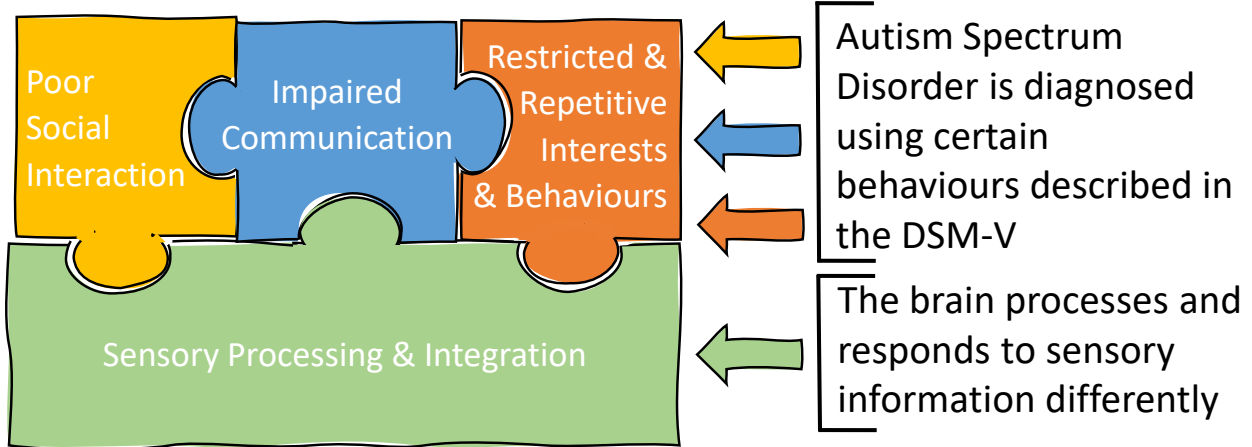


## Autism Spectrum Disorder

### What is Autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong developmental condition. No two people experience autism in the same way. The word spectrum represents the diversity of that experience and effect.



## Supporting Individuals on the Spectrum

### Pre-empt sensory stressors

Reduce noise, light, activity etc. wherever possible. Avoid interrupting self-stimulatory behaviour such as flapping or rocking, as this functions as self-soothing

### Create predictability

Explain what is happening **now** and what will happen **next**. You may need to reassure multiple times.

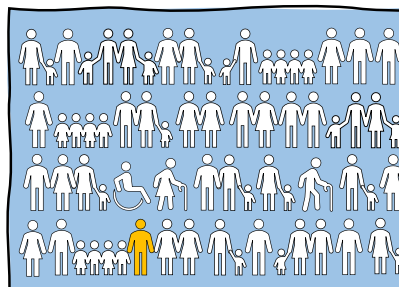
### Say exactly what you mean

Use clear, direct language. Minimise facial expressions and gestures. Allow time and space for information processing.

### Support Positive/appropriate interactions

Model social interactions so that the person with autism, and whoever they need to communicate with, has a clear understanding

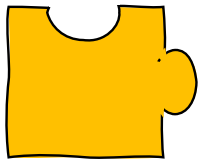
Vaccinations  
**DO NOT**  
cause autism



**1 in 70** Australians are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. That's over **350,000** people

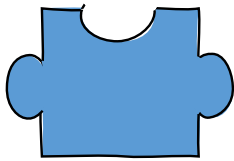
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## SOCIAL INTERACTION



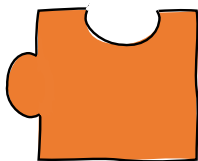
- Difficulty understanding when and how to appropriately respond in social interactions
- Trouble developing, understanding and maintaining relationships/appropriate relationships with others
- Reduced ability to understand and abide by social conventions e.g. difficulty telling 'white lies', turn-taking, making eye contact etc.
- Reduced ability to use social imagination and to empathize
- Reduced capacity to identify others' intentions and susceptible to dangerous people/situations

## IMPAIRED COMMUNICATION



- Difficulty **understanding** and **providing** information
- Difficulty understanding non-verbal communication, such as facial expression, body language
- Difficulty understanding abstract language, sarcasm, metaphors e.g. "it's raining cats and dogs"
- Abnormalities in pitch, stress, rate, rhythm of speech
- May repeat words or phrases (echolalia)

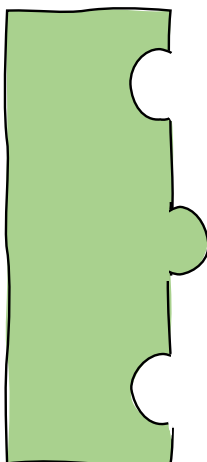
## REPETITIVE PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR



These provide **structure, order** and **predictability**, and help people cope with the uncertainties of daily life.

- Repetitive use of movement, speech or objects
- Easily upset by changes to routine, travel routes, environment, and the familiar
- Very narrow and intense focus on limited areas of interest i.e. fixations or obsessions
- Self-stimulatory behaviour or 'Stimming' to help regulate the sensory environment

## SENSORY PROCESSING AND INTEGETRATION



**Sensory-Seeking** - an unusual craving for, or preoccupation with, certain sensory experiences (and a need to fulfil these)

- Have a high tolerance for pain
- Be overly 'touchy' with people and objects; sometimes 'too rough'
- Lack awareness of personal space
- Be unable to sit still and may be labelled as 'fidgety'
- May appear unresponsive when spoken to or touched
- Enjoy intense movements such as climbing, jumping, spinning
- Make loud noises, either vocally or physically

**Sensory-Avoiding** - over-reactive to sensory input to the point of anxiety, distress and/or pain

- Irritated by textures, including those from clothing, furniture or food
- Low tolerance for crowds and noisy areas
- Dislike human touch including hugging and kissing
- General discomfort including motion sickness, odd tastes, and panic
- Withdraw from stimuli and/or people
- Vulnerable to sensory 'overload' which may produce fight or flight responses

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