Mental Health and Learning Disabilities

Autism Spectrum Disorder
What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder.

Most people with Autism also have a Learning disability.

A person with autism can have difficulty in the following:

1. Social interaction
2. Communication
3. Having fixed and repetitive behaviours

Asperger’s Syndrome is a type of Autism in which people have normal or even high intelligence. They Do not have language difficulties.

Difficulties in social interactions include:

- Prefer to spend time alone
- Find it difficult to understand other’s feelings
- Behaving in a strange manner in social situations
- Being unable to make or keep friendships
- Difficulty in understanding other people’s feelings and thoughts
- Poor eye contact
## Autism

### Difficulties in Communication:
- Little use of language
- Speaking in the same tone
- Being unable to understand the meanings of gestures and facial expressions
- Difficulty in understanding jokes
- Mixing up of the words ‘you’ and ‘I’
- Repeating what other people have said

### Repetitive and restricted activities or interests:
- Repeating certain actions or movements such as flapping hands, twirling on toes.
- Being obsessed with a particular topic or object
- Having fixed routines
- Getting upset when the routines are changed

### Other features include:
- Being very sensitive to certain sounds, smells or textures
- Lack of imaginative play
- Being unable to understand other’s thoughts, feelings and actions
What causes Autism?

The exact cause is not known as yet.

It can be associated with several factors.

There is a higher possibility of a person having Autism if their family member also has this condition.

What is the Treatment?

Although there is no known cure, help is available.

Knowing about Autism helps. Educating family and carers about Autism is extremely important.

Various people can help:

Occupational Therapists can help by teaching skills and suggesting day activities.

Social workers can help to find an appropriate place to live.

Speech and language therapists can help in improving communication.

Specialist nurses can help in managing difficult behaviours.

Psychiatrist can help if there are any mental health problems.
# Help and support

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