

EACH PERSON WITH ASD IS UNIQUE AND HAS BOTH STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES. HELPING SOMEONE WITH ASD BEGINS WITH ACCEPTANCE, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ASD AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

PLEASE REFER TO OUR OTHER BROCHURES FOR SPECIFIC SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Pathology
- Psychological Services
- Group Programs
- Assessments and Plans
- Information and Support Services

Further information and publications are available from autismsa.org.au

WHAT IS **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?**

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can:

- Use clear and simple language;
- List events sequentially;
- Give one instruction at a time;
- Take time to listen and communicate;
- Warn of changes or transitions;
- Simplify the environment where possible;
- Offer a quiet space; and
- Provide access to sensory activities.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Autism SA has been providing services to young people across South Australia since 1964. Our founding members were families driven by the desire to ensure that they had access to the best information, education, treatment and support. We have remained true to our beginnings.

In all of our services we aim to establish great relationships, consistency in staff, expertise in the area of disability and specifically Autism Spectrum Disorder and evidence based and innovative practices.

If you would like more information on ASD or about our services contact 1300 AUTISM or www.autismsa.org.au



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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) IS A CONDITION THAT AFFECTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL ACROSS THEIR LIFE SPAN.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION, RESTRICTED INTERESTS AND BEHAVIOURS AND SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFERENCES ARE THE MAIN AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT AFFECTED.

THE TERM 'SPECTRUM' IS USED TO INDICATE THAT NO TWO PEOPLE WITH ASD ARE THE SAME. THE DIFFERENCES DEPEND ON THE COMBINATIONS OF SOCIAL ABILITY, COMMUNICATION LEVEL, COGNITIVE ABILITY (IQ), AGE, PERSONALITY AND MANY OTHER FACTORS.

THAT IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION IS INDIVIDUALISED TO ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES AND GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WHAT CAUSES ASD?

The cause is unknown at present but it is generally accepted that it is caused by variations in brain structure or function. There is evidence to suggest that genetics plays an important role in the cause of ASD; it is likely to be multiple genes. Genes may create a "susceptibility" to developing ASD but researchers have not yet identified a single "trigger" that causes ASD to develop. There is no medical or genetic screening currently available.

HOW COMMON IS ASD?

ASD affects 1 in 100 individuals (Fernell and Gillberg, 2010) in Australia and more males than females. The male to female ratio is approximately 4:1 (Freitag, 2007, Abrahams and Geschwind, 2008).

DO ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD HAVE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?

Some individuals with ASD have an intellectual disability whilst some have average or above average intelligence. Often individuals with ASD show an uneven pattern of skills having areas of particular strength and other areas where support may be required.

HOW DO INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD COMMUNICATE?

Individuals with ASD vary greatly in their communication skills: Some individuals are highly articulate and effective communicators, often well above their chronological age; Some individuals may never develop language whilst others may only develop simple language skills; Some may not develop speech at all but may communicate with devices, signing, pictures or writing. Those who do communicate verbally may still have difficulties with the subtleties of language, such as tone of voice, knowing when to stop talking and adapting their language to suit their audience.

HOW DOES ASD AFFECT A PERSON DURING THEIR LIFE?

ASD is a lifelong condition. Most individuals will require varying degrees of support throughout their lives. The supports are unique to the needs and age of the individual. Such supports work on the areas that can best support the person to fulfil and maximise their potential.

Using evidence based interventions and supports are important to ensure the success of the programs as these interventions have been researched and have shown positive outcomes. Fact sheet: Autism and Evidence Based Practice www.autismsa.org.au/factsheets explains the evidence based approach.