

# What is autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder.

The main areas below show examples of behaviours that people with ASD may display.

## Social communication and social interaction



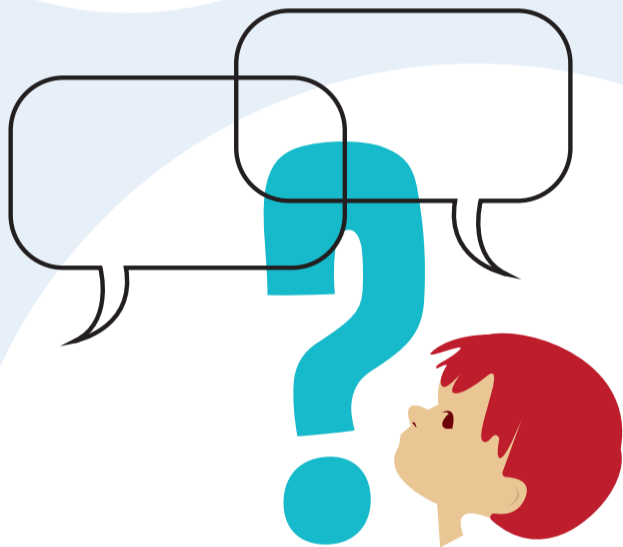
### May appear to be in their own world

- May avoid eye contact or have limited eye contact
- May fail to react to their name



### Need help to interact with others

- May prefer to be alone
- May want to participate, but not know how
- May have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships
- May initiate contact in an unusual manner



### Need help with communication

- May have delayed or limited speech development
- May have a literal understanding of words
- May have a large vocabulary, but have difficulties with using language in a social situation



### May have difficulties keeping to a topic and/or changing topic

- May experience difficulties starting, maintaining or finishing a conversation
- May have difficulties keeping to a topic



### Difficulties “reading”/interpreting social signals or situations

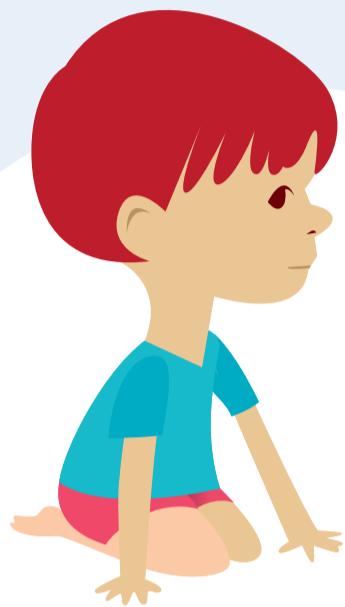
- Difficulties understanding body language, facial expressions and tone of voice
- May need help understanding what is appropriate in different situations

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## Behaviours, interests and activities



### Repetitive behaviours

- May repeat the same action over and over again, e.g. lining up objects or watching the same video



### Repetitive movements and unusual speech

- Echolalia (repeating words and sentences)
- New words/idiosyncratic speech
- Hand-flapping, spinning or rocking



### Prefer structure and routines

- May dislike surprises and react strongly to changes, whether large or small
- May need support to try something new



### Restricted field of interest

- May have an intense interest in a topic (e.g. trains)
- May have an interest that appears unusual (e.g. glue sticks)
- May have/show an unusually high level of interest in a topic, thinking or talking about it all the time

### Under- or oversensitivity

- May have unusual reactions to what they see, hear, smell, touch or taste
- May have unusual reactions to pain



# Common accompanying difficulties

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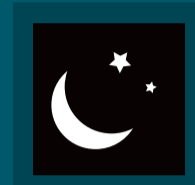
## Difficulties in regulating activity

- Hyperactivity
- Inactivity



## Sleep problems

- May wake up multiple times every night
- May need less sleep



## Difficulties with emotional regulation



## Problems with food

- May react to consistency or colour of food
- May react when food is mixed together

