



# AUTISM

A short guide

# “What is Autism”?

One person in 100 has Autism.

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition.

Autism affects how a person communicates and relates to others.

Autism affects everyone d56hee.58540 reiy

# Some Characteristics of Autistic People

Appear to be over-compliant.

Avoids eye contact/over eye contact.

Behaves unusually.

Inappropriate behaviour.

Unpredictable.

Unusually irritable, agitated and anxious.

May seem scared of you.

Struggles to understand you.

Repeats what you say.

Honest and blunt.

Repetitive behaviour.

Obsessive.

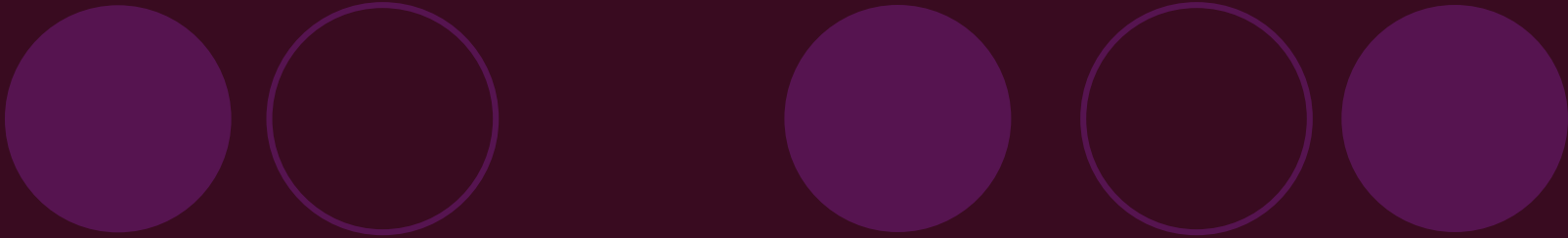
Vague or inattentive.

Space intrusion.

# Some Characteristics of Autistic People

Unable to read body language/voice.



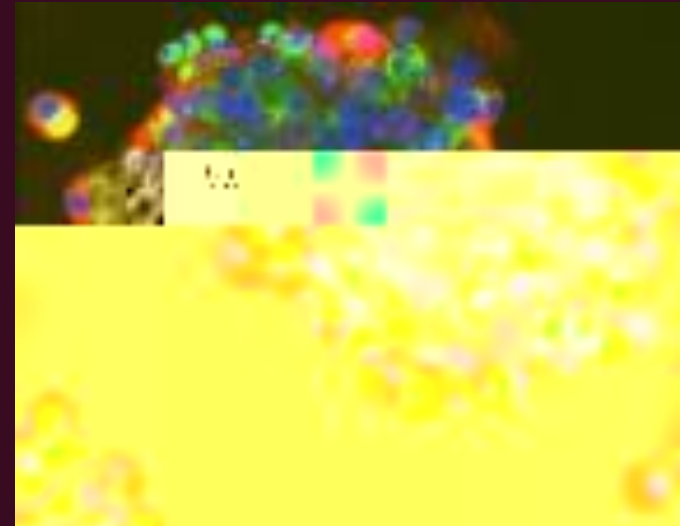


Autistic people coming into contact with the Criminal Justice System can be Victims, Witnesses, Suspects or Offenders.

Good strategies are needed to help the individual understand and communicate.

Making 999 calls or giving statements could be difficult for them.

Could be coerced to commit offences by others.





# Strategies



Involve parents/carers who know the person well where possible.

An informed approach, may not understand or recognise a police officer by uniform or vehicle

Behaviour/speech may change so expect this to happen.

Do not try to stop them doing what they are doing, e.g. pacing up and down this may calm them down.

If they have an object they may need that for comfort like a comfort blanket or key or something similar.



# Strategies continued:-

Turn off any unusual things e.g. flashing lights/alarms – sensitive to noise and light.

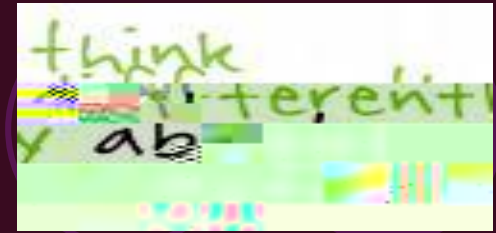
Try to avoid touching wherever possible – fearful of crowds.

Check they have no injuries by observation if possible rather than touching.

Visual aids work better e.g. photos/writing/videos for evidence.

Tell them exactly what is happening and what will happen .

# Strategies continued:-



Don't shout – talk calmly.

If in custody a Doctor must authorise that the person is fit to be interviewed. Always consider support of a professional such as a Social Worker who has an understanding of their disability.

Family should be consulted and informed.

Use short sentences and instructions.

Allow time for responses and be patient.

Reinforce things. e.g. when you say yes nod as well.

Say their name at the beginning of sentences.

Don't use sayings, or metaphors etc.

# Strategies continued:-

Don't put words in their mouth ask clear questions and wait for answers.

They may repeat the question back to you, check you asked it clearly.

They may have a card or something similar they show you to recognise they are autistic.

You may need to meet several times to gather information – ask the people involved in the family where possible e.g. psychiatrist, parent.

Consider contacting Social Services to get help from someone with Autism specialism.

Interview people in surroundings they know.



For Help

Contact The National Autistic Society

0845 070 4004

[nas@org.uk](mailto:nas@org.uk)

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

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