

ASPERGERS SYNDROME AND THE AUTISM SPECTRUM IN THE CLASSROOM

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Main issues that decrease the amount of work produced

- Distraction
- Inattention
- Lack of motor skills
- Inconsistent language processing
- Tunnel vision
- Poor ability to generalise
- Poor abstract reasoning – difficulty estimating
- Have to see the reason behind a task
- Need logical explanations



Cont'd

- Difficulty with word problems
- Cannot see what information is relevant
- Dislike of revision
- Cannot make inferences
- Have information but cannot get it down onto paper
- Dependent on task presentation
- Competitive
- Refusal to ask for help
- Attention to detail and not the context

Main issues that affect the child's behaviour in the classroom

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Mental and physical exhaustion
- Need to correct others mistakes
- Cannot see another person's perspective
- Look purely at the “act” rather than the “intention” behind the act
- Immaturity
- Impulsivity



Cont'd

- Cannot tell who comments are being made to
- Strong sense of fairness and moral code (they can break the rules however)
- No understanding of the consequences of behaviour



Anxiety

- Generalised anxiety
 - Difficulty realising that it may be many things that are making them anxious rather than just one thing
 - Can try to please
 - Try hard to be social
- Anxiety displayed as
 - Anger Need for control Sadness Withdrawal



cont'd

- Wake up on higher stress levels
- Cannot RECOGNISE, LABEL or place emotions to SITUATIONS
- More anxiety triggers that are not recognised by others or the person on the spectrum
- Try to contain the anxiety but lead to explosions either both at school and home or just at home



Cont'd

- Two process decrease whilst anxiety rises
 - Language processing
 - Express
 - Understand
 - Problem solve
 - Sensory filtering
 - Filter out extraneous information



What to do

- Changes, rules and transitions
- Mistakes and asking for help
- Breaks and activities
- Emotions
- After an event
- Social Development



● Rule Based

- Rules make sense to them
- They provide order and structure into a world that is confusion, chaotic and unpredictable
- Some children break the rules freely but comment on others breaking the rules
- Some children would never break a rule even if it is in their best interest to do so



What to do

- Build flexibility into rules
- Give clear, specific rules BEFORE an event
- State the behaviour you want rather than what you don't want
- Give explanations
- Act out rules
- Rule book
- Clear, firm boundaries
- Different rules for different situations
- Discuss what to do when rules are broken



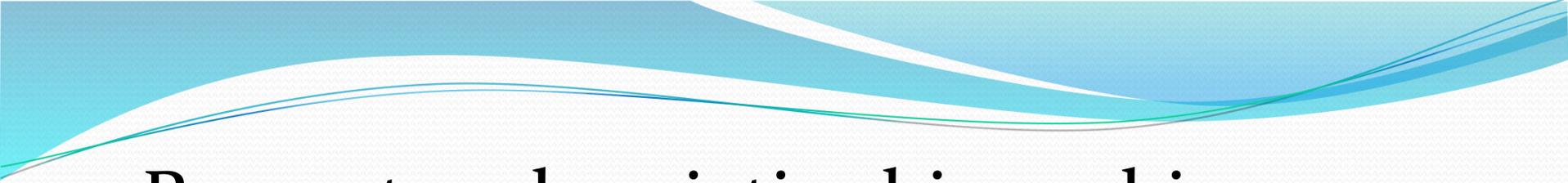
- **Mind Blind**

- People on the spectrum are “mind blind” or unable to “read” other people’s minds. This affects the persons
 - Social understanding
 - Behavioural prediction
 - Social interaction and communication
 - Ability to be empathetic by imagining what a situation would be like for another person



What to do

- Social stories
- Talk about how and why people do certain behaviours
- Realise that when they are discussing a neutral situation it will be easier than when discussing a situation in which they are involved
- Talk about how we guess about what other people think, feel and know
- How we use facial expressions, gestures and actions to work out how other people are feeling



- Respect and societies hierarchies

- Have to respect people in order to listen to them
- Believe they are equal to everyone in that there is no difference between adults and children etc
- Need to see logical, reasonable explanation behind tasks

What to do

- Talk about the hierarchy within the school
- Social stories

Mistakes

- View many situations in terms of “mistakes” and “not mistakes”
- Create defensive mechanisms to protect themselves
- What to do
 - Get them to give explanations rather than correct other people
 - General explanations
 - Model that making a mistake is “ok”

High expectations and focus on the negative

- Place high expectations on themselves and are very self-critical
- Focus on the negatives

This leads to higher anxiety