

Aspergers syndrome and autism stereotypes and life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

According to the Center for Disease Control, "Autism (or a closely related disorder such as Aspergers Syndrome) affects 1 in 150 children in the United States." (Overview - Autism, DD, NCBDDD, CDC) The first thing that you think of when you hear of Asperger's Syndrome or Autism; are the age old stereotypes that one with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism are labeled with, such as: that they can't feel emotions, they lack empathy, and most of all they are all like the guy from Rain Man. What about the positive side of having Asperger's Syndrome/Autism. Most of all, living with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism may come as a struggle, but with the right support anything is possible.

Even though this is the twenty-first century; a lot of people still label people on the Autistic Spectrum with the age old stereotypes, but not all individuals on the spectrum abide by those stereotypes:

The fact that individuals on the autism spectrum have no emotion is not true. The emotion is there; but the individual might have a hard time expressing those emotions, or the way the emotion is triggered is different than everyone else's. The myth about individuals on the spectrum not having a sense of humor is false. The individual on the spectrum might find different to be funny such as satire. It said that there is no capacity for improvement for those on the spectrum, and that is false. If the individual is given the right support and a positive environment, they will be able to improve. The age old stereotype within the autism spectrum is that they are all good at math, music or science, but that is a hit and miss situation. Sometimes an individual is bad at math but good at other things such as recognizing faces. (Carley 19-21)

<https://assignbuster.com/aspergers-syndrome-and-autism-stereotypes-and-life/>

According to Reitman, “ Most stereotypes of persons with autism are that they are odd, aloof, strange, or loners. Those who are labeled with Asperger’s tend to be thought of as nerds or ‘ brains’ but as people who lack basic social graces, lack manners, and do not have friends. Those characterizations are rarely the truth though and those with these labels often struggle to free themselves of them.” (Reitman) What Reitman means; when an individual on the spectrum is labeled with these stereotypes it is a challenge for them to prove their community and the world wrong, and that they can achieve anything that they put their mind to.

From Fry’s personal stand point, People on the spectrum tend to be labeled as: geeky nerdy people with no social skills, lack of empathy, sometimes as someone with a mental health issue rather than neurological condition, and as someone who may be learning disabled. (Fry)

Not all people on the spectrum can calculate dates and generate calendars in their heads like Rain Man can. Only those with a form of Savant Syndrome have those kinds of abilities. According to Jackson, being talented at math is either a hit or miss:

I am no genius in this area but a lot of AS kids are. It seems to be one thing that you either excel at or you don’t. A lot of kids with AS love Latin, German, and definitely information technology (IT). There may be some subjects which are better suited to an AS person’s brain but, generally speaking, we are not clones and have our own strengths and weaknesses. Despite the film Rain Man, we don’t all have these amazing mathematical skills. (Jackson 123)

The positives of having Asperger's Syndrome or Autism are, having an extraordinary memory and being honest. Lisa Rudy from About.com has listed the top 10 terrific traits of Autistic people, and just to name a few of them: "Autistics rarely judge other people, they are less materialistic, play fewer head games, and they have fewer hidden agendas." (Rudy)

Pyles stated:

Many people with Asperger's Syndrome tend to have normal or high levels of intelligence, and test in the high IQ ranges. Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome tend to have phenomenal memories, especially for things they are interested in. Most individuals with Asperger's Syndrome tend to be very honest and they rarely tell lies. Lies don't work for them anyways. Also people with Asperger's Syndrome are law-abiding citizens. (Pyles 67-69)

So if someone thinks an individual on the spectrum is lying and insists that's true; then that is wrong, because people on the Autistic Spectrum don't have a reason to tell lies, because most of the time when they do tell lies; they are bad at it and then they feel guilty for lying.

