**DAP NOTE**

**D:** Sebastian is a 16-year-old Caucasian adolescent who was referred for neuropsychological assessment to determine his learning and emotional status and to make recommendations regarding a treatment plan. He has experienced difficulty with motivation and attention in school. There is concern that he may also have symptoms of attention deficit disorder in addition to a previously diagnosed dysgraphia. An evaluation of his early development, cognitive capability, emotional status and academic achievement resulted in a determination of a complex set of characteristics that are contribution to his difficulties.

**A:** Sebastian performed at an average range of cognitive functioning with no notable differences between verbal and nonverbal functions. However, there were many variations in his basic processing of information. Excellent abstract cognitive capability was noted for abstract thinking in both verbal and nonverbal visual spatial modalities. These good capabilities are reflected by his outstanding ability with math reasoning and verbal comprehension. His oral language is also mature and demonstrates good verbal communication skills. His academic skills are all within the average or above level of ability; but he often fails to utilize his capacity to achieve up to his potential. He demonstrates some positive symptoms of an attention deficit disorder, but there is insufficient evidence to make a diagnosis of AD/HD at this time. Most likely the underlying anxiety and depression, as well as the identified learning disability contribute to these symptoms of poor working memory, slow processing speed, superficial processing and lack of motivation. Any treatment must consider the interaction of these co-morbid conditions.

**P:** In order to best serve Sebastian’s needs there are several areas that may be targeted for intervention. 1. Primary focus should remain on managing his depression and anxiety symptoms. He is learning to communicate in an assertive fashion and should continue to develop his capacity to express his needs and to initiate conversation. A strong therapeutic bond is essential with anyone who is engaging with Sebastian. He has the capability to benefit from some cognitive therapy techniques in addition to stress management and positive reinforcement. Concrete examples of his positive growth should be presented and reinforced. 2. It is imperative that Mrs. Smith establishes structure and boundaries that will enable Sebastian to follow through with his schoolwork. This consistency on the part of everyone who has a close relationship with Sebastian will enable him to internalize these controls and allow him to begin to monitor his own behavior. He needs to have a modeling of proper roles and boundaries in families in order to develop his own sense of self. 3. A multistep progressive program that gives increasing independence and responsibility may prove helpful. Some type of outward bound or challenge program may give him needed confidence and resiliency to empower him to stand up for his own needs. He will require much structure and support, with continual monitoring during this fragile time. Consistency in all environments is especially important so that he can solidify the gains he has made and feel a sense of security and predictability. Otherwise he will be set up for failure in any program that he attends.