

Contact Cambian referrals team here:  0161 507 3723  ccs.referrals@cambiangroup.com

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong condition in which the brain works differently to others. It affects how a person makes sense of the world around them and communicates and interacts with others. It is often referred to as a 'hidden disability' as it is not always apparent to others.

Autistic people have a range of strong skills and other things they may struggle with. Being Autistic does not mean they won't have a good life, it just means that they may need help in some areas. It is not clear what causes Autism, but often it can affect people in the same family. Everyone is different and Autism is no exception, however it can be better understood through the Triad of Impairment.



Interaction Social differences may mean poor social timing, lack of empathy, rejection of body contact and off-set eye contact.



Communication Speech, vocal tone, gesture, expression and body language may be impaired, making it harder to present one's self.



Imagination Rigid thought processes make Autistic people resistant to change and often present special interests and ritualistic behaviour.

Autism may also present sensory differences, developing an increased or decreased sensitivity to touch, sights, smells, tastes and sounds. Most importantly, Autism varies from person to person and the requirement of need will range individually.

What Causes Autism?

It is not known whether Autism has a cause, it's widely speculated to originate from birth but may not present itself immediately. It is often considered to have hereditary connections; that being, it is passed on through genetics.

There is on-going research into many different potential causes of Autism surrounding brain defects, dietary allergies and more. What we do know is that Autism is not caused by bad parenting or vaccinations; which are two common misconceptions. Research also suggests that there is no singular cause of Autism and it is likely due to a combination of factors, which is why Autism is so diverse.

Is There a Cure for Autism?

There is no cure for Autism, it is a lifelong condition. There are however, many different methods of helping those with the condition to live a good life.

There is also a growing community for celebrating the diversity that Autism brings and treating it as being individual, rather than a debilitating condition.

Language and communication

People with autism can have difficulty understanding the meaning of words and the intention of the speaker; they may take things literally and are not able to interpret gestures, intonation, facial expressions or body language. Many children may have delayed speech and some may not develop speech at all and will need other communication aids e.g. pictures, photos, gestures etc. Maintaining consistent eye contact can also be difficult for them.

Hyper / Hypo Sensory Sensitivity

Autism may present in signs of increased or decreased physical sensitivity. You may have heard of 'Autism Friendly' environments, which are areas of reduced sensory stimulants. They exist because Autistic people can feel very uncomfortable in places with bright lights, loud noises and other things that people without the condition might not even notice. These sensory differences can also make interpretation of surroundings more difficult, reducing perception of safety.

Fixed Routine

People with Autism tend to prefer structure and routine. This is caused by the way they process thoughts, and manipulate those into creative ideas. Preferring patterns in life, they may get upset if things change from what they're used to. Body rocking and other repetitive movement is also common. People with Autism can be creative, but the way they play may differ. For example, they may play alongside friends but not necessarily with their friends directly. Autistic people may also not understand the dangers of certain activities.

Social Skills

As a spectrum disorder, its effects are different in everyone. Those with the condition often struggle with their interpretation of social situations. They find reading emotion, thoughts and intention difficult within themselves and others. This may appear as a lack of empathy, but it is more than likely they simply don't have the ability to perceive others' emotions. Some of those with the condition may not enjoy the company of others, whilst there are those who want to develop relationships, but struggle to do so. Cambian services aid in developing their understanding and behaviours in social situations.

Some Key Things to Remember:



- Autism isn't incorrect in anyway, it's just different to those without the condition and what they may be used to.
- Having Autism doesn't mean they can't live a healthy and active life, it just means they might need some help with understanding things along the way.
- Those with the condition understand things differently. When giving instruction, keep chat to a minimum, speak clearly, concisely and give them time to process what's been said.
- Not all behaviour can be attributed to Autism, and those with the condition are just as likely as those without it to have other disabilities.
- The understanding of Autism is always developing and improving inclusivity of those with the condition in everyday society.

Website resources:

NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/> is a well-rounded NHS resource with a plethora of easily understood information on Autism.

Autism Education Trust

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk AET is dedicated to coordinating and improving education support for all children on the autism spectrum in England. Downloadable resources and toolkits for education staff.

Autism.com

www.autism.com the website of the Autism Research Institute in US which contains lots on information for families and individual.

Days Out

www.daysout.com a one stop directory for great family days out – attractions which have good facilities and access for visitors with disabilities and special needs have a specific identifying symbol.

NAS Surrey Branch

<http://www.nassurreybranch.org/home.html> is the website of The NAS (Surrey Branch), an excellent site with lots of up to date information, news, and resources wherever you are in the country.

Further Resources and Contacts:

The National Autistic Society

The largest autism charity in the UK can help with local support groups; information on autism for individuals, parents, professionals; befriending; training; links and much more.

Website: www.autism.org.uk

Helpline: **0808 800 4104 (Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm)**

Supporter Care Team: **0808 800 1050**

BIBIC (British Institute for Brain Injured Children)

They help children with conditions affecting their social, communication and learning abilities. There is a National Assessment Centre in Somerset, a team of Lottery-funded Outreach Therapists working closely with families in their own homes across the UK.

Website: www.bibic.org.uk

Email: info@bibic.org.uk

Tel: **01458 253344**

Cerebra

For parents of children with brain injuries and neurological problems including Asperger syndrome and autism. Has a helpline, regional Parent Support workers, telephone counselling service, sleep service, DLA Guides, grants scheme, speech and language therapy voucher scheme, holiday home and more.

Website: www.cerebra.org.uk

Email: enquires@cerebra.org.uk

Parent Support Helpline: **01267 244 200**

Contact a Family

UK wide advice on all aspects of caring for a child with any special need, disability or rare disorder; national SEN help line; downloadable fact sheets and publications; Connected magazine; local support groups and parent reps; campaigns and research etc.

Website: www.cafamily.org.uk

There are many different contact options; have a browse and see what fits your circumstances.

The Disabilities Trust

Provides a range of specialist education services, housing and support for children and adults with autism; also has an

Autism Awareness website – a meeting point for people concerned with autism.

Website: www.disabilities-trust.org.uk and www.autism-awareness.org.uk