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The Neurodiversity Lecture Series



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Lecture #1

An introduction to autism

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History of Autism

The word autism comes from the Greek word autos – meaning self.

In 1911 a psychiatrist by the name of Eugen Bleuler coined the terms autism and autistic to describe an aspect of schizophrenia in which a person withdraws from the outside world into himself.



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In 1943 Leo Kanner, a psychiatrist, used the term 'autistic' in his publication describing eleven children with characteristics similar to how we define autism today.

In 1964 a psychologist named Bernard Rimland published a book that insisted that autism was a biological disorder, not an emotional illness caused by unfeeling parents.

1943

1944

1964

In 1944 Hans Asperger, Austrian pediatrician, used the term autistic to describe four boys with characteristics of what was referred to as Asperger Syndrome.



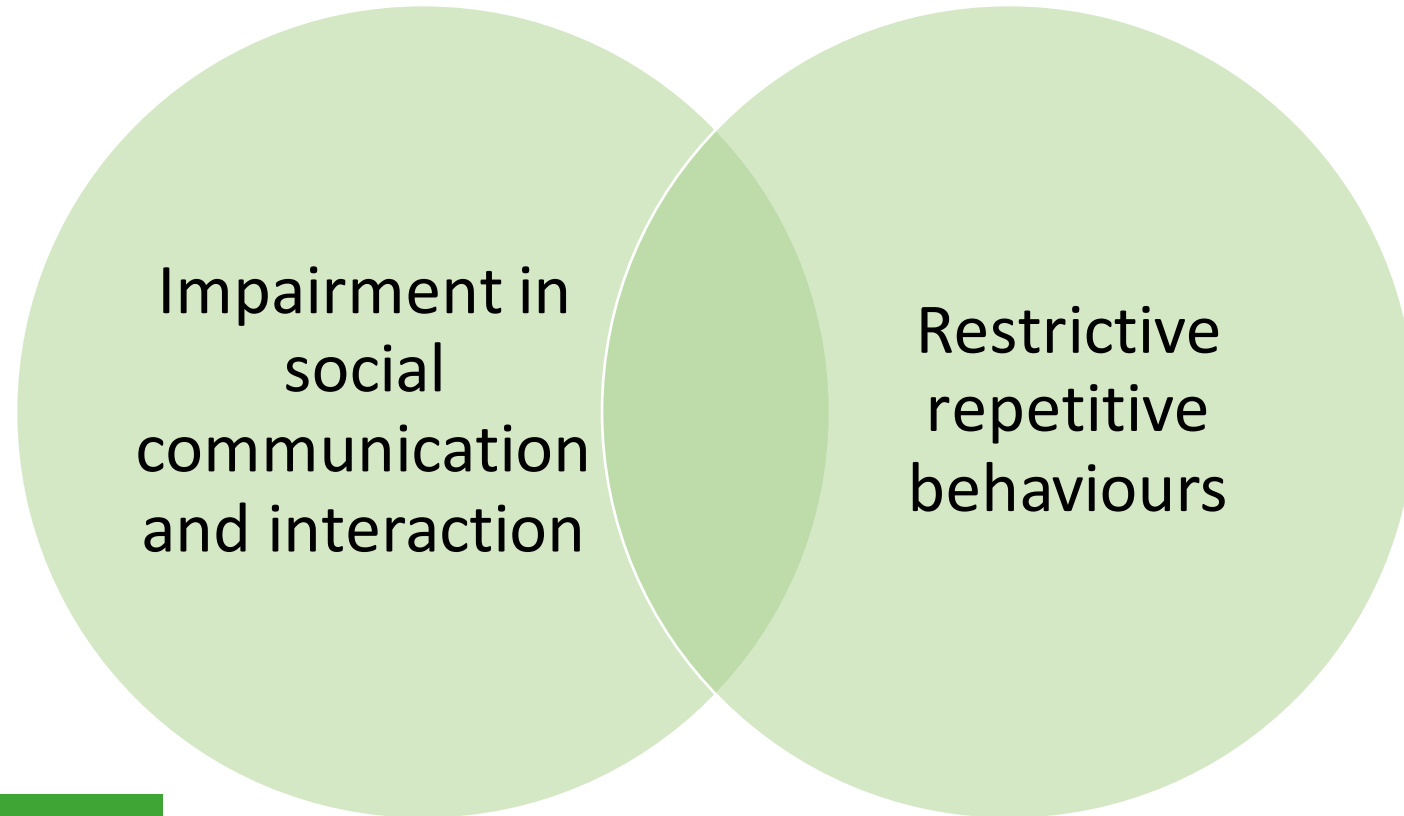
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Dyad of Impairment - DSM-V



