

# Everybody's Mental Health Matters



## Asperger Syndrome

### What is Asperger Syndrome?

Asperger syndrome is a disorder in the autistic spectrum that causes difficulties with communication, socialisation and imagination.

### Characteristics

Asperger Syndrome (AS) will affect people in very individual ways. There can be wide variations in the extent to which people are affected by different characteristics of Asperger Syndrome.

#### Communication Difficulties:

This may include problems with speech and intonation, facial expressions and body language. People with AS will often have good verbal skills and be of above average intelligence, but can also interpret things in a very literal way. They may also be prone to lengthy discussions on a favourite subject. Facial expressions can also sometimes be limited, and tone of voice monotonous.

#### Social Difficulties:

These may include problems forming social relationships, lack of empathy and inappropriate eye contact. People with AS will often have as strong a desire to form social relationships as their peers, but are inhibited by problems in understanding social behaviour rules. Feelings of being different can also cause high levels of anxiety which in turn makes social relationships more difficult.

#### Imagination:

People with AS may have difficulties with rigid and inflexible thought patterns and difficulties accepting change.

Some people with AS may also experience poor co-ordination.

### Typical Treatments

Treatment for Asperger Syndrome focuses around managing some of the more distressing symptoms. These may include:

- Training in social skills
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help with stress, anxiety etc...
- Medication to help with depression & anxiety
- Speech therapy to help with conversational skills
- Physical therapy to assist with sensory and motor coordination
- Vocational training to help with job interview etiquette

#### Further Information

<http://www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk>

<http://www.oasis.co.uk/home.htm>

### Positive Traits

There are also some positive traits associated with Aspergers Syndrome. These include honesty, reliability, dedication and determination.