

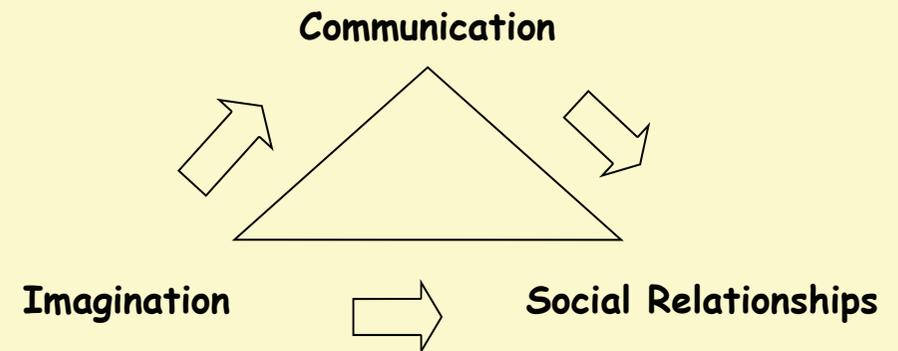


Asperger's Syndrome

Asperger's syndrome is a form of autism, it is a condition that affects the way a person understands and relates to others.

Everyone with the diagnosis experiences their difficulties very differently. Not everyone with a diagnosis has every symptom of Asperger's

People may experience difficulties with: -



Communication:

Some people may have problems with:

- ◆ Making small talk and general conversation
- ◆ Taking things literally
- ◆ Getting anxious talking to new people
- ◆ Being pedantic about the language they and others use

- ◆ Cognitive behavioural therapy can help some people who lack confidence or feel depressed
- ◆ Supportive counselling and practical problem solving therapies can help some people too
- ◆ Work (employment) can help some people as it provides routine and a topic of conversation
- ◆ Some people like feedback if they are doing something unusual

What else can help?

- ◆ Being supported and being believed about their diagnosis
- ◆ Being in control of who knows about the diagnosis
- ◆ Other people being patient and giving them time to think about and respond to questions
- ◆ Other people sticking to plans or arrangements they have made
- ◆ Remembering that people with Asperger's tend to be perfectionists
- ◆ Being told about changes in their routine; make changes in stages; and make sure people know what the end result will be
- ◆ Always asking the person how best you can help them

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Social Relationships:

Some people may have problems with:

- ◆ Making eye contact
- ◆ Interpreting other people's body language (and feeling confident about their own)
- ◆ Making small talk and chatting
- ◆ Starting new relationships and keeping them going
- ◆ Empathy (i.e. finding it hard to understand other people's thoughts, feelings, and opinions)
- ◆ Sharing (feelings and possessions)
- ◆ Showing emotions

Imagination:

Some people may have:

- ◆ Difficulties with imagination (i.e. They can't imagine things without having had direct experience of them)
- ◆ Generally prefer fact to fiction

Key Features

Associated with Asperger's syndrome

- ◆ A strong preference for routine and/or rituals.
- ◆ Finding the idea of change disturbing.
- ◆ Tendency to be preoccupied with particular topics (e.g. timetables, data, or historical records). These topics may fill much of people's leisure time and general conversation.

Treatment Options

- ◆ There is no cure for Asperger's syndrome
- ◆ Medication (and psychological therapies) can be used to try and help with anxiety or depression.
- ◆ Eating a healthy balanced diet and taking regular exercise helps maximise people's physical and mental health.

What can you do to help people with Asperger's?

- ◆ Keep your communication clear and to the point
- ◆ Avoid metaphors
- ◆ Think about the language you use (people tend to interpret things literally)
- ◆ Think about how you use humour