

>>> AUTISM : AN INTRODUCTION

Autism: Diagnosis [Autism Spectrum Disorder]

Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by persistent deficits in the ability to initiate and to sustain reciprocal social interaction and social communication
AND ...

By a range of restricted, repetitive, and inflexible patterns of behaviour and interests.

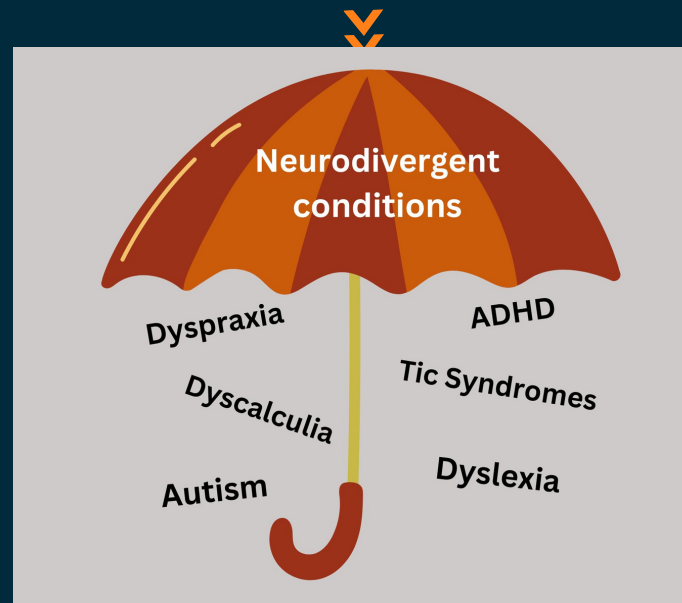
The onset of the disorder occurs during the developmental period, typically in early childhood,

Deficits are sufficiently severe to cause impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Autism is:

‘A difference in the way a person perceives, processes and understands the world, themselves and others’.

Part of the Neurodivergent Group of Conditions.



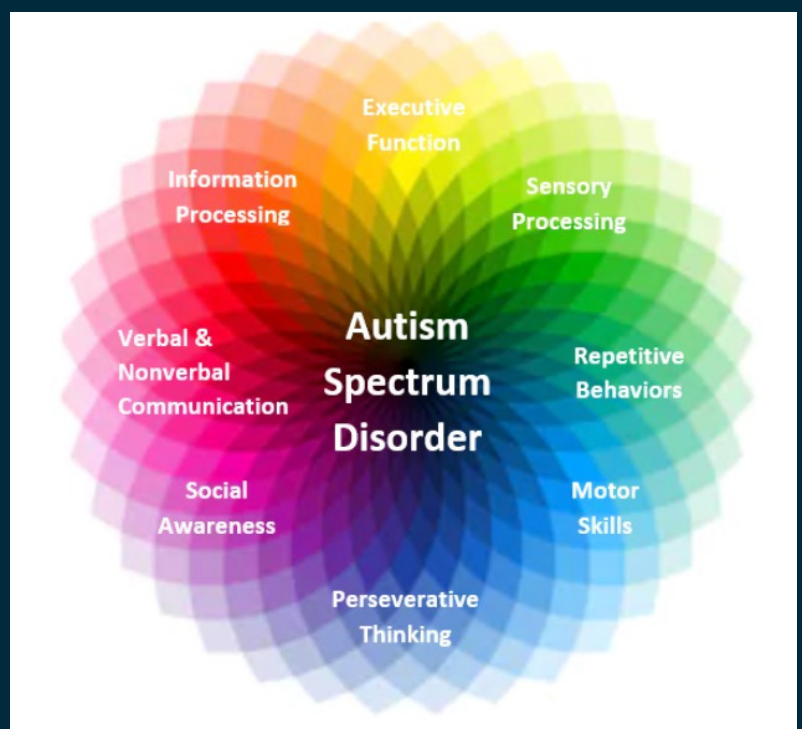
>>> Autism: The old myths:

- It's just wee boys that get that'
- 'He'll never get a job'
- 'The tantrums will be wild'
- 'Maybe he'll grow out' it'
- 'All that family are a bit odd'
- 'They never had that in my day'

Autism: The new myths

- 'They don't show empathy'
- 'No sense of humour'
- 'It's caused by vaccines'
- 'It's a posh white thing'
- 'They can't learn social skills'
- 'They prefers to be alone'
- 'They have special skills'
- 'Everyone is a little bit autistic'

AUTISM AS A SPECTRUM



THE AUTISTIC ADVANTAGE

Thinking advantages

- Strong long-term memory skills
- Maths, computer, musical, artistic skills
- Thinking in a visual way
- Detail orientated
- Intense focus
- Extensive knowledge from deep study of favourite topics

Communication advantages

- Direct communication
- Non-judgemental listening
- Independent thinking - less concerned about what others may think

Social advantages

- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Following the rules
- Logical thinking - helpful in making decisions



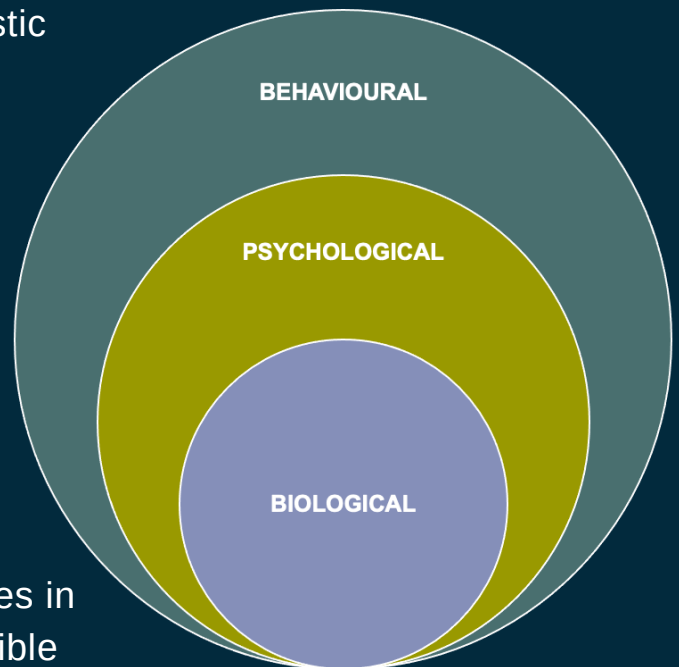
A MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING AN AUTISTIC PERSON

Biological: the differences in how the autistic brain works and processes information

Psychological: the theories behind autism e.g. differences can occur in:

- Theory of Mind
- Double Empathy Problem
- Central Coherence
- Executive Functioning
- Monotropism

Behavioural: the things we see (differences in social communication AND interaction, flexible thinking AND sensory processing)



7 Things to remember:

1. Avoid making assumptions
2. Understand needs, desires and ambitions
3. Be consistent and work together
4. Think differently
5. Expect success
6. And remember:

Masking is exhausting
Sensory sensitivities are powerful
Difference is expected and good



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