

An Introduction to Autism

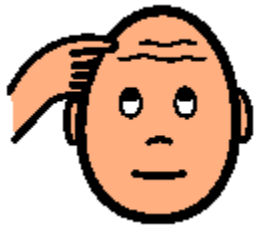
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Aims and Objectives for the session

- To gain a basic understanding of autism
- To think about how people with autism behave and see the world.



What is Autism?

‘Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them’

National Autistic Society



Introductions

Task 1

Scaling

- Discuss in groups what you know already about Autism and share something with the group
- What would you like to learn from today?
- <http://www.online-stopwatch.com/egg-timer-countdown/full-screen/>

Autism –other related terms

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)

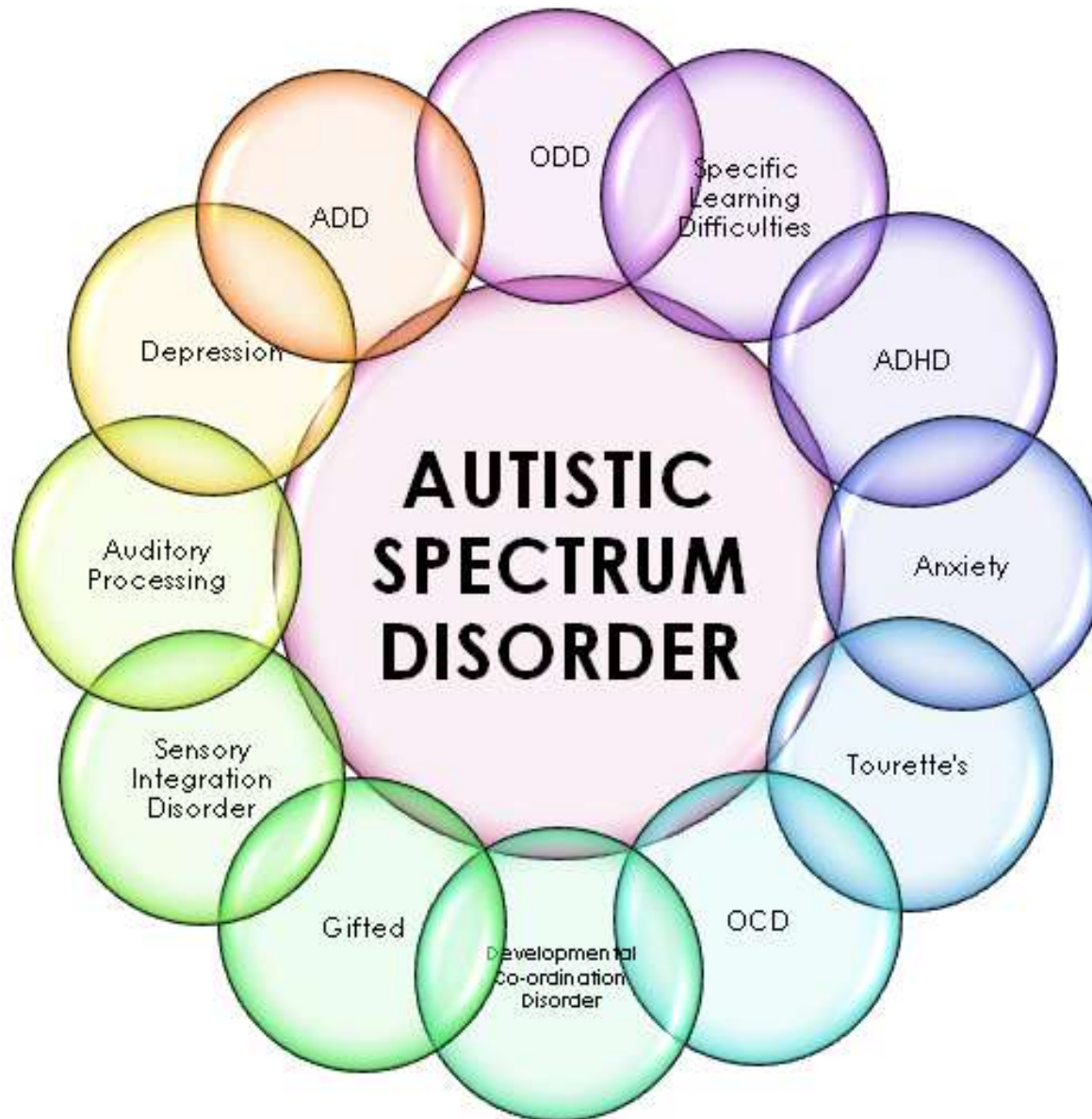
Childhood Autism

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)

