

AS and Further Education.

Many people with AS can benefit greatly from post-secondary education, especially in their area of special interest.

Unfortunately a high proportion of individuals who make a promising start in further education do not go on to complete their courses due to the nature of the social learning difficulties they experience.

An awareness on the part of education providers of the factors already listed, combined with an understanding of specific education related issues will make it easier for individuals to do so:

Individuals with AS may:

- ✓ Find social communication and interaction difficult.
- ✓ Be reluctant to ask for help due to a fear of being misunderstood
- ✓ Experience anxiety around a number of social situations and academic expectations
- ✓ Be unaware of how to go about speaking to staff members about issues they are facing
- ✓ Find group work or projects where they have to negotiate and communicate difficult
- ✓ Have a difficulty with time management

People with AS can benefit greatly from:

1. Linking in with the access services and or counselling services where available.
2. Making education providers aware of AS and the effects it will have on them as students.
3. Linking in with an advocate to work with them and where necessary to liaise with staff with them and / or on their behalf.

Useful Websites

For people interested in finding out more about AS we would recommend:

www.aspergersupport.ie
www.aspire-irl.org
www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger
www.nas.org.uk

www.citizensinformation.ie - Information on Rights and Entitlements

Asperger Syndrome Advocacy Service

The Asperger Syndrome Advocacy Service was set up in partnership with EVE Ltd and the Citizens Information Board to provide an independent advocacy service to individuals with Asperger Syndrome.

EVE Ltd Tuiscint

Eve Ltd Tuiscint is a part of Eastern Vocational Enterprises (EVE) Limited and operates as a rehabilitative and training day service for adults with Asperger Syndrome.

Contact Details

You can find more information from the service online at: www.aspergersupport.ie

For further information please feel free to contact us at:

Asperger Syndrome Advocacy Service
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An Introduction to Asperger Syndrome

Produced by:

Asperger Syndrome Advocacy Service



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The Opportunity Network



What is Asperger Syndrome?

Asperger Syndrome, or "AS" for short, is a condition which results in differences in the way information is processed due apparently to differences in the brain. This results in social and communication difficulties paired with rigid and concrete thinking patterns and a limited range of interests. It shares some of the same characteristics as Autism though there are qualitative differences with AS being referred to as being at the "high" or "mild" end of the autistic spectrum. AS was only confirmed as a distinct Autistic Spectrum condition in the early 1990's so we are still learning how it affects children and adults. The purpose of this leaflet is to give a general understanding of Asperger Syndrome as we know it.

AS and how it Affects People

Firstly it is important to point out that AS is **NOT** a disease, health problem or something to be cured. It is a life long condition that people are born with and has usually been inherited. With good supports, undesirable effects can be reduced. People with AS can lead successful lives, attend mainstream schools and have successful careers.

Having AS does not mean that a person is any less intelligent than the next person. In fact, to receive a diagnosis of AS, you cannot have an intellectual disability. Studies have shown that some people with AS have above average abilities in specific areas and may in fact truly excel in certain disciplines. Most, however, are in the average range of intelligence, though could struggle in some school subjects, particularly handwriting.

By definition, AS is a social learning difficulty that usually affects the way people relate to others, how they interact, communicate, cope with stress, and how they interpret social situations. AS is sometimes referred to as "social dyslexia". People with AS may be single minded, have trouble making or keeping friends, and have one intense special interest.

An understanding of the condition on the part of education providers and employers can greatly improve an individual with AS's chances of living a happy and successful life.

People with AS will experience difficulties in the following areas to varying degrees:

Social Interaction

People with AS may seem exceptionally quiet and/or be seen as loners and self-focused, or alternatively, be overly eager in imposing themselves on others and may have a difficulty with sharing, turn-taking or having an interest in the other's preferences. Sometimes people with AS can appear socially inappropriate and/or naive.

Communication

Individuals can have unusual language characteristics, e.g. be overly perfect or formal, have an unusual tone of voice, interpret things literally, and have problems understanding subtle non-verbal communication cues. Some people with AS benefit from visual or written back ups and prompts to improve their understanding of what's said to and expected from them. They may also have clumsy or awkward body language, limited use of facial expressions, a deferred or stiff gaze, and limited use of gestures.

Imagination

Individuals may be very rigid thinkers and rely a lot on 'sameness' and routines. Change can sometimes cause them distress. Individuals with AS may have problems grasping concepts that are not very black and white.

AS and Employment

People with AS have many skills and expertise on offer and can make excellent employees.

Before finding the right job, the individual with AS will benefit from a detailed assessment of strengths, interests, talents, abilities, and needs. Good career guidance with an advisor who has knowledge of Asperger Syndrome is essential.

For further careers information please feel free to contact us.

If you are an employer interested in reaping the benefits of employing someone with AS, please feel free to contact us for information and support.

Some of the advantages an individual with AS could bring to the workplace include:

- ✓ Dependability
- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Specialist Knowledge
- ✓ Often a good mind for figures and memory for detail
- ✓ Strong concentration around repetitive tasks
- ✓ Logical thinkers