

Pediatric Psychiatry ECHO®

Session 6 Notes and Resource Sheet



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DIDACTIC PRESENTATION

“Whole Treatment / Whole Teams”
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[Recording](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

CASE SUMMARY

We explored the case of a 17yo caucasian male, who is experiencing increased and debilitating anxiety that set in and remained. The onset of symptoms, including fatigue, loss of appetite, and chest-pain were experienced by the entire family, but for him the symptoms did not go away after a few days, rather it has been over 6 weeks and he is no longer hanging out with friends, or even leaving the house.

His clearly loving and supportive family has a strong history of being non-neurotypical, along with PANDA's, chronic fatigue syndrome, and likely anxiety. There were no developmental or behavioral concerns until he reached ages 6-12 when he began to experience PANDA's that were accompanied by migraines, tics, and unexplained rashes.

There has been no explanation for current symptoms after being seen by PCP, ED, and urgent care except for anxiety. There has been some interactions with Anxiety Solutions of Northern New England, but those were negative. His family is against medications, so there have been no trials.

KEY QUESTION(S)

How best to approach treatment of anxiety?

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Any treatment for PANDAs?	Self-diagnosed, no treatment.
What is his diet?	In general, very bland, doesn't like to eat. He'll eat some veggies, tea, water, when his body feels hungry. Self-described grazer.
Are they shopping around for a provider?	Family feels like they aren't being heard.
Has he been tested for Lyme?	Tested negative. Needs a cardio work-up.
Any hx of behavioral health professionals?	Has had a counselor in the past.
Are there any cultural or religious beliefs impacting care?	Not so much cultural, but they feel like they are "free spirits."
Does he have an idea or plan about what comes next and do his feelings/ sense of self mesh with the family's?	Family seems to be very symbiotic with one another. Has desire to go to college. Seems content at home.
Is food insecurity an issue?	No, he has access to food but avoids eating because of how it makes him feel physically.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue the important work of building trust and a relationship with the family so they will see that they aren't being treated with stigma/bias.
- Recommend a counselor who won't be judgemental, will see the anxiety as a serious condition, and able to identify non-medical solutions.
- Consider inviting a therapist to come to your office rather than providing a list and having the family follow up.
- It stands out that the family feels they are an exception (all neurodiverse, raising their family differently than others, etc.) and they don't like the anxiety solutions they've tried. It may be challenging to validate them and avoid going down a lot of rabbit holes trying to find a solution that they can accept. Dig into why the tried solutions didn't work. Realize it may be difficult to find a solution they are happy with.
- Do the cardio work up, but also ask if they would be willing to bring a counselor in to optimize sleep, diet, exercise, and other routines.
- It is often useful to think of these types of presentations as combinations of medical and psychological factors. Having medical issues causes emotional reactions (e.g. the body's fight or flight response to danger/injury etc.) and negative emotions can cause or exacerbate underlying medical symptoms or issues. If you can avoid "taking sides" as to whether it is caused by an as yet undiagnosed medical issue versus it's "anxiety", you often can improve your working relationship with the patient/family.
- It is likely that he is trying to figure out who he is and how he is fitting into the family system, as he is maturing and becoming a young adult. Recommend looking into this more deeply.
- Yes, there are likely components related to social issues, coming of age, dating, etc. Also, reach out to a nutritionist to meet with him to make sure he is getting what he needs from his diet.
- You are doing a great job understating their issues and meeting them where they are. Important to do as you are building the relationship. Baby steps with meds can be very effective in that regard.
- As the relationship is becoming stronger and they trust you, might be helpful to find out why they keep going to new PCPs.
- There will come a time when your professional opinion and advice will need to trump the family.

Reach out for a consult through the MPBHP access line 1-833-672-4711.