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AUTISM SPECTRUM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Re: Armin Marth

Date of birth	25/04/1989
Date/s of evaluation	02/10/2019
Age at time of assessment	30 years old
Name of Assessor	Kyra Thompson

Armin attended the Sydney Cognitive Development Centre for an Autism Spectrum Disorder assessment. The assessment consisted of a two-hour clinical interview. In addition to a clinical interview, Armin completed some questionnaires regarding autism symptomatology and adaptive level of functioning; The Autism Spectrum Quotient, The Empathy Quotient, DASS 42 and ABAS-3.

Background

Armin presented as a 30-year-old man who resides in Sydney and previously worked in IT. Armin reported attending the assessment as he felt he had similar symptoms to the diagnostic criteria and advised throughout his life, many individuals queried whether he was on the autism spectrum.

Clinical Interview

Social and Communication reciprocity

Information obtained throughout the two hour clinical interview, indicated Armin experiences several difficulties with social emotional reciprocity. Armin recalled having difficulties with friendships throughout school. Armin would spend a lot of time in the library by himself, however, reported he was able to get along with his peers in primary school due to sharing common playing interests such as pokemon.

Armin did recall having a best friend and attending play dates and birthday parties however has not maintained the friendship since school. Armin was happy being by himself rather than with others and where he could he would cancel play dates in order to continue doing the activity he was by himself. Armin was able to engage in imaginative play as a child, however recalled being tired a lot in social situations. Armin finds himself on his phone a lot in a social outing and will go home as soon as he can find an excuse.

Armin stated his attention span is quite limited in social situations and at work, when liaising with customers, he would rather put them on hold rather than make small talk. Armin was told he needed to make small talk so he created a list of questions to ask, however, doesn't feel he engages in the conversation. Armin shared he finds it difficult to have any interest in the conversation if the topic isn't around video games. Armin has been told he isn't great at showing empathy, for example when a friend went through a break up they reportedly told him he didn't give the support they were expecting. Armin shared he does feel the emotions others do, he just doesn't have a response related to it.

Armin is able to notice when others are being standoffish or sarcastic but requires the emotion to be quite explicit, for example, if someone is sad, he is better at understanding their emotion if they are crying. Armin reported he has been known to misread social cues and has experienced awkward social situations due to missing these responses. Armin has currently been with his partner in a polyamorous relationship for around nine years and was in a relationship prior to this one. Armin stated he will ask his partner about his day but can only understand why he feels a certain way if it is logical to Armin.

Nonverbal Communication

Armin has difficulty maintaining eye contact and is only able to do this in a professional setting (confirmed through observation during the assessment). At work, Armin has been told to make more eye contact and appear more engaged. Armin reported he mostly keeps a neutral facial expression and others will have difficulty interpreting if he is joking or not. Armin recalled receiving the occasional hug from his mother however if he was upset, he would be by himself to self soothe. Armin has difficulty managing personal space and would change and adjust his work schedule to avoid travelling in peak periods on the train, become distressed in crowds and will avoid a lot of occasions where there will be a lot of people around.

Armin has difficulty with greetings (handshakes, hugs) however is ok when in a romantic relationship with someone.

Developing and maintaining friendships

Armin remembered completing a group assignment and becoming upset that another member wanted to cheat and take the easier option. Armin then fixed the assignment to make it right. Armin recalled being upset if others were disrupting the class or being naughty and if others in his group didn't want to play the game he wanted to, he would go off and play it by himself. Armin previously was apart

of several gaming groups that he would socialise with however now spends his time learning Auslan and doing activities with his partner.

Restrictive and repetitive behaviours

Armin reported to touch his hair a lot when in conversation and constantly rub his legs (observed throughout assessment), however, did not have any awareness of any echolalia.

Rituals and routines

Armin is not currently employed, however, tries to stick to a regular daily schedule. Armin reported to not be leaving the house much during the day but follows daily chores whilst at home. Regarding rituals, Armin prefers to follow a set order when cleaning the house and stated he can't make his bed until the laundry is done and can't start cleaning the kitchen until the rubbish is taken out.

Armin has a specific way of doing things, for example when cleaning dishes will only do so with a specific sponge. If he doesn't have the right sponge, the dishes will pile up as he won't be able to do them. Armin recalled getting frustrated when transitioning between subjects at school and would find it difficult to get back into the original task if he has been told to change. In his previous employment, Armin had difficulty managing many responsibilities and found he was complemented a lot when completing one task but found it challenging managing multiple tasks. Armin stated he was let go of his previous employment due to difficulty managing various responsibilities and meeting expectations.

