Case Study: The Overwhelmed Parent

Beatrice is a working mother of three children, Brock (14), Bobby (10), and Alan (6). Her oldest child, Brock, has autism although he is verbal and is integrated in a typical high school with special support services. Bobby also has autism, although more severe, along with several physical and health conditions and is in a special needs classroom. Alan is a typically developing child. Beatrice works as an administrative assistant at a busy law office, and her husband is a night-shift warehouse manager.

The day started at 3 a.m. when Bobby woke up and started stimming by playing his music on speakers in his room (balloon). Although she gave him his headphones so the house could again be silent, her youngest son Alan was also awakened and she had to soothe him back to sleep (balloon). It was 5 in the morning and Beatrice couldn’t get back to sleep herself, so she started packing lunches for the boys. Her husband came home from his work shift around 5:30 a.m. and stated that he received a speeding ticket on his way home from work (balloon). She knocked on Brock, her oldest son’s door, at 6 to remind him to wake up since he has to be on the bus at 7, and he rolled over, stating he wanted to go back to bed and didn’t want to go to school today (balloon). Beatrice helped dress Bobby and Alan while her husband cooked breakfast, and Brock finally appeared from his room at 7:01, just in time to miss the school bus (balloon). She loaded all three boys in the van and dropped the younger boys off at their school and then Brock at his high school. She went in the office to pick up a tardy slip for him and the special education teacher reminded her that her Brock’s IEP meeting was re-scheduled to today at 1pm because the OT couldn’t make the originally scheduled time (balloon). She finally made it to work, realize she had left her own lunch in the refrigerator (balloon). At 10 a.m., she received a call from the elementary school stating that her middle child Bobby’s seizures that were typically controlled by medication were getting more severe, and they recommended she take him home for observation (balloon). Beatrice called her husband and woke him up to ask if he could attend the high school IEP meeting and gave him a list of important accommodations to ask the teacher about for their oldest child (balloon). She then rushed to the school to pick up Bobby and made an appointment with his primary provider for 4pm. After she arrived home to get Bobby situated to observe him for more seizures, she noticed some messages on her cell phone from her boss (balloon). Her boss called and he said they had an important case tomorrow and asked if she could complete some paperwork for the case from home since she had to leave work early (balloon). She quickly scrambled to her laptop to finish the paperwork just in time to get Bobby back in the car for his doctor’s appointment. In the lobby, she called the insurance company, who had previously denied Bobby’s last three therapy visits and they told her to get additional documentation from the provider (balloon). Finally, the doctor was able to see Bobby at 4:30 and put him on a new medication, although he continued to have mild seizures. Exhausted, and knowing her husband didn’t have time to cook dinner due to the IEP meeting and picking up their youngest son, Beatrice packed Bobby in the car and stopped by KFC to get the family some dinner before returning home. Beatrice spent the remainder of the evening continuing to monitor for seizures and collapsed into bed shortly after her husband left for work at 7pm.