

The Social Interaction & Understanding in Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders



SCOTTISH AUTISM SERVICE NETWORK

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Why is social interaction important?

- Social interaction differences are one of the defining characteristics of the syndrome
- Skills are 'different' not just delayed Van Meter (et al 1997)
- Difficulties in social interaction are a defining primary deficit, Volkmar (et al 1987), Rodrigue (et al 1991), Wing & Gould (1979)
- Social interaction and social skills

Impact

- Predicts outcome
- May be the most 'handicapping' aspect of the triad

Matson (1994), Rogers (2000)

Social interaction and ASD: infancy

- Joint attention (pointing and looking)
- Poor relating or interacting (TOM)
- Difficulties understanding and expressing emotion (Affective reciprocity)

Charman and Baird (2002)

Social interaction and ASD: early childhood

- Less interest in other children
- Often fail to imitate others movements
- Difficulties playing with one or a group of other children
- Hard to follow rule based games
- Impoverished imaginative play

Stone & Lemenak (1990), McGee (et al 1997)

Middle Childhood and Teenage Peer Interaction Difficulties

- Difficulties understanding friendships, especially the subtleties
- Groups especially difficult
- Problems in adolescence with opposite sex relationships
- More likely to be bullied or shunned by peers than other children

Little (2001), Koning & Magill Evans (2001)

Middle Childhood and Teenage Social Communication

- Eye contact
- Atypical intonation
- Understanding personal distance
- Failure to co-ordinate gesture with speech
- Difficulty understanding social cues
- Timing and reciprocity in conversation

Loveland and Tunali-Kotoski (1997)

Adulthood

- Social relationships contribute to problems finding/retaining work
- Friendships often with younger people
- Lack skills to perceive needs, interests and feelings of others
- Mood disorders (anxiety / depression) common

Grandin (1992) Mesibov & Stephens (1990), Abramson (1992)

Attempts to remediate Social Impairment

- Traditionally behaviourally orientated
- Reinforcing isolated (splinter) skills e.g. teaching games to share in playground
- Recent work starting to emphasise social cognitive abilities and social understanding
- Involves peers and family members

Gaylord Ross (1984), Bauminger (2002)

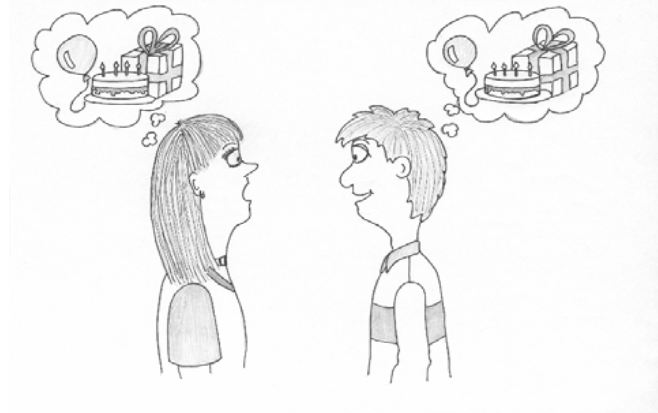
