

AUTISM AND ASPERGERS

Ian Channing

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THE PLAN

- What is it?
- The 'spectrum'
- Psychology
- Ways to help

Its more likely that you will meet people with Aspergers in our work, but it's mostly invisible, so I hope some of this helps to recognise and understand them.

WHAT IS IT?

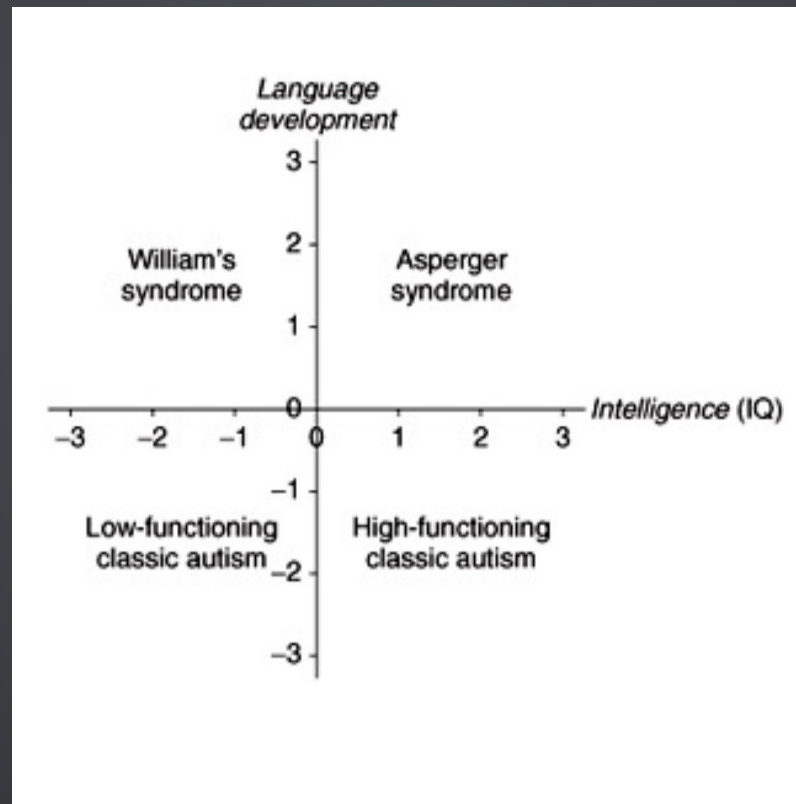
- An ADHD disorder
- A language disorder
- A movement disorder
- A mood disorder
- An eating disorder
- A non-verbal learning disorder

TRIAD - VISIBLE/INVISIBLE

- Social difficulties
- Communication difficulties
- Narrow Interests / Repetitive behaviour

AUTISM COMPARED TO ASPERGERS

Aspergers is not High-functioning autism



THE 'SPECTRUM'

There's a lot of disorders combined together
As long as you have the 'triad' then it's likely to get a
dianosis of autism.

But with in that band the strengths of the
ADHD/language/mood/eating differ dramatically.

MEASURING THE SPECTRUM

It's changing constantly as the concept of what is
Autism widens.

Estimates in Western population are 1%

In Silicon Valley its 10%

Autism comes from Greek *autos* for self.

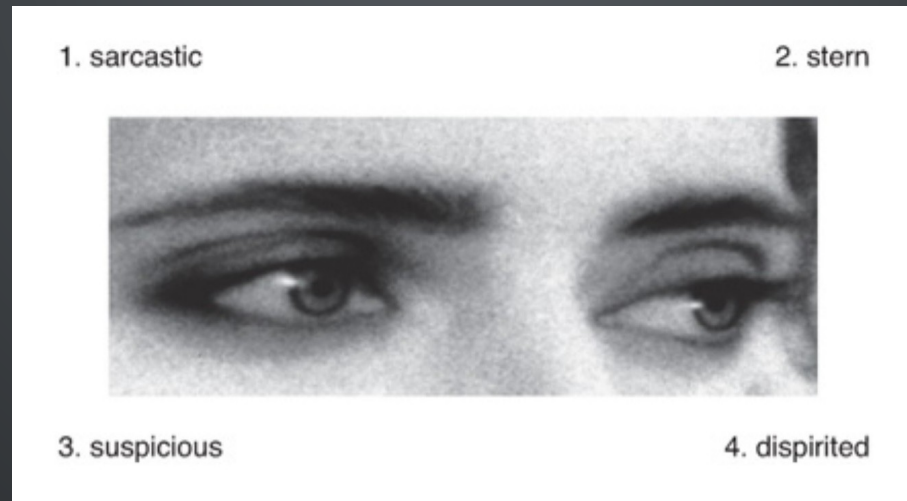
*Asperger's dream of a planet where they
are the only human being*

PSYCHOLOGY

- Executive dysfunction theory (action control)
- Weak central coherence theory (details)
- Magnocellular theory (biological)
- Mindblindness theory (mind-reading/mentalizing)
- Empathizing-systemizing theory

MINDBLINDNESS THEORY / THEORY OF MIND

Reading eye expressions (guess, but don't say out loud)



EMPATHIZING-SYSTEMIZING THEORY

(answer - dispirited)

Social/communication difficulties - delays and deficits
in *empathy*

Areas of strength - intact/superior skill in *systemizing*

For Aspergers/Autism the difficulty in empathy and the
skill in systemizing is higher than “Neuro typical”

EMPATHY QUOTIENT (EQ)

Empathy encompasses ToM, but just cognitive

cognitive empathy

Second component is the response: having an appropriate emotional response to another person's thoughts and feelings

affective empathy

SYSTEMIZING QUOTIENT (SQ)

Drive to analyse or construct systems

This can be any type of system

A system follows *rules* and when we systemize we are trying to govern the system to predict how it will behave.

EXAMPLE SYSTEMS

- Collectible - distinguishing stones
- Mechanical - VCR, window locks, fixing bicycles
- Abstract - language syntax, music notation
- Natural - all types of tortoise
- Motoric - Frisbee throwing, skateboard, juggling
- Social - management hierarchy, dance routines
- Music - instrument, song structure

SPLITTER

A 'splitter' not a 'lumper'

Neurotypical sees tree with leaves (lumps things)

VS

Asperger sees all trees with different leaves, some leaves have fungal disease (splits things)



WORK QUALITIES

- Reliable, persistent, honest
- Perfectionist, easily able to identify errors
- Sense of social justice and integrity
- Accurate, attentive to detail
- Logical, conscientious
- Thrive on routine and clear expectations

WORK DIFFICULTIES

- teamwork skills
- being a line-manager
- sensory perception
- time keeping and work routines
- managing and communicating stress and anxiety
- coping with change, asking for help
- accepting advice (perceived as criticism)
- conflict resolution

COPING MECHANISMS

- Self-blame / depression
- Escape into imagination
- Denial / arrogance
- Immitation

TREATMENTS

- Psychotherapy (with Autistic specialist)
- Music therapy
- Art therapy

INFO

- The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome (Attwood)
- Austim and Asperger Syndrom - the facts (Baron-Cohen)
- <http://www.researchautism.net> (autism.org.uk)