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Autism Spectrum Disorders and Co-occurring Conditions

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Presentation Overview

- What is an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?
 - Epidemiological data
 - Diagnostic criteria & who can diagnosis
 - Strengths for Autistic Individuals
- Common Co-occurring Conditions
 - Medical
 - Cognitive/Learning
 - Psychiatric
- Resources



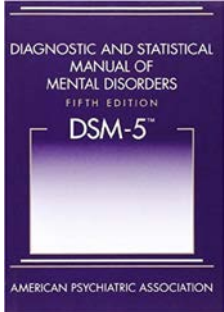
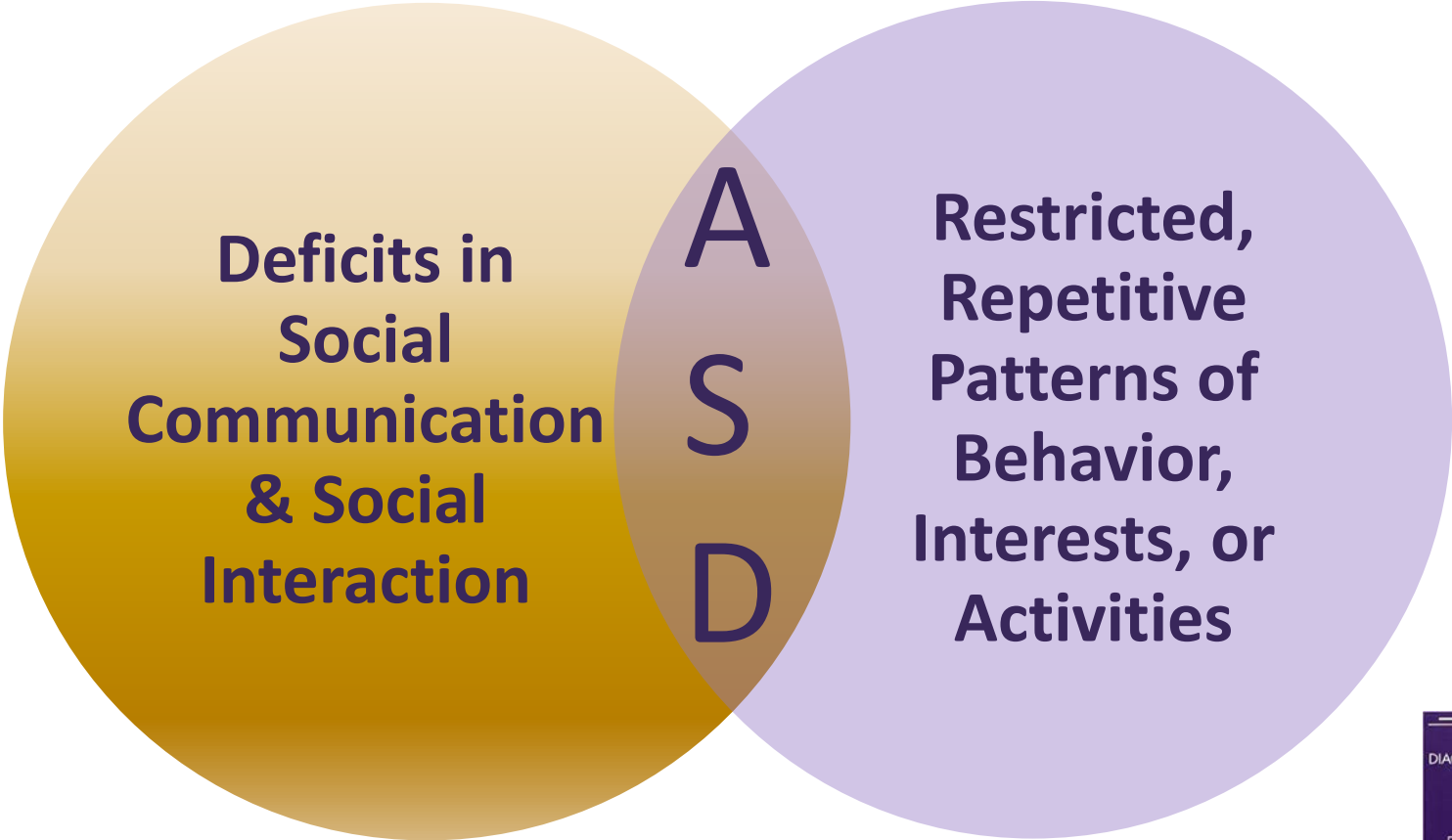


AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OVERVIEW

**“If you’ve met one individual
with autism, you’ve met one
individual with autism.”**

- Dr. Stephen M. Shore

DSM-5 Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



1 in 59
children living in
ADDM sites are
identified with ASD



- ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder
- Males are 4 times more likely to be identified with ASD than females
- ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups
- Approximately 2/3 of individuals with ASD **do not** meet criteria for an intellectual disability

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>

*1.7% prevalence rate based on data reported
from 11 communities across the US*



Social Communication/Social Interaction

Persistent *deficits* in Social Communication and Social Interaction across multiple contexts

(must meet all 3 features)

- Differences in social-emotional reciprocity
- Differences in nonverbal communicative behaviors
- Differences in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships



DSM-V, 2013

Social Interaction and Communication



Adapted from Division TEACCH; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Restricted/Repetitive Patterns of Behavior

(Must meet at least 2 of 4 features)

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior
- Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
- Hyper- or hypo reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment



[Sensory Video](#)

Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors

Behaviors Observed



- Pacing, rocking, flapping, vocalizing
- Physical aggression to self or other
- Large response to small change
- Difficulty with changes in staff, room, procedures
- Different response to physical touch/pain
- Fixate on specific item or topic

Symptoms of ASD



- Stereotyped or repetitive movements, use of objects or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexibility
- Hypo or hyper reactions to sensory input
- Intense interests

Adapted from Division TEACCH; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



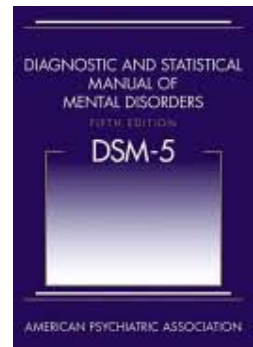
DSM-V: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Specifiers

- *With or w/o intellectual disability*
- *With or w/o language impairment*
- *Associated with known medical or genetic condition*
- *Associated with another neurodevelopmental, mental or behavioral disorder*
- *With catatonia*

Severity Ratings

- *Level 1 “Requiring support”*
- *Level 2 “Requiring substantial support”*
- *Level 3 “Requiring very substantial support”*

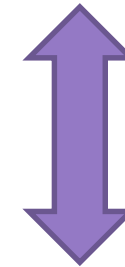


Who can diagnose ASD in Washington State?



- Board eligible neurologists (M.D.),
- Board eligible psychiatrists (M.D.),
- Licensed psychologists (Ph.D., Psy.D.),
- Board certified developmental and behavioral pediatricians (M.D.)

Diagnosis of ASD



Special education eligibility as a student with autism

- Different procedures, personnel, & definitions



“There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what they cannot do.”

- Dr. Temple Grandin



Common Strengths

- Strong visual-spatial skills/advanced verbal skills
- Strong passion and superior knowledge base related to interests (e.g., computers)
- Original way of thinking
- Strong moral code, sense of justice
- Follows rules
- Honesty and loyalty
- Independent



CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

Common Co-occurring Conditions:

Medical:

- Seizures
- GI problems
- Sleep problems



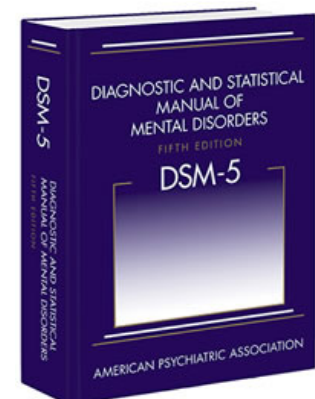
Cognitive/Academic:

- Intellectual Disability
- Learning Disorders
- Speech Disorders



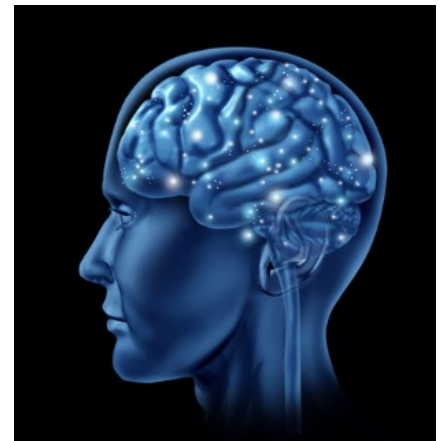
Psychiatric:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- ADHD



