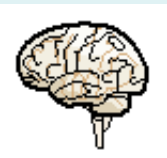


Autistic Spectrum Disorder

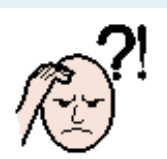
Information for parents, carers and young people



Key points



Autistic Spectrum Disorder is caused by problems in the way the brain grows and works. It is sometimes called ASD or autism.



People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder can find life difficult at home and at school.



There is no cure for Autistic Spectrum Disorder but we can help you find ways to cope.

What is Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopment disorder. This means it is caused by differences in the way the brain develops and works. It affects approximately one in every 100 young people and children.

Children and young people with ASD have particular difficulties in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts (eg home and school). Examples of this are the following:

- struggling to engage in the normal back-and-forth of conversation with another person
- difficulties initiating or responding to social interactions
- reduced sharing of interests
- reduced use of non verbal communicative behaviour used for social interaction eg poor use of eye contact, gestures, body language or facial expressions
- difficulties in developing,

maintaining and understanding relationships

- not interested in making friends
- difficulties in sharing and imaginary play
- difficulties adjusting behaviour to suit various social contexts.

Children and young people with ASD also have restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities. Examples of this are:

- liking routines
- difficulties with changes to routine
- ritualised behaviour eg having to say certain things before going to bed, eating the same thing for every meal
- highly restricted fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity eg liking Star Wars and talking about it at every opportunity even when inappropriate.
- hyper or hypo reactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment. For example:



- apparent indifference to pain/temperature
- adverse response to specific sounds or textures
- excessive smelling or touching of objects
- visual fascination with lights or movement.
- stereotyped or repetitive motor movements or use of objects eg repeating phrases said by other people and lining up of objects
- severity is based on social communication impairments and restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour.

be found on the National Autistic Society Website and we can let you know about other local services and support groups.

It is important to know that these difficulties are not caused by intellectual disability (sometimes called intellectual developmental disorder) or global developmental delay. In fact children with ASD can often have exceptional skills in some areas. Intellectual disability and ASD can sometimes occur at the same time, however.

There is no "cure" for ASD. It is a lifelong condition. However, assessments are available to get a diagnosis. Helpful support and information about ASD can


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