**Autism**

**Summary**

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity.

Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people also have learning disabilities, mental health issues or other conditions, which means that individual people will need different levels of support. All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing.

**Symptoms**

Some autistic people say the world feels overwhelming and this can cause them considerable anxiety. In particular, understanding and relating to other people, and taking part in everyday family, school, work and social life, can be harder. Other people appear to know, intuitively, how to communicate and interact with each other, yet can also struggle to build rapport with autistic people. Autistic people may wonder why they are 'different' and feel their social differences mean people don't understand them. Autistic people often do not 'look' disabled. Some parents of autistic children say that other people simply think their child is naughty, while adults find that they are misunderstood.

Strategies

* REPETITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND ROUTINES (keeping to a routine)
* HIGHLY-FOCUSED INTERESTS (trains, art, computers, music etc – can be used to engage)
* PREPARATION FOR CHANGE (If changes in routine are likely, prepare student early)
* SENSORY SENSITIVITY (Colours, light, temperature, noise etc need to be managed)

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>