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Theories

Theory of Mind

Central Coherence

Executive Functioning



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Impairments in social imagination

Autistic people experience social imagination differences. The way this affects a person can vary, and can include difference in the use and understanding of:

- Problem solving
- Relating to others
- Coping with change
- Planning
- Predicting events and reactions



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How this impacts on day to day life:

We rely on social imagination to help with problem solving, those with autism can find this more difficult.

Playing team games often relies on social imagination to predict how other people will interact in the game.

Autistic people may find it difficult to predict how others may be feeling or how they will react due to problems with social imagination.

Planning can be difficult without good social imagination.

Managing change can be difficult and harder for those without good social imagination. Those with autism normally prefer routines over unpredictability.



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How can we optimise the learning environment?

Structure

Prepare

Clarify

Instruct

Minimise distractions

Motivate

SALT areas of intervention

- Understanding emotion words
- Increasing ability to understand and interpret the world around them (social inferencing, gaining information, analysing)
- Understanding social world
- Strategies for self advocacy
- Friendships (building and maintaining, conversation skills, debating, negotiating, compromising.
- Functional communication (greeting, apologising, getting attention, asking for something you need etc).
- Understanding abstract language
- Time telling
- Language support: conjunctions, essay writing, grammar
- Speech/ dysfluency

Speech, language & communication needs

Taking Information in	Expressing yourself
<p>Attention and listening</p> <p>Interpreting tone of voice and facial expressions</p> <p>Remembering / Recalling spoken language/ information</p> <p>Understanding meanings of individual words</p> <p>Understanding what someone means in a situation</p>	<p>Choosing words</p> <p>Deciding what to say</p> <p>Talking and / or joining in on a conversation appropriately</p> <p>Speaking clearly</p>

Meeting these needs is vital for success at secondary school level for employability, academic achievement, mental health, behaviour, emotional development and social relations.



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Identifying the lagging skills

Executive skills: mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, juggle tasks, filter distractions, impulse control

Language processing and communication skills

Emotional regulation skills

Cognitive flexibility: ability to adapt routine, seek new experiences, think creatively, transfer learning

Social skills



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Communicating basic needs

Talking on the phone



Hello, its ____ here. How are you?
Can I speak to _____.

Listen to answer



Can you tell me....

I have a problem because....

I'm wondering if you could tell me...

