

## Why post-traumatic stress disorder in children can be diagnosed as autism

All I knew at first was that Jeremy's mother wanted her son assessed for autism. The boy had been a social toddler, his mother recalled. But over the years, he had begun to avoid others and engage in repetitive play. He had also become prone to violent outbursts.

Over the course of our session, I learned that Jeremy and his brother had been abused by their father. Their mother, whom I will call Joy, had been unaware of the abuse for almost a year. She was not sure when Jeremy's behavior had changed and whether it was before or after the abuse began.

Joy suspected her son had [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD). He had, in fact, received a PTSD diagnosis.

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At first, I couldn't figure out why anyone thought Jeremy has autism. He made eye contact with me and used gestures to communicate when he had trouble expressing himself with words.

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Jeremy's repetitive play, coupled with the communication difficulties stemming from his language barrier, quickly helped me to understand why so many professionals suspected autism. After all, having [repetitive behaviors](#) and restricted interests is a core feature of autism.

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It is critical for clinicians to recognize that some features that appear related to autism, such as withdrawal from peers, rigid play and angry outbursts, may be more accurately categorized as PTSD.

**Read full, original post:** [Post-traumatic stress disorder may mimic autism in some children](#)