Fixations and obsessions

Armin is really interested in video games and will binge watch Netflix. Armin reported to have always been interested in video games and used this as an escape. Armin shared playing several rounds a day and when he was younger, spent a lot of time on Pokemon. Armin owned multiple game boys. Even when the 'craze' had gone, he was still fixated on playing. Armin would collect all the different card sets and would feel the need to complete a set before moving on to another set. Armin believes his place is cluttered with his collections of vinyl figures and would occasionally go out of his way to collect rare pieces. Armin would spend days researching YouTube on different figurines he was collecting and would have a lot of difficulty shifting his attention away once he started talking about it.

Hypo/hyper sensitives

Armin has difficulty with sounds when he is in a crowded bar or restaurant and finds it challenging talking to the other person. Armin reported his only difficulty with touch and texture was wearing ties. Armin recalled no sensory difficulties with sight, taste or odours.

Results

Table 1: The areas of criterion A, B, C,D and E that Armin met.

Criterion A Social Communication and Social Interaction (all 3 criteria must be met)	Criteria Met?
Social-emotional reciprocity	Yes
Non-verbal communication	Yes
Developing and understanding friendships	Yes

Criterion B Repetitive/Restrictive Patterns of Behaviours, Interests or Activities (2 out of 4 criteria must be met)	Criteria Met?
Repetitive motor movements or speech	No
Insistence on sameness and routines	Yes
Fixated interests of abnormal intensity or focus	No
Hyper/Hypo reactivity to sensory input	No

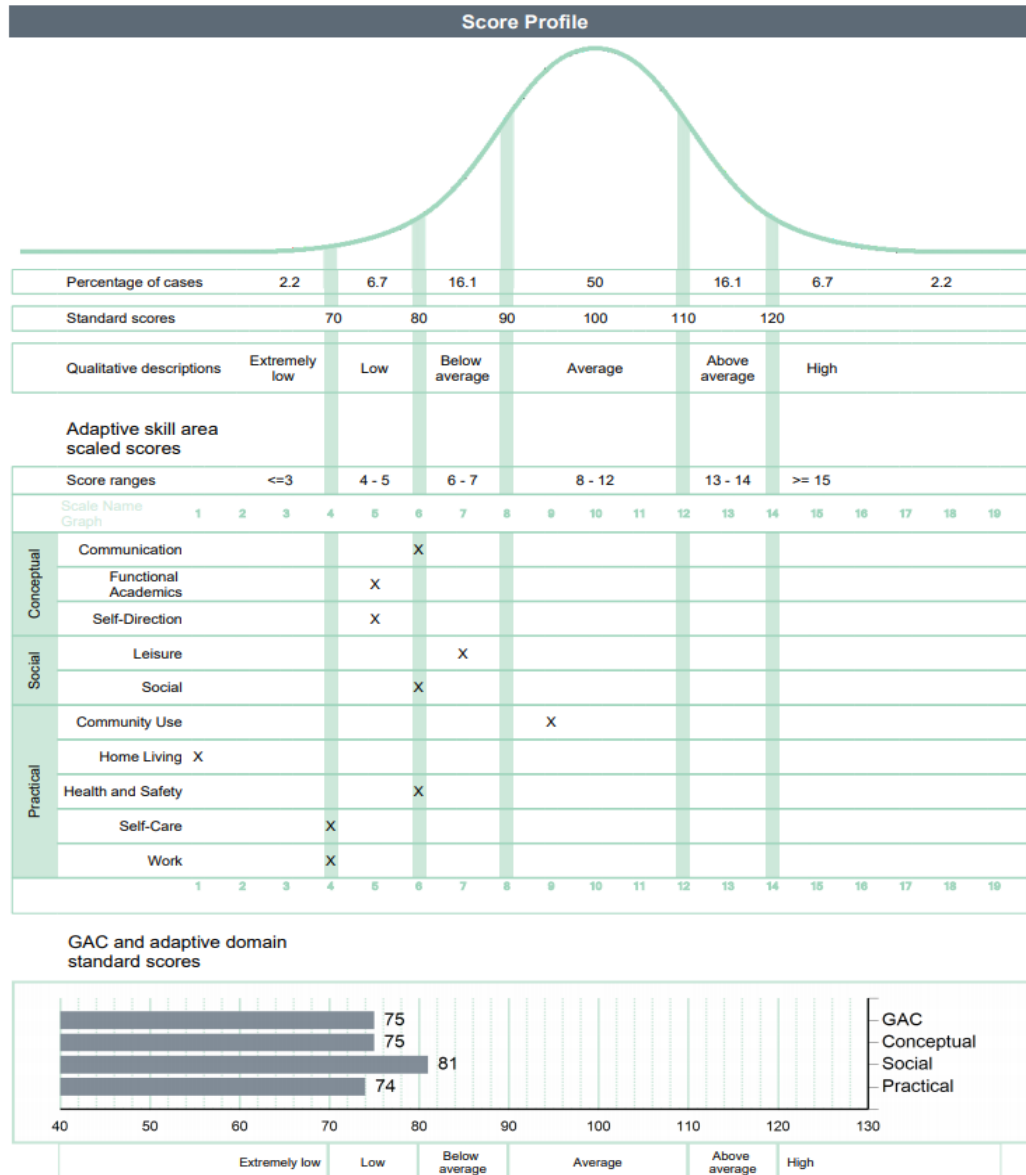
Criterion C Symptoms Present in the Early Developmental period	Criteria Met?
Symptoms from criterion A and criterion B were not fully manifest until adulthood although there were indicators from the early developmental period.	Yes