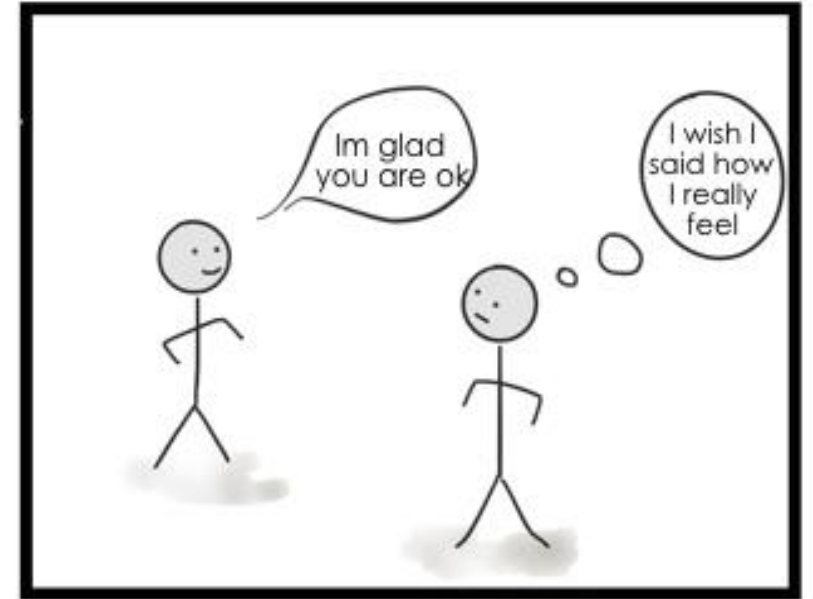
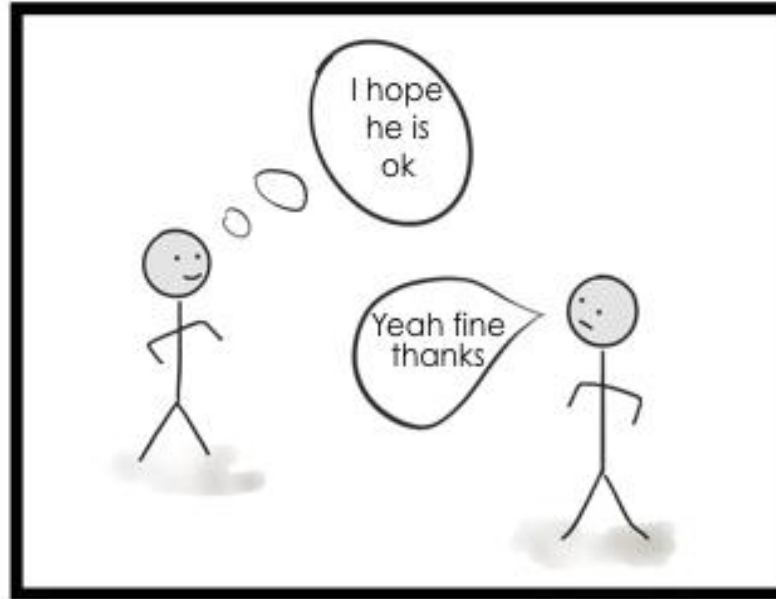
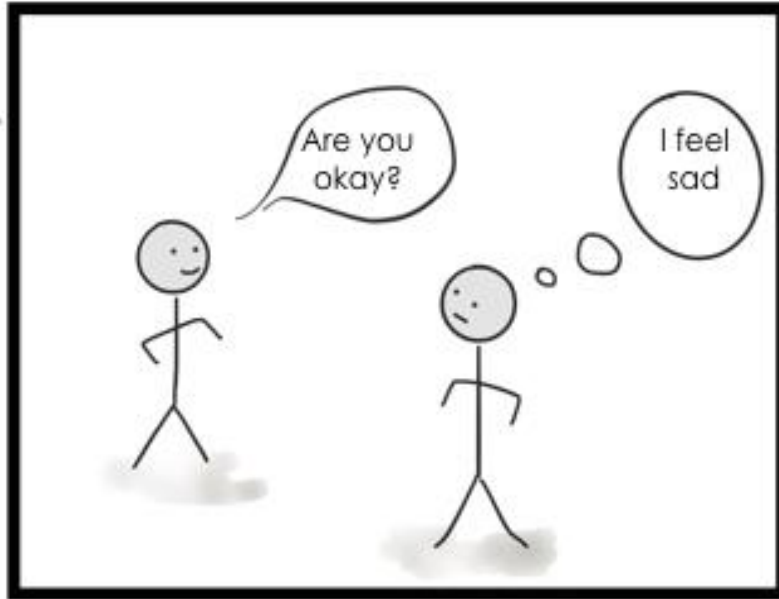
Listen to answer



Thank you for the call. Have a good day! Bye.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| What's the time? | Can I go get a drink please? | Can I have a snack please? | Can I leave the room please? |
| Can I go to the toilet? | Can I have a 5 minute break? | Can I have some help please? | Can I talk to you? |

Understanding social situations



What are Comic Strip Conversations?

A visual representation of a conversation – taking notes in picture form.

Firstly it is a tool for adults to LISTEN

This allows us to understand the student's perspective which is our starting point for the conversation.