Imagine that a person can remember almost everything that happened to them; in this case that is true for individuals on the Autistic Spectrum. They can remember almost anything such as: exact details, places, events and sometimes exact date and time. According to Kanner's research on Autism:

Many of Kanner's children had superb rote memory. They were able to remember and mechanically repeat large amounts of information. Some of the children were capable of memorizing and repeating long and unusual

<https://assignbuster.com/aspergers-syndrome-and-autism-stereotypes-and-life/>

words. Others repeated the questions and answers of the Presbyterian Catechism, list of animals, nursery rhymes, a roster of the U. S. presidents, and lullabies in French. (Rodriguez 31)

People on the Autistic Spectrum deal with everyday life the best way that they can; most of the time a person on the spectrum can lead an almost normal life with a little bit of help. For example, they would have to learn coping skills to deal with everyday dramas and to make the right decision during tough times, and social skills to help them get along in society. Society isn't made for those on the spectrum, and is actually made for a NeuroTypical. NeuroTypical is defined as: " An informal term used by the online autism community to denote those whose neurological development and function is within the normal range." (A World Apart - Definitions) That is no excuse though for a person on the spectrum to give up on society and live a stereotypical life.

For those living on the spectrum, it is hard to pick up on social cues or figure out what is the right behavior for each social situation. Today, there are therapies and other resources out there such as, speech therapy, occupational therapy and social skills training. There are even specialists trained in working with people on the Autistic Spectrum. For example:

Reitman works with individuals as young as 18 months and on into adulthood as well. With the younger individuals, Reitman addresses communication and social skills deficits through role-play, creation of rules and discussions of difficulties being encountered. For adolescents and adults, the struggles with miscommunication are frequent ones, as is the managing of ever-shifting

priorities and responsibilities. Organization, self-esteem, initiation, and inattention are common issues that are addressed in therapy. (Reitman)

Even though there are all these therapies and other resources out there, but not all of them is for every individual. “ I believe that there is no one treatment that works for everyone and that each individual is unique. The work we do is collaborative and aimed at helping the person to develop self-awareness, empathy, and perspective-taking skills.” (Reitman)

Then there is the view of the individual on the spectrum and how they view their everyday life. Fry takes it as it comes when it comes to life, he tries to build a network of friends and family who are autistic aware, tries to avoid situations where would not feel comfortable for example: social events or places where there would be too much sensory inputs and he takes time out to refocus. (Fry)

What do sensory inputs mean? Sensory inputs are actually sensory issues. As worded by Zaks, “ sensory issues may be thought of as difficulties interacting or dealing with the environment posed by the way the autistic brain handles sensory information.” (Zaks 7) But what sensory issues do those on the spectrum deal with in everyday life though? The sensory issues that an individual on the spectrum deals with on the day-to-day basis varies at times; sometimes it is either noises such as, loud music, scratching the chalk board, or the vacuum cleaner. Then there are also smells and lights.

If an individual is in an area where the sound is getting to them to the point where it gets too much for them, Zaks said:

The most obvious answer is to get away from the noise. But that is not always possible. Sometimes down out the din. Other chose to wear ear plugs. If an intolerable noise suddenly occurs, an autistic person may need to bolt from the scene until measures are taken to reduce or eliminate the source of distress. (Zaks 16)

Sometimes individuals can be sensitive to smells. From personal experiences this all known too well. Some smells can make an individual psychical ill and sometimes sick, smells such as, a stinky diaper, strong perfume, and canned salmon. There are also other smells that would irritate almost anyone regardless of being on the spectrum or not, but it irritate and bothers those on the spectrum even more than it does to those that are not on the spectrum. Zaks suggests, " If scents are unavoidable and make you sick, try wearing a special filtration mask such as those used by cyclists to eliminate car fume smells when they ride in traffic." (Zaks 12)

Often times, people on the spectrum are sensitive to light. Lights that do not cause other people stress can sting or hurt the eyes of a person on the spectrum, and cause them severe headaches or induce nausea. Some individuals can't tolerate the flashing lights of the television or movies. Even though their vision may measure within the normal range at the eye doctor's, yet they will still have a problem with painful eyes. (Zaks 13)

However there are some suggestions though, the individual could get transitions lenses if they need prescription glasses, or wear lightly tinted sun glasses if they do not need prescription glasses.

Even though the first thing you think of when you hear of Asperger's Syndrome or Autism are the age old stereotypes. There still positive sides of being on the spectrum. While growing up with having Asperger's syndrome or Autism may be rough, but there is better help out there and more information then there was years ago. Years ago, the Autistic Spectrum was just being researched on and not much was known about it, but today there is more information out there for individuals on the spectrum to find and better oneself and become a more productive citizen of society. Instead of being a living stereotype like the world wants them to be.