

Autism Spectrum Disorder



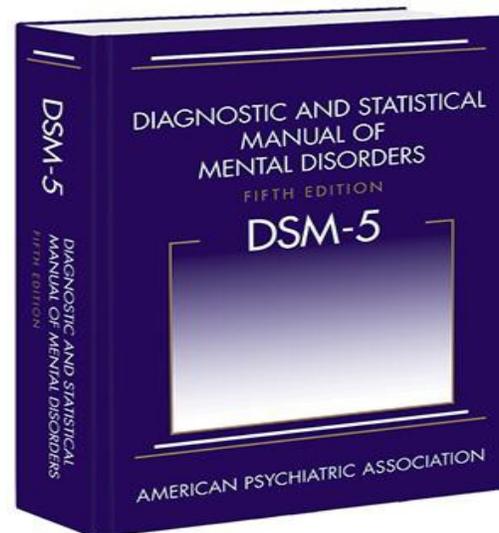
Autism Spectrum Disorder

ASD is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Children and adults with ASD may find it difficult to relate to other people, may show restrictive and/or repetitive patterns of behavior or body movements.



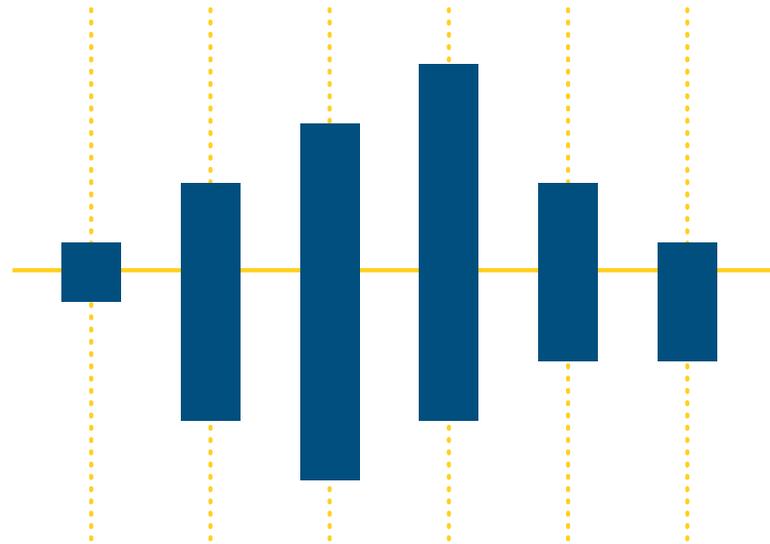
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual

Follow [this link](#) to the Autism Speaks website for more information



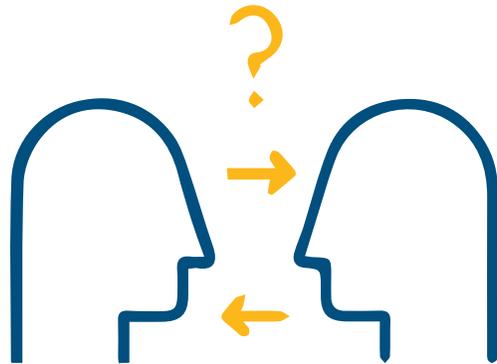
Spectrum

The term “spectrum” refers to having a wide range of symptoms, skills, levels of impairment or disability....



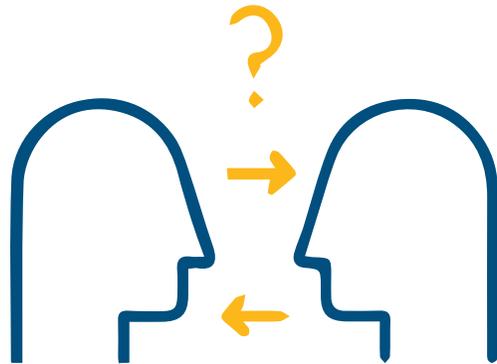
Social Interaction

- Difficulty using non-verbal behaviors such as facial expressions, body postures and gestures
- Difficulty forming relationships
- Difficulty seeking out others for the purpose of sharing or building on interests
- Difficulty establishing back-and-forth conversations



Communication

- Delay or lack of development of language
- Difficulty in maintaining a conversation
- Trouble with spontaneity in make-believe play or social imitative play



Behavior

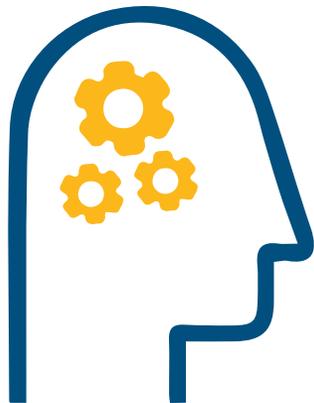
- Being preoccupied with an interest, intensity or focus is abnormal
- Being flexible and sticking to specific routines or rituals that may not be “purposeful”
- Repetitive motor movements-whole body movements
- Difficulty expressing their needs verbally, therefore sounds and actions are displayed
- Having trouble adapting when routine changes



Obsessions

“My mind was constantly whirring with thoughts, worries, and concerns. The time spent with my obsession was the only time in which I had a clear mind—it gave me that much sought-after relaxation.”

- Young Person with ASD



Repetitive Behavior

“I quickly became overwhelmed (in social situations). Is it surprising that I then feel like blocking the world out and literally putting my thoughts back in order? That I start to rock to tell myself which feelings are mine? That I start speaking to myself or groaning to block out other sounds and so that I know which thoughts are mine? I think anyone experiencing life this way would do the same.”

- Adult with ASD



Adults with Autism

Adults with autism develop obsessions for several reasons:

- Provides structure for the individual when faced with uncertainties of daily life
- Their obsession gives them an opportunity to start social interactions to talk about their interests
- Helps them feel relaxed and safe
- Personal enjoyment by learning about a particular subject/object



Adults with Autism

- Repetitive behaviors include rocking, spinning, head-banging
- Objects can be used as flicking a rubber band, twirling a piece of string
- Sensitivity to sounds, sights, smells, taste, and touch can affect a person's balance and awareness
- Some of the reasonings behind such behaviors is an attempt to gain sensory insight (stimulate balance) or reduce the input from such senses.
- Behaviors are often a response to stress or anxiety when uncertainty is common.



Routines and Resistance to Change

“Reality to an autistic person is a confusing, interacting mass of events, people, places, sounds and sights...Set routines, times, particular routes and rituals all help to get order into an unbearably chaotic life. Trying to keep everything the same reduces some of the terrible fear.”

-Jolliffe (1992) in Howlin (2004), p.137



Routines and Resistance to Change

Routines have a strong influence to help introduce order, structure, and predictability....which helps manage anxiety. Minor changes such as moving or big events like holidays can cause an increase in anxiety. Having a timetable enables individuals with autism the ability to know what is going on and how to manage daily outcomes.



Examples of Routines

- Changes with environment (layout of a room changes, introduction of a new staff/resident)
- Rigid preferences about things: foods (eating certain foods), clothing (wearing certain colors or fabrics), everyday objects (using specific types of soaps, using certain brands)
- Following daily routines, especially around meals and sleep times
- Verbal routines/rituals (repeatedly asking the same questions and looking for a specific response)
- Compulsive behaviors (washing hands repeatedly, checking locks frequently)



Change

Preparing for change for an individual with ASD can be difficult. A person with ASD thrives on being in a familiar environment and with those they can relate to. If there comes a time when routine is changed, providing a step by step process on what is going to happen, including the outcome in the end....the transition will be less overwhelming for the individual. Visual support can help them understand the process and provide a structure that supports comfort and safety. Change can occur in the most simplest forms, such as changing the menu or running out of milk for breakfast. Either way, the significance of these changes can cause anxiety and stress for the person with ASD.



Staff Skills and Training

When working with individuals diagnosed with ASD, staff/caregivers need to be aware of their surroundings and their reactions to situations involving a ASD client.



Staff Skills and Qualities

- Clear communication skills
- A sense of curiosity about ASD
- Emotional literacy
- Flexibility
- Knowledge of autism
- Patience
- Understanding
- Positive Outlook
- Sense of humor
- Ability to remain calm
- Understanding sensory needs
- Consistency of approach
- Good listening skills
- Adaptability



Resource Modules

Extinction:

https://www.autisminternetmodules.org/user_login.php

"Extinction as a procedure occurs when reinforcement of a previously reinforced behavior is discontinued; as a result, the frequency of that behavior decreases in the future."

- Cooper, Heron, & Heward (2007, p. 457)

Reinforcement



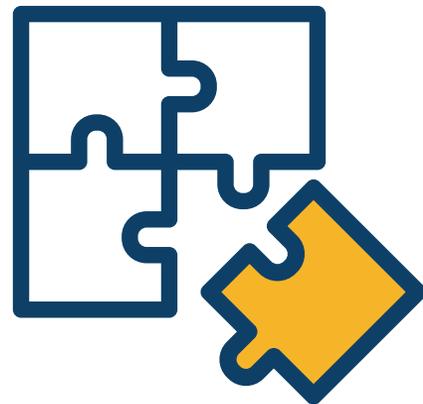
Extinction



What are the new criteria?

There are two domains where people with ASD must show persistent deficits:

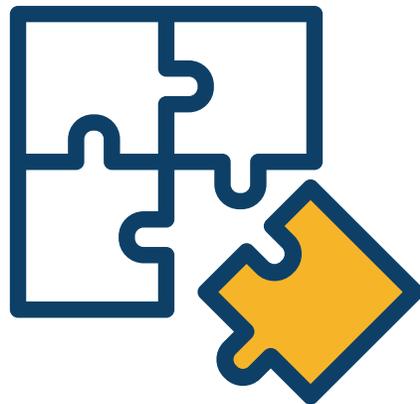
1. Persistent social communication and social interaction
2. Restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior



What are the new criteria?

People with ASD must demonstrate (either in the past or present) deficits in:

- Social-emotional reciprocity
- Nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- Developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships



What are the new criteria?

They must also show at least 2 types of repetitive patterns of behavior including:

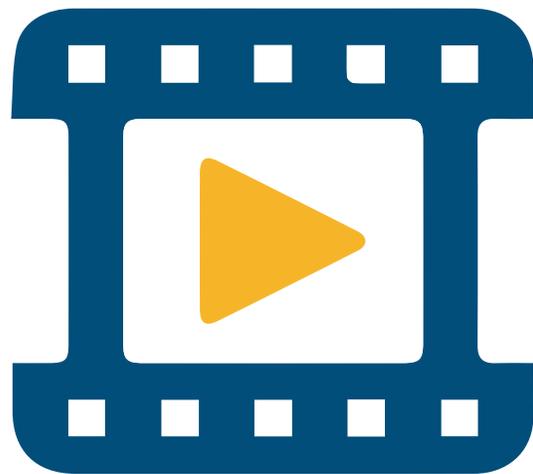
- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements
- Insistence on sameness or inflexible adherence to routines
- Highly restricted, fixated interests or hyper or hyporeactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment

Under the new DSM 5, clinicians should also rate the severity of these deficits, based on the level of support they require. (Autism Speaks)

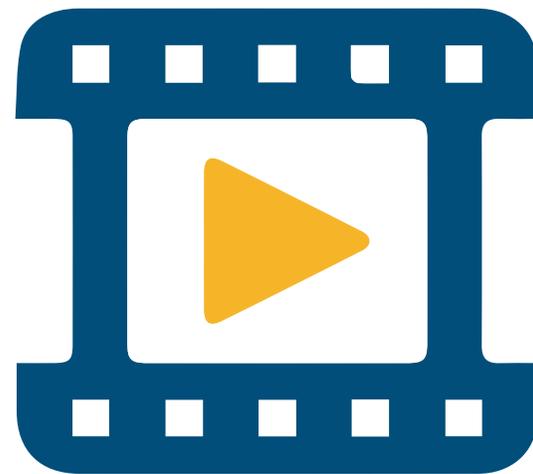


Videos

[Sensory Simulation](#)



[Playground Simulation](#)



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