Autism

Autism is a complex development disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person’s ability to communication and interacts with others. [Autism is spectrum disorder, which means the condition has wide ranging degrees of severity]There is also a condition called Asperser Syndrome which is a form of autism used to describe people at the higher functioning end of the Autism Spectrum.

**Characteristics of Autism:**

The degree or characteristics differ from person to person, but all those affected have impairment in Social interaction, social communication, repetitive and restricted patterns of behavior. This is referred to as a triad of impairment.

**Social Communication**

(Difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication)

**Social Interaction**

(Difficulty with social relationship)

**Behavior**

(Repetitive and restricted patterns of behavior)

In addition to this triad, resistance to change in routine is a notable feature Individual with autism may also experiences sensivity in the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, movement.

**Causes of Autism**

Autism is a brain disorder which affects the way brain uses information. The exact cause or causes of autism is/are still unknown. Research shows that genetic factors are important. Autism may indeed result from a combination of several ‘’causes’’.

[Autism is a brain based development disorder. No factors in the psychological environment of the

Child cause autism]

**Autism and Mental Retardation**

Most people with mental retardation show relatively even skill development, while individuals with autism typically show uneven skill development with deficits in certain areas-most frequently in their ability to communicate and relate to others.

It is important to distinguish autism from mental retardation or other disorder since diagnostic confusion may result in referral inappropriate and ineffective treatment techniques.

**Autism is Treatable**

Studies show that people who have autism can improve significantly with proper education. Early diagnosis and intensive behavioral intervention can have a significant and lasting positive impact on

Autistic children. Autistic children can benefit from placement in a good educational program.

Through specially trained teachers, using specially structured programs that emphasize individual instruction, persons with autism can learn to function at home and in the community.

**If a child shows any of these signs, please ask your pediatrician or family practitioner for an immediate evaluation:**

* No big smile or other warm, joyful experiences by 6 months.
* No back and forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expression by 9 months.
* No babbling by 12 months.
* No gestures (point, wave, grasp) by 12 months.
* No single word by 16 months.
* No two words meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months.
* Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age

People with autism are not physically disabled; they look just like anybody without disability. Due to this invisible nature it is much harder to create awareness and understanding of the

Condition.

**AUTISM WELFARE FOUNDATION (AWF)**

Autism Welfare Foundation (AWF), a non-profitable, non-government, voluntary welfare organization was established on April 4,2004 aiming to train and educate the children to perform their maximum strengths and interests, and making them able to support themselves. AWF provides programs that support its mission in a variety of

ways, including community awareness and outreach, early screening and intervention, parent and professional information and training as well as family support. AWF`s day to day actives now focus on a wide range of services and actives to improve the lives of children with autism and their families. AWF since its inception has made several intervention in these regards.

Present Activities of AWF

* Offers diagnosis and assessment of autistic children.
* Runs education and training centre for autistic children.
* Runs Early Intervention Program for children below 5 years.
* Runs Adult Activity and Vocational Training Programs for older children and adolescents with autism.
* Arranges Training Program for parents and Teacher.
* Arranges seminar, workshop for Teacher & parents.
* Offers Package Program for children and adolescents who are unable to attend training at AWF.
* Provide outing program for AWF students for improving social behaviour.
* Publishes News Letter and yearly magazine on Autism.
* Integrates more able autistic children into regular school.
* Offer free service for poor autistic children.
* Arranges programs for creating awareness on autism.

Future Programme of AWF

* Establish Foundation’s own complex comprising Training and Education center, regular school and residential setting for adults with autism.(Under Construction)
* Provide free education and training for underprivileged autistic children and adolescent.
* Arrange job opportunities for more able person with autism.
* Establish training and education centre for person with autism in different areas of Bangladesh.

**AUTISM WELFARE FOUNDATION**

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