

## Module: Functional Communication Training

### CASE STUDY

#### Amir

Amir is a seventh grader with Asperger's Syndrome. He is highly verbal, and does well academically. However, Amir recently developed some interfering behaviors. Specifically, he started biting his hand and humming during science class in the afternoon. His teacher was very frustrated because it was disrupting the class and he was hurting himself. As a consequence, the teacher started sending Amir to the resource room when he engaged in the behaviors. Amir's team completed a thorough and high-quality FBA, and determined that the behavior always occurred when group work was on the schedule, and that the function of the behavior was to avoid the group work.

Amir's team discussed the situation, and decided it was more important for Amir to verbally advocate for his own needs than to participate in group activities. He worked with small groups in other classes, which appeared to not bother him as much. His science teacher sat down with Amir and explained that if he raised his hand and requested, "May I work on my independent project?" that he would be allowed to spend science class in the library. His teacher also expressed interest in Amir staying for the group, as he valued his participation and thought he was an asset to the class.

Amir was thrilled to have this choice, and needed minimal prompting to use the communicative act. As promised, he was allowed to work in the library on an independent project. As the year went on, however, Amir became more interested in some of the class activities, especially when they were specific to his interests. He began staying in class for some group work, and requesting to work independently when it suited him.

Allowing Amir to make choices about his own environment and verbally advocate for his own needs kept his interfering behaviors out of the classroom, and eventually led to his participation in group work.