Aspergers (Syndrome)

In Manchester all these terms are referred to as
Autism.

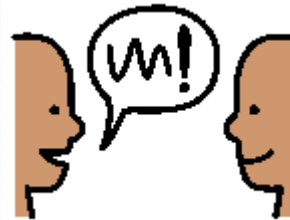






Autism may present as having ...

- Difficulties with social interactions
- Difficulties communicating
- Difficulties with imagination and flexible thinking



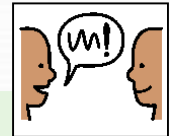


Triad of Impairment

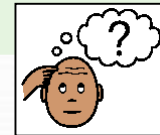
Social Interaction



Communication



Imagination and Flexible thinking



***Sensory sensitivities**

Sensory issues

- One of the Main problems for children with Autism in the Mainstream environment.
- It is often the cause of any challenging behaviour you may see.
- Remember, children may be hypo- or hyper-sensitive to sensory stimulation

- Sensitivities can fluctuate throughout the day – may be worse during times of stress
- Sensory sensitivities can make it very difficult for children and young people with Autism to access some environments
- Children can be overwhelmed by their environment as they have difficulty filtering out what is irrelevant
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcS2VU0e12M> -

What senses do you know?

- 5 senses.... plus
- The three internal senses
- Proprioception
- Vestibular
- Interoception

Activity

- For the environment you are given, think of at least one sensory difficulty that COULD occur for each of the 8 senses.

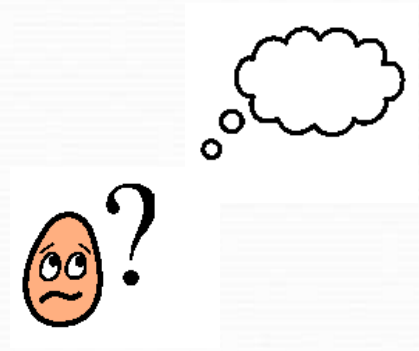
DSM latest guidelines for diagnosis

- Impairment in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts
- Restricted repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities including sensory needs.

What does it mean to have difficulties with social interaction?

Children with social difficulties:

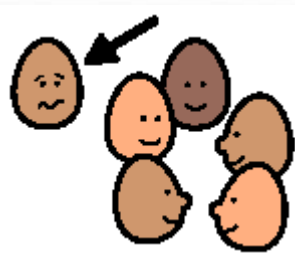
- Cannot guess what others are feeling
- Cannot guess what others are thinking
- Find it hard to pick up on cues around them
- Do not make/makes odd eye contact
- May isolate themselves, play on their own





And.....

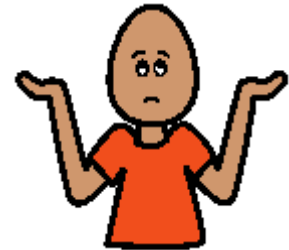
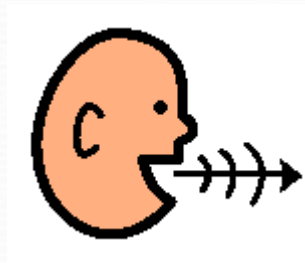
- May find it hard to take turns
- May be on the edge of a group - look like he/she wants to join in but does not know how
- May not know when to listen
- May not know who to listen to
- May find it hard to tell or show you how they feel





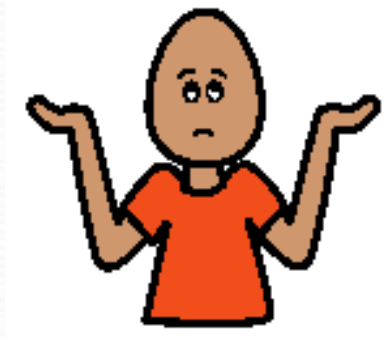
What does it mean to have difficulty communicating?

