

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism Spectrum Disorder, abbreviated as ASD, is a neuro-biological disorder that affects:

- the way a person communicates;
- socialises with others;
- processes information from his/her senses;
- and adapts to his/her environment.

These deficits may lead to behaviours such as:

- rigid adherence to routines;
- fixations on objects or topics;
- withdrawal;
- Aggression
- bizarre or repetitive body movements.

ASD can have a profound and complicated impact on ordinarily simple everyday activities.

ASD affects:

- people of all intellectual abilities from those with a profound intellectual disability to people who are more able and, in some cases, gifted;
- approximately four boys to every girl;
- at least one in every 100 people.

The cause is not fully understood. Children with ASD grow up to be adults with ASD. Emphasis for assistance is on providing individualised, highly structured therapy and treatment, delivered by professionals with expertise with ASD, assisting individuals to reach their full potential.

BEHAVIOURS

Children *usually* display one, or some, of these types of behaviours.

They don't *usually* show all of them.

- Displays indifference to people or the environment
- Bizzare behaviour
- One-sided interaction
- Inappropriate laughing or giggling
- Lack of creative pretend play
- Echolalia - copies words like parrot
- Talks incessantly about only one topic
- Does not play with other children
- Indicates needs by using an adult's hand
- Flaps hands or other repetitive movement.

ASD is an invisible disorder. People with ASD do not have any observable physical signs of their disability.

Many of the very able people with ASD look and behave entirely appropriately at certain times.

This tends to lead to their outbursts of inappropriate behaviour being unexpected by onlookers and labelled as "spoilt", "naughty", "selfish", "bad" or "obnoxious". In fact, what they are actually experiencing is great difficulty in making sense of what is going on, and their outburst of inappropriate behaviour is an expression of confusion, fear and frustration.

CHARACTERISTICS

Each individual falls somewhere unique on the Autism Spectrum, so not all of these characteristics will be found in every adult, but they can:

- Stay focused for long periods
- Follow directions and stick to rules
- Avoid workplace social politics
- Be very truthful
- Think outside the box with fresh ideas
- Be perfectionists
- Be trustworthy and loyal
- Be immune to current crazes
- Be unmaterialistic
- Be kind and forgiving
- Be reliable, caring, and sincere
- Be empathetic
- Be conscientious
- Be observant
- Give great attention to detail
- Be creative
- Have a keen sensory system
- Possess a sense of humour
- Have a great memory
- Be great with animals

People with ASD have unlimited potential. They need your support, understanding, and acceptance. It is only when the community acknowledges, understands, and appropriately addresses this condition that effective support and assistance can be maintained and each individual's full potential realised.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Mackay Autism Support Group

Meets on the third Tuesday of each month for a coffee and a chat. Typically between 9.30am and 11am during school terms.

A variety of other support and information is offered via: monthly newsletters and other email updates, a Facebook group, parent register, sub-social groups, group library, Lego social therapy group, and community awareness. For further information contact:

T: Debbie 07 4942 3458, or
T: Cheryl 07 4969 5110
E: autismmackay@gmail.com

Autism Queensland

PO Box 354 Sunnybank QLD 4109
T: 07 3273 0000
F: 07 3273 0093
E: admin@autismqld.com.au
W: www.autismqld.com.au

Autism Queensland, Mackay-Whitsunday

John Villiers Centre of Excellence
10 Macrossan Street, East Mackay
T: 07 4841 8300
E: mackay@autismqld.com.au

Autism Advisor Program

T: 07 4923 4800

Early Days Workshops

T: 1800 428 847

Asperger Services Australia

T: 07 3865 2911
W: www.asperger.asn.au

Blue Care Galaxy

T: 07 4957 6016

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

25 Wellington St Mackay
T: 1800 052 222

Engedi Inc.

T: 07 4944 1989

Engedi Inc. Flexible Family Support Program

T: 07 4944 1989

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Level 1, 44 Nelson Street, Mackay .
T: 07 4898 6600.

Child, Youth and Family Health Unit

12-14 Nelson St Mackay
T: 07 4968 3863

Carers Queensland (Mackay)

4/19 Palmer Street North Mackay
T: 07 4944 0544

MADEC (Disability Services)

15 Peel Street, Mackay
T: 07 4951 1233

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre

T: 1800 242 636

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.autismtraining.com.au



MACKAY AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

A part of the local autism community



"Don't underestimate a person with autism, try to understand them"