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It is also a learning tool for students which helps with:






- Working out other people's thoughts and feelings
- Thinking about cause and effect
- Remembering or working out the sequence of events
- Linking feelings with actions
- Thinking about a different way of doing things next time
- Thinking of ways to repair a situation

OT areas of intervention

- Emotional regulation
- Sensory circuits
- Understanding their own sensory needs and putting in strategies to support
- Anxiety management (breathing, problem jars, understanding their anxieties, breaking down the problem)
- Activities of daily living (dressing, making food, self care etc)
- Fine motor/ gross motor
- Problem solving
- Functional academic skills- handwriting, touch typing
- Community work (money skills, out in the community, road safety) etc.

Emotional Regulation:

Zones of Regulation

				
<p>WHITE ZONE Concentrating Thinking Neutral Content Okay</p>	<p>BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Grumpy Disappointed Lonely Day-dreaming Demotivated Shy Embarrassed</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE Calm Focussed Grateful Pleased Relieved Proud Motivated Confident Optimistic</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE Excited Surprised Brave Waiting Jealous Frustrated Worried Disgusted Confused Irritated Distracted</p>	<p>RED ZONE Angry Terrified Outraged Guttled Guilty Out of control Over the moon Overjoyed</p>



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Emotional regulation:

Sensory circuits helps children achieve a “ready to learn” state. Are a series of activities designed specifically to wake up all the senses. They are a great way to energise or settle children into the day.

Each session includes:

- **alerting activities** (e.g. spinning, bouncing on a gym ball to stimulate the body's central nervous system in preparation for learning)
- **organising activities** (e.g. balancing on a wobble board, log rolling which demand brain and body to work together)
- **calming activities** (heavy muscle work and deep pressure e.g. wall pushes, push ups,) to give an awareness of their body in space and increases the ability to self-regulate sensory input.



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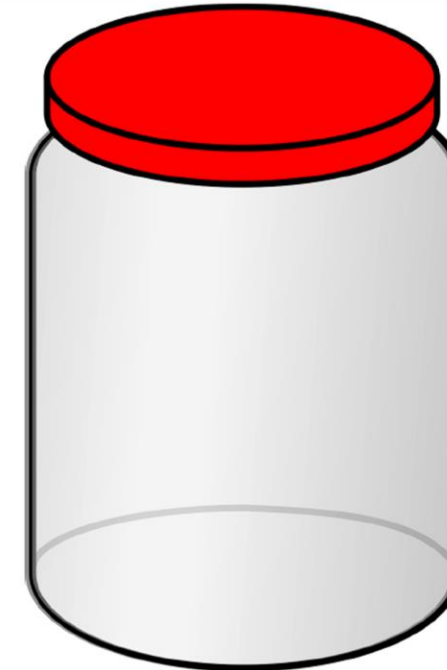
Anxiety management

What is the size of my problem?

5	Emergency You need help from an adult, e.g. hospital, fire	
4	Gigantic Problem You can change with a lot of help e.g. hitting, punching, breaking things, bullying, getting lost	
3	Big Problem You can change with some help e.g. someone being mean to you, help calming down, minor accident	
2	Medium Problem You can change with a little bit of help e.g. feeling sick, hungry, something bothering you, afraid, need help	
1	Little Problem Need a reminder e.g. not winning a game, not taking turns, making a mess	
0	Glitch You can fix yourself. e.g. forgetting something, dropping something	

My Worry Jar

Add your worries and distracting thoughts to the Jar to help clear your mind.



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Problem solving

Who will know how to fix the problem?



What can we say to fix the problem??



What can we do to fix the problem?



Why should we fix the problem??



When can we fix the problem?



Where can we fix the problem?



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Other Functional skills

- Shoe laces
- Knowing right/ left
- Knowing the alphabet
- Making a cup of tea
- Making a sandwich
- Filling out forms
- Talking to the doctor

Going to see the nurse

1 Name _____
Date and time _____

2 How much does it hurt?

No Hurt Hurts Little Bit Hurts Little More Hurts Even More Hurts Whole Lot Hurts Worse

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 Where does it hurt?

head arm chest
back leg

Orders

Name (initial)	Tea	Coffee	Hot choc	Strength (W,M,S)	Milk	Sugar

“Our students access a structured environment and high levels of targeted intervention and differentiation throughout the school day”

Student



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Learning without limits

Learn · Grow · Achieve



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Thank you



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