Medical Conditions

- Seizure disorders:
 - Epilepsy
 - Seizures = staring spells, stiffening of muscles, involuntary jerking of limbs, irritability, sleepiness or sleep disturbance, regression of skills
 - Treatment
 - Evaluation by Neurologist – EEG
 - (see handout by Autism Treatment Network)
 - Medication



Medical Conditions

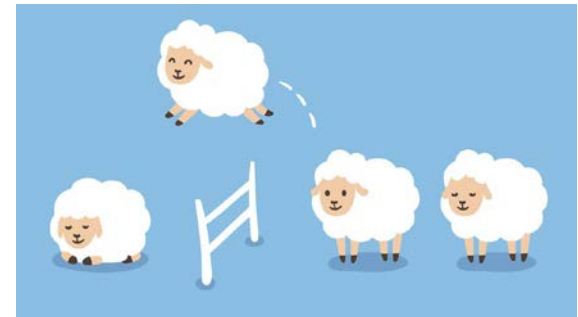


- Gastrointestinal disorders:
 - Chronic constipation & diarrhea
 - CDC reports ASD individuals 3.5 times more likely
 - Picky eating habits
 - Sensory difficulties
 - Irritable bowel
 - Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Research/Treatment:
 - Differences in gut bacteria and intestinal cells
 - GI doctor, nutritionist/dietician, probiotics, enema



Medical Conditions

- Sleep disorders:
 - Very common for individuals with ASD
 - Up to 80%
 - Sleep onset, nighttime awakenings, parasomnias, apnea
 - Research
 - Sleep hygiene, hormone levels, brain chemicals, comorbidities
 - Treatment
 - Neurologist
 - Pediatric Psychologist
 - Books/Toolkits
 - Medication



Sleep Resources



- Sleep Better! A Guide to Improving Sleep for Children with Special Needs by V. Mark Durand
- Solving Sleep Problems in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Guide for Frazzles Families by Terry Katz & Beth Malow
- A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems by Jodi Mindell & Judith Owens
- Autism Treatment Network Sleep Tool Kits
 - <https://www.autismspeaks.org/science/resources-programs/autism-treatment-network/tools-you-can-use/sleep-tool-kit>



Cognitive/Academic Conditions

- Intellectual Disability:
 - Significant limitations in both cognitive functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) & adaptive behavior
 - Onset before the age of 18
 - Severity = Mild, Moderate, Severe, Profound
 - 1/3 of individuals with ASD <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>
- Learning Disorders:
 - Neurologically-based processing problems which interfere with learning specific academic skills such as reading, writing, and/or math or executive functioning skills such as organization, attention, or planning
 - ASD individuals often visual or experiential learners
- Speech Disorders:
 - Expressive & Receptive delays
 - Aphasia
 - Articulation problems



Psychiatric Conditions

Anxiety disorders:

- Excessive fear, anxiety, and related behavioral disturbances
- More persistent and lasting longer
- One of the most prevalent and co-occurring psychiatric disorders in individuals with ASD
- Most common types:
 - Generalized Anxiety
 - Phobias
 - OCD
- Anxiety symptoms may look different for individuals with ASD and be harder to identify.



Depression

- Overwhelming feeling of sadness, isolation, and despair
- Not intermittent - lasts 2 weeks or longer
- Impacts functioning
- Five or more symptoms present:
 - Depressed mood most days
 - Diminished interest in things that usually give pleasure
 - Significant changes in eating habits or weight loss/gain
 - Significant sleep changes
 - Restlessness
 - Attention problems
 - Suicidal ideation



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Neurodevelopmental disorder
- Symptoms of: Inattention, Hyperactivity, Impulsivity
 - At least six symptoms in one domain
- Impacts functioning
- Symptoms present before age 12
- 30-50% of individuals with ASD meet criteria for ADHD



ASD Resources



National Autism Support Agencies:

- Autistic Self-Advocacy Network
 - www.autisticadvocacy.org
- Autism Speaks
 - www.autismspeaks.org
- Autism National Standards Project
 - List of evidenced based treatments for ASD
 - <http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/national-standards-project/results-reports/>
- AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit
 - Resources for Primary Care Physicians and Adults on the Autism Spectrum
 - <https://www.autismandhealth.org/>

Local Autism Support Agencies:

- UW Autism Center – Training & Clinical services
 - www.uwautism.org
- FEAT – Family for Effective Autism Treatment – Ben’s Fund grant
 - www.featwa.org
- WAAA – Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy – legal counsel and insurance appeals
 - www.washingtonautismadvocacy.org
- ARC – For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
 - <http://www.thearc.org/>



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