

# Module 7: Autism



<https://pixabay.com/photos/team-friendship-group-hands-4529717/>

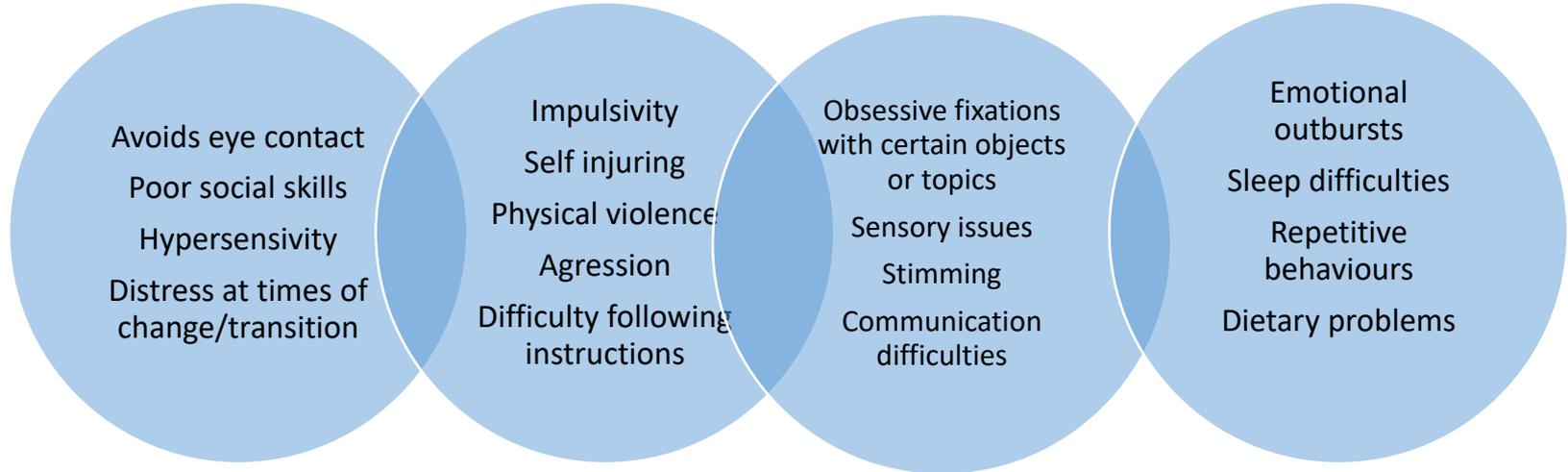
# Learning about Autism

Autism, or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a disorder which causes people to have difficulties with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication.

Some people with mild Autism may attend mainstream school with supports. Other individuals may be non-verbal and could need a lot of extra support with care needs and may attend schools for children with additional needs.

People living with Autism who are verbal, may interpret information quite literally. This means that sarcasm, non-verbal cues and facial expressions may not be easy for them to understand. The individual may speak in a monotone voice, speak very fast or very slow and may struggle to recognise when people they are communicating with are expressing emotions

# What are the effects of autism on the individual?



# Autism Symptoms and Behaviours to Expect

## Sensory issues

Sensory issues are concerned with sights, sounds, touch, smell and taste.

The person living with Autism may become overwhelmed and distressed by some senses.

Click each sense below for more information:

[Sight](#)   [Sound](#)   [Taste](#)   [Smell](#)   [Touch](#)



# Stimming

When the person you provide care to is overstimulated or finds themselves feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed, they may use stimming behaviours.

Stimming (or self-stimulating behaviours) include but are not limited to:

Rocking

Hand  
flapping

Clicking  
fingers

Pacing back  
and forth

Repeating  
words or  
phrases

# Aggressive/Violent Outbursts

People living with Autism may display aggression or violent outbursts as they may not have the ability to communicate their needs.

This can be extremely challenging for the caregiver.

Caregivers may need to protect themselves and other family members from physical violence. Such behaviours also affect the emotional and mental well-being of the caregiver and other family members.



Image credit: [https://www.pngsee.com/download/hxoJTJh\\_angry-emotion-feeling-frustrated-frustrating-pulling-angry-woman/](https://www.pngsee.com/download/hxoJTJh_angry-emotion-feeling-frustrated-frustrating-pulling-angry-woman/)

# Concerns

The safety of the person with Autism can be of major concern for caregivers.

Depending on the severity of the condition, the individual may not understand danger or be aware of how to prevent injury to themselves.

Safety concerns in the home

Safety concerns outside of the home



# Coping with change



A person with Autism may find transitions or changes difficult to process.

This means that if the person has to move from one place to another, or needs to adjust to a new experience, it may be very distressing for them.

A change in routine, for instance, such as a last minute doctor's appointment, or an activity being cancelled can cause the person with Autism to become upset or unable to cope with the change.

# Social exclusion

People living with Autism have difficulties with communication. This can lead to challenges in making friends and keeping friendships.

**What are the challenges for a person with Autism communicating?**

Stimming (self-stimulating behaviour) such as rocking, hand flapping, clicking fingers or jumping are a way the person with Autism feels safe in a place or situation that they are uncomfortable with. However stimming actions are repetitive and can sometimes cause other people to avoid the person with Autism as they see stimming as unusual.

# Strategies for the Individual

Responding to aggressive/violent outbursts

Spend time with the person to try to work out what they are trying to communicate when they are displaying aggression.

They may be feeling overwhelmed in relation to sensory issues.

Looking back on times of violence and aggression may help you as the caregiver to understand the cause of the outburst and try to help the person to have their needs met if this happens again.

# Safety

Safety planning can help caregivers to support the person with Autism to cope when a dangerous situation occurs. Click below for ideas on how to keep the person you provide care to safer:

# Social Inclusion

- By connecting with other caregivers through services you attend with your loved one, attending support groups or chatting online, you can create social opportunities for the person you care for.
- Other caregivers of people with Autism will be happy to arrange social activities and outings where the people you care for can spend time with one another.
- Every opportunity to interact and socialise is a step toward more opportunities!

# Transitions and changes

- ✓ When changes happen that are unplanned, caregivers need to try to support the person with Autism through this distressing time.
- ✓ Preparing the person you care for of possible changes which may affect them may help to make the change easier for them.
- ✓ Talking to the person about changes at home such as moving bedrooms, or rearranging furniture can be helpful.



# Do you want to learn more?

Our interactive Resource Pack will give you information about

- concerns that you as caregiver might have
- what can be done
- useful tips how to handle the burden of care
- how to avoid stress and burnout
- how to deal with your emotions
- acceptance of the disorder
- and more!

You will also find exercises and activities for YOU and for the care receiver!



**More information is available in the  
Resource Pack:**

[https://developfc.csicy.com/?page\\_id=11708](https://developfc.csicy.com/?page_id=11708)