

Supporting People with Asperger's Disorder

People with Asperger's Disorder want the same things everyone else does in life – to enjoy time with friends and family, to live, learn and work in their communities and to have interesting and valued recreational and work experiences.

The characteristics of Asperger's Disorder can be seen as assets in a work or learning situation. People with Asperger's Disorder can often work independently and be successful in structured and predictable routines. They may often demonstrate strong abilities in specific skills or areas of individual interest. Many individuals with Asperger's Disorder learn skills and recall information through their visual processing abilities.

They may need to have social expectations or situational rules clearly defined. Often it can be helpful to clarify these expectations in advance. It may also be helpful to write ideas or tasks down or present them in a visual manner. Planning ahead is always a good way to have a positive outcome.

Supporting people with Asperger's Disorder often means that people around them need information too. Educators, friends and service providers need to understand the social or communication differences the individual may present, along with the things they can do to promote success.



Florida's First Choice for Autism Support

The Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) provides support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism and related disabilities.

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What is
**ASPERGER'S
DISORDER?**

What is Asperger's Disorder?

- A neurobiological disorder considered to be on the autism spectrum.
- Individual symptoms will vary with different ages, stages of development and environmental supports.
- Currently, 1 in 250 people are diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder (Asperger's Syndrome Coalition of US).
- 4:1 ratio males to females.

Strengths

- Average or above average IQ
- Grammar and vocabulary
- Rote memory
- Absorbs facts easily
- Interest in social world
- Special talents

Many individuals with Asperger's Disorder may have difficulty with:

- Predicting
- Understanding others' intentions
- Understanding and expressing emotions
- Explaining own behavior
- Understanding the perspective of others
- Reading social cues and reacting to others
- Understanding social interactions

People with Asperger's Disorder may:

- Display a restricted range of interests and activities
- Adhere to routines, rituals
- Demonstrate poor problem-solving skills
- Use inappropriate behavior to get needs met



Characteristics of Asperger's Disorder

Communication may include:

- Egocentric/eccentric topics of conversation
- Conversations typically revolve around specific topics
- Speech voice quality is sometimes stilted, repetitive and lacks empathy
- Speech may resemble more of a monologue or lecture
- Poor topic maintenance and comprehension
- Literal interpretation of idioms
- Difficulty using and interpreting non-verbal communication

Social Skills which may be observed include:

- Failure to understand hidden social agendas
- Making poor social choices
- Using few social niceties
- Difficulty understanding social rules
- Difficulty making friends
- Restricted range of isolated interests, topics and activities

Similarities and Differences Between Autism and Asperger's Disorder

Like autism, characteristics may include:

- Social interactions may lack reciprocity
- Problematic use of pragmatic language
- Repetitive/restricted behaviors, interests, activities
- Adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals
- Sensory processing deficits
- Difficulty managing unpredictable changes

In contrast to autism, we may observe:

- Social relatedness, but poor command of conversational rules
- More proficiency with language
- No delays in cognitive development
- No delays in adaptive functioning

