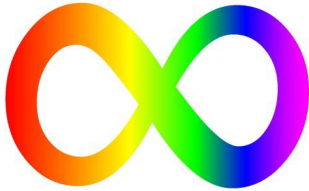
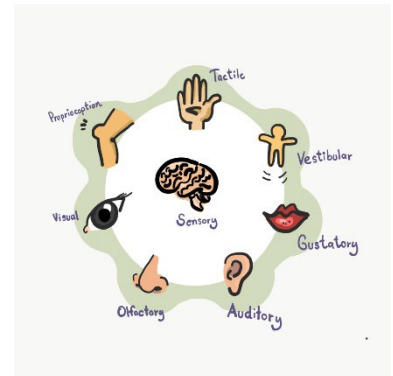


# ASD Family Help

## What is Autism?



Autism is a life-long neurodevelopmental condition of the brain and can affect how an autistic person processes information and the environment around them. It is a different way of seeing the world.



The main areas that can affect them are:

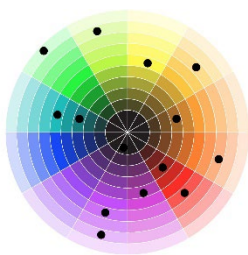
How they communicate and interact with others

How they experience their inner and outer environment through their senses ( Sensory Processing)

How they think and feel using their imagination skills

How they cope with change, transitions and being able to be flexible at times

This means that autistic people often have difficulties with everyday life. Some people experience extreme anxiety. Many find change very difficult. It is important to value and develop their particular interests and activities and not to focus on trying to change them; instead try to see situations from their point of view. We can help and support autistic people to grow and develop wonderful skills and with the right support and understanding, autistic people can lead full and rewarding lives.



**Autism** is known as a “**spectrum**”

The meaning of the word, “Spectrum” is the case of having many different points and characteristics within a certain range. This relates to autism as **every individual autistic person demonstrates the condition in different ways.**

There is a saying by Stephan Shore:

*“When you have met one autistic person, you have only met one autistic person”*

## **Other conditions that may also affect an Autistic person are:**

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Learning Difficulties
- Dyslexia / Dyspraxia / Dyscalculia
- Mental Health – Anxiety feeling very worried
- Sleep
- Alexithymia - the inability to recognise or describe one's own emotions
- Epilepsy

These are the main conditions, however there can be others we have not mentioned above. This is all part of being Neurodivergent.

## **Acceptance and Awareness**

This is why it is so important that we get to know and understand the individual and learn how best to connect and support them. Autism is not just one simple thing, it is a group of amazing people who have a range of different skills and outlooks in life. However, sometimes life can be overwhelming for an autistic person and they can find it difficult to communicate or express how they are feeling, see another person point of view or imagine what may happen next or deal with a situation.

Some autistic people are highly intelligent and extremely intellectually able, however some days will not be able to leave the house or judge the speed of a car or process a conversation in a busy environment. Another person maybe nonverbal and have excellent computer skills. So if you meet an autistic person do get to know and understand them so that you can give them the appropriate support. What works and what doesn't work for them

A good way of understanding autism is by watching and learning from other autistic people. There are many great books out there along with autistic Youtubers. [What is autism? | Ambitious about Autism](#)

## **Here are a few top tips on supporting an Autistic Person.**

- Keep language simple and allow time for a response.
- Say the person's name to get their attention.
- Explain social rules and how to behave in different social situations as clearly as possible.
- Provide structure and routine to give predictability. This will help reduce anxiety. Some people really benefit from visual support like symbols, pictures and photographs to add meaning to the spoken or written word. Social stories' can be helpful in preparing a person with autism for a change.
- Look at the environment to see if it is creating difficulties for autistic people, can you change anything?
- Always try to be prepared: tell people with autism in advance about possible sensory stimuli they may experience in different environments

## **Autistic People have many strengths:**

- They can often have a special interest, these can be really helpful to motivate them or even lead to career choices. In some cases, a person's special interest leads them to become quite famous, for example Albert Einstein or the scientist Temple Grandin and Chris Packham a Naturalist. There are many more.
- They can have amazing long term memories (short term can be more difficult for them) and can have the ability to recall facts
- They can have high level of certain skills, and can be very smart.
- They can sometimes see the finer details that others may have missed.
- They can be open and honest
- They enjoy routines and **and will happily maintain those routines with great success**
- Many can be very happy with their own company and are not always driven with the need to be social.
- They don't tend to judge others, accepting of difference

**Believe in them, the difference you can make is: *ENORMOUS!***

With the right understanding / awareness and support we can help our young people access life as an independent adult and learn to feel safe, happy and make their own positive choices to enable them to become successful individuals. (Success is acknowledge on an individual basis.)

Be open to the future / possibilities, try not to feel too negative and have hope / faith in your child.

***Think ahead and plan for success and it is always ok to ask for help.***