Criterion D Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning.	Criteria Met?
Symptoms from criterion A and B have caused significant impairment to social and occupational functioning.	Yes

Criterion E These disturbances are not better explained by intellectual disability or global developmental delay	Criteria Met?
Intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder frequently co-occur; to make comorbid diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability, social communication should be below that expected for the general developmental level.	Yes

Results

Table 2: ABAS-3 adaptive functioning results that Armin self-reported.



The Adaptive Behavior Assessment System – 3rd Edition (ABAS-3) is an individual assessment of adaptive behaviour that measures the extent to which an individual performs the age-appropriate, everyday activities required to take care of him or herself and get along with others. The ABAS-3 yields four composite scores. The Conceptual domain summarizes communication and functional academic skills. The Social domain represents interpersonal skills and social competence. The Practical domain indicates independent living and skills required to function in the community. The General Adaptive Composite (GAC) is a composite score based on all of the areas assessed by the ABAS-3 and is a measure of overall adaptive behaviour.

Armin's scores on the DASS-42 fell within the mild range for Depression, the moderate range for Anxiety and the mild range for Stress.

Armin also completed the Autism Spectrum Quotient questionnaire and received a score of 43 out of 50 indicating significant autistic traits. Armin also completed the Empathy Quotient questionnaire and received a score of 9 out of 80, with scores lower than 30 indicating lack of empathy common with individuals on the autism spectrum.

Diagnosis

Results of the assessment indicate that **Armin's presentation is consistent with a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fifth Edition (DSM-5) diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (299.00 DSM-5), (Social communication-requiring support & restrictive/repetitive behaviours- requiring support, both severity level 1)** There are three severity levels for both areas ranging from Level 1 or "Requiring Support" through Level 2 or "Requiring substantial support" to Level 3 or "Requiring very substantial support". It is important to note that severity can vary by context and fluctuate over time. Nevertheless, severity ratings are one way of describing some of the variation that exists between individuals with ASD.

Recommendations

1. Armin would benefit in engaging with a psychologist to assist in managing his anxiety and stress symptoms. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy would be of use to challenge his unhelpful thought patterns and develop strategies to help regulate his emotions and manage stress.
 2. Armin could also commence social skills therapy to assist in developing his social and emotional reciprocity and develop better social connections. We would be happy to offer this therapy with Armin at Sydney Cognitive Development Centre.
 3. Supported Employment; Armin could benefit in receiving support for future employment through an agency that specialises in placing individuals with a disability or other additional needs with suitable employment. A local employment agency Armin may be able to link in with;
- The ORS group

- Aspect Capable Employment service (www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect-capable-employment-service)
- 4. Ongoing GP review is recommended as a means of overseeing progress, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of intervention and support services.
- 5. Psychoeducation and Resources can be found online at ASPECT's website (www.autismspectrum.org.au). Research Autism website (www.researchautism.net) or alternatively, there are several books that may be of assistance;
 - "Living Well in the Spectrum: How to Use Your Strengths to Meet the Challenges of Asperger Syndrome/High Functioning Autism" by Valerie Gaus
 - "Autism Adulthood- Strategies and Insights for a Fulfilling Life" by Susan Senator.
 - "A Practical Guide to Happiness in Adults on the Autism Spectrum- A Positive Psychology Approach" by Victoria Honeybourne.
- 6. NDIS: The National Disability Scheme currently provides some potential funding for people diagnosed as being on the Autism Spectrum. This funding is usually reserved for people with higher levels of severity and can provide support in relation to community participation, daily living skills, and certain types of therapy. You may want to consider an application to see whether you are eligible. More details and application forms can be found at www.ndis.gov.au

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me.



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