

What is Asperger syndrome?

People with Asperger syndrome can find it hard to read the signals that most of us take for granted. They may find it more difficult to communicate or interact with others. This can lead to high levels of anxiety and confusion. Asperger syndrome is a form of autism which affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to others. It can affect people in many different ways and varying degrees.

Asperger syndrome is mainly a “hidden disability”, meaning that you could not tell from a person’s outward appearance if they have the condition.

Social communication

They sometimes find it difficult to express themselves emotionally or socially. For example:

- have difficulty understanding gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice
- have difficulty knowing when to start or end a conversation and choosing topics to talk about
- using complex words and phrases without fully understanding their meaning
- be very literal in what they say, difficulty in understanding jokes, metaphor and sarcasm.

In order to help people with Asperger syndrome understand you, keep your sentences short - be clear and concise.

Social interaction

Many people with Asperger syndrome want to be sociable but have difficulty initiating and sustaining social relationships, making them anxious. For example:

- struggle to make and maintain friendships
- not understand the unwritten ‘social rules’ such as standing too close to a person or an inappropriate topic of conversation

- finding others unpredictable and confusing
- becoming withdrawn and seeming uninterested, appearing aloof
- behaving in an inappropriate manner

Social imagination

People with Asperger syndrome can be imaginative conventionally; many are accomplished writers, artists or musicians. Difficulty in Social Imagination includes:

- struggle to interpret other people’s actions, thoughts or feelings
- missing subtle messages such as facial expressions or body language
- limited imaginative activities such as repetitive collecting and organising

There are sometimes similarities with autism but people with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence.

Other related characteristics

- love of routines
- special interests often become intense or obsessive
- sensory difficulties, being uncomfortable with touch of others such as in queues, bright lights, loud noises, overpowering smells, the feeling of certain materials

What causes Asperger syndrome?

The exact cause is still being investigated. It is not caused by a person’s upbringing, their social circumstances and is not the fault of the individual with the condition.

Is there a cure?

There is no cure or treatment. However there are many approaches which can improve an individual’s quality of life. These may include behavioural therapy, communication based intervention and dietary changes.



Useful Websites

The National Autistic Society

<http://www.autism.org.uk/asperger>

Asperger-Syndrome.me.uk

www.asperger-syndrome.me.uk

Asperger's Syndrome Foundation

www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk

Further help in the Library

If you need help in the Library please ask for:

Anne Crowther 01204 903264 or

Jane Corrigan 01204 903092

Support in the University of Bolton

If you require any advice regarding Asperger syndrome or other disability issues please contact the Disability Service:

Phone: 01204 903478

E-mail: disabilityinfo@bolton.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/disability>

Speak to one of the Disability Advisors:

Katie Morris 01204 903086

Sabera Patel 01204 903803

Sarah Gilchreast 01204 903435

Liz McGovern 01204 903087

The Library

Asperger Syndrome awareness