- May be delayed in communication
- May have difficulties understanding the rules of language
- May speak in monotone and/or with odd pitch



And.....

- May be a good mimic
- May not understand what you need to know - give too much or too little information
- May take things literally e.g. pull your socks up



What does it mean to have difficulties with imagination and flexible thinking?

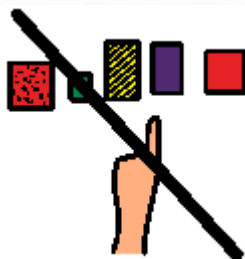
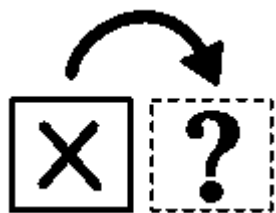
- May find it hard to play at all-some appear to play imaginatively but these could be learned routines.
- Might only be interested in a few things
- These interests may seem **very** unusual!
- Might be obsessive about the special interest
- Might find it hard to predict what's going to happen next





And.....

- May find it hard to switch to new activities
- Might be overwhelmed by too much choice
- Is likely to find abstract ideas very difficult to understand
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6G-OpGgo3c&safe=active>



In addition...people with Autism may



- Have a love of routines
- Be extra/ super sensitive to/ or less sensitive to noise, touch, sight, taste, smell, vestibular, proprioceptive and interoceptive issues (hypo or hyper)
- May have associated behaviour problems, e.g., with sleeping, eating and toileting



And.....

- May have a learning disability
- May engage in repetitive movements, rocking and twirling
- Have difficulties with co-ordination and motor movement
- Have difficulties with transferring skills
- May have a particular skill - savant



Remember.....

- If you know one person with autism, you know one person with autism
- Everyone is different



The Autistic Spectrum

Everyone with autism:

- will have problems with social interaction, communication and imagination / flexible thinking

But:

- not everyone with autism looks the same or behaves the same.
- Over to you- can you share examples of this?



Individual differences...

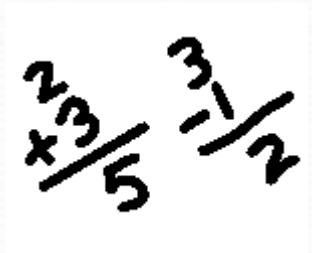
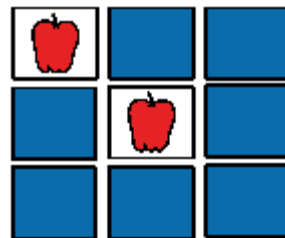
- Age
- Gender
- Temperament/Personality
- Environment
- Reactions of others
- Previous interventions
- Life experience





Autism - Strengths

- Take people at face value, tend not to manipulate others
- Honest – find it difficult to lie/deceive – but not always
- Feeling that you are on the wrong planet – can offer a ‘logical view’ of social situations
- Can be high achievers in chosen field e.g. Temple Grandin
- Good rote memory
- Special interest can be beneficial
- Persistent – carry on where others may give up
- May have high energy levels
- Can be perfectionists – useful in scientific matters and mathematics



How common is Autism?

- Recent national studies show a prevalence of 1 in 100 people are on the autistic spectrum
- There are far more boys than girls
- In Manchester (2009) recent figures suggest approximately 180 children per year receive a diagnosis of autism
- This means that there are likely to be a number of children with autism in every Manchester school
- Numbers are rising – possibly due to increased awareness and better diagnostic tools



What causes autism?

- There is a genetic component but it is not straight forward and there is no genetic test
- It is not caused by:
 - MMR
 - Parenting
- Autism is not anyone's fault



Always.....

- See the positive aspects of the child or young person
- Be flexible
- Provide consistency and predictability
- Remain calm
- And most of all.....

Keep a sense of humour!



Please share this link with everyone you know.

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gZjDxt8Zrg->

