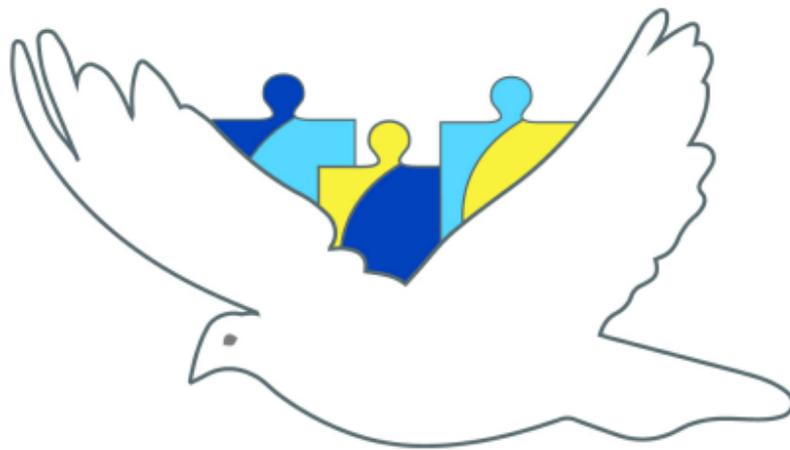


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# *Understanding Autism*

A Guidebook for Teens and  
Tweens



SANFORD AUTISM  
CONSULTING

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# *Introduction*

*Are you a clinician supporting teens and tweens with Autism? Or, are you a parent of a teen or tween with Autism? If so, have you considered disclosing Autism as a diagnosis for your client/child? This does not have to be a scary experience for you or your child/client. This guidebook will assist you in having the discussion with your teen/tween and empowering them with knowledge about their strengths and challenges. By starting now, your child/client will become well equipped as their own self-advocate. By sharing about Autism, we will continue to increase awareness and acceptance for our wonderfully unique children/clients.*

*Let's begin...*

# Understanding Autism

*Some people have Autism. This means that their brains are just “wired differently.”*

## *Autism is:*

- A range of conditions described by problems in social skills, language and behavior*
- Young children can have Autism, or they find out when they are older*

## *Autism has three levels:*

*Level 1: Also known as Asperger’s Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism: People with Level 1 Autism need some support to communicate and learn: however, they may also be really smart and know a lot of words.*

*Level 2: People with Level 2 Autism need moderate supports to communicate and learn; they may speak in simple sentences and have a hard time making friends.*

*Level 3: People with Level 3 Autism need maximum supports to communicate and learn; they may understand things, but they may speak very little or not at all.*



## *Some famous people have Autism/High-Functioning Autism/Asperger's Syndrome:*

- *JAMES DURBIN Singer from American Idol (TV show)*
- *DARYL HANNAH Actress (movies "Splash," and "Steel Magnolias"; Netflix show "Sense8")*
- *DAN AYKROYD Actor (movie "Ghostbusters" ; co-founder of The House of Blues locations)*
- *TIM BURTON Director (movies "Beetlejuice," "Charlie & the Chocolate Factory," "Alice in Wonderland")*
- *TEMPLE GRANDIN Animal Scientist, Author, Public Speaker*

*People with Autism have great strengths:*

- *Honest*
- *Fair/Follows the rules*
- *Great long-term memory*
- *Detail-Oriented*
- *Visual Learner*

*People with Autism also have challenges:*

- *Understanding humor/sarcasm*
- *Short-term memory weakness*
- *Difficulty summarizing main ideas*
- *Trouble understanding "hidden social rules"*
- *Hard to plan for long-term assignments*



## *Here are some of the best jobs for people with Autism:*

- *Computer Programmer*
- *Animal Trainer*
- *Engineer*
- *Journalist*
- *Photographer*
- *Architect*
- *Laboratory Technician*
- *Bank Teller*
- *Statistician*
- *Librarian*

*Autism is just one of the many “Invisible Disabilities” that people face; an “Invisible Disability” may have symptoms that no one can see, but can greatly impact people’s lives. Other Invisible Disabilities that some people with Autism have include: ADHD, Depression, OCD, and Anxiety.*

## *Autism Statistics:*

- *In 2014, 1 in 68 children (1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls) were found to have Autism at some level.*
- *Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S.*
- *There is no exact cause known for Autism, but in some cases researchers have found that traits may be heredity (“run in the family”).*



## *What can help Autism:*

- *There is no known cure for Autism; however, thousands of people have found help with effective treatments, such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Behavioral Therapy.*
- *Talk to a parent, trusted adult, or therapist about your feelings or to ask questions*
- *Join a support group so that you can meet other great people with Autism, just like you!*

# All About Me-Plan

Here is a great plan to complete with our teen/tween after they have learned more about their strengths and challenges related to Autism. Then, review annually or as significant changes occur.

My name is

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My birthday is

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My favorite things include (color, food, sports):

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My hobbies are

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I am really good at

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I have a hard time with

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What really helps me is

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# All About Me-Plan

I am interested in going to college:            YES            NO

I am interested in the following careers

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What I can do this year to prepare for my future

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As an adult, I want to live: (circle one)

with my parents            with roommates            by myself

What I can do this year to prepare for my future living arrangements

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# All About Me-Plan

*When I think about Autism, I feel*

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*When I think about Autism, I think*

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*I have these questions about Autism*

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*The three things that I want other people to know about Autism are*

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*I have a safe people to talk to about my feelings, including*

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*When I'm upset or afraid, I can also try*

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*I am a great person!*

# All About Me-Story

*This is a great tool to help teens and tweens become more proactive in discussing Autism with others. Discuss these statements and help your child/client to complete this story.*

*This can be used to share with teachers, friends, classrooms, etc.*

*My name is.....*

*I have Autism.*

*That just means that my brain works differently.*

*I am really good at....*

*Some things that are hard for me are....*

*What really helps me is....*

*Two things that I want people to know about Autism are.....*