

SYMPTOMS/BEHAVIOURS

- Adult-like pattern of intellectual functioning and interests combined with social and communication deficits
- Isolation from peers
- Rote memory is generally good and the student may excel in math and science
- Clumsy or awkward gait
- Difficulty with physical activity and sports
- Repetitive pattern of behaviour
- Preoccupations with one or two subjects or activities
- Under/over sensitivity to stimuli such as noise, light or unexpected touch
- Victims of teasing and bullying

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Many youth with Asperger's Syndrome have difficulty forming age appropriate relationships, displaying empathy, and understanding social interaction such as non-verbal gestures. When confronted with change to routine, they may show visible anxiety, withdraw into silence or burst into a fit of rage. They may be very articulate but can be very literal and have problems using language in a social context.

SERIES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Anxiety



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



Asperger's Syndrome



Autism Spectrum Disorder



Conduct Disorder



Depression



Eating Disorders



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Oppositional Defiant Disorder



Reactive Attachment Disorder



Tourette Syndrome

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CONTACT:

Rainbow District School Board
Gord Ewin Centre for Education
275 Loach's Road
Sudbury, ON P3E 2P8
Phone: 705.523.3308
rainbowschools.ca

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ABOUT ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Asperger's Syndrome, formerly referred to as High-Functioning Autism, is now included under the term Autism Spectrum Disorder. A neurobiological disorder, Asperger's affects cognition, language, socialization, sensory issues, visual/audio processing and behaviour.

Students with Asperger's Syndrome are often known to be verbal and have an average to above-average intelligence quotient (IQ). Often, they become preoccupied with a single subject, activity or with parts of an object rather than its functional use, like spinning the wheels of a toy car rather than driving it around. They may also display excessive rigidity or resistance to change, non-functional routines or rituals, and repetitive motor movements.

The most common characteristic of Asperger's Syndrome is impairment of social interactions, which can include failure to use or comprehend non-verbal gestures in others, failure to develop age appropriate peer relationships and/or a lack of empathy.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

- Create structured, predictable and calming environments.
- Consult an occupational therapist for sensory needs suggestions.
- Foster a climate of tolerance and understanding. Consider assigning a peer helper to assist in joining group activities and socializing. Teasing should not be tolerated.
- Celebrate the student's verbal and intellectual skills.
- Use direct teaching to increase socially acceptable behaviour. Demonstrate the impact of words and actions on others. Increase awareness of non-verbal cues.
- Develop a standard of presenting change in advance.
- Be cognizant of the usual triggers and warning signs of a rage attack or meltdown. Help him/her with self-management.
- Remain calm and non-judgmental at all times.
- Try to help support parents/guardians, as some may feel professionals blame them for poor parenting skills.

