. He was able to successfully manage the teamwork required in his college program.

Previously Max did not trust himself enough to leave his home. With some support and planning, he successfully took a weekend trip with college peers. As our time ended with Max, he was meeting with service providers to look at living semi-independently. Max graduated from his college program and is enjoying his life of new opportunities and possibilities. He has successfully held a job for a year in his desired work.