



Autism Awareness

'Celebrating Difference'

Social Communication

People with autism may have difficulties with both verbal and non-verbal language. Many have a very literal understanding of language, think people always mean exactly what they say, or find it difficult to express themselves emotionally and socially. They can find it difficult to use or understand gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice.

They may:

- not speak, or have limited language.
- understand what others say to them but prefer to use alternative means of communication themselves, i.e. sign language or visual symbols.
- have good language skills but they find it hard to understand the give-and-take nature of conversations, perhaps repeating what the other person has just said (this is known as echolalia).
- use complex words and phrases, but may not use them in the correct context.
- have difficulty knowing when to start or end a conversation and choosing topics to talk about.



Social Communication

Ways to help a person with autism understand you:

- Provide a means to communicate in all situations.
- Keep your sentences short.
- Use language that is clear and precise.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Give time for processing instructions or comments.
- Use positive directive language.
- Present information visually.
- Attract attention—begin with the child's name then follow through with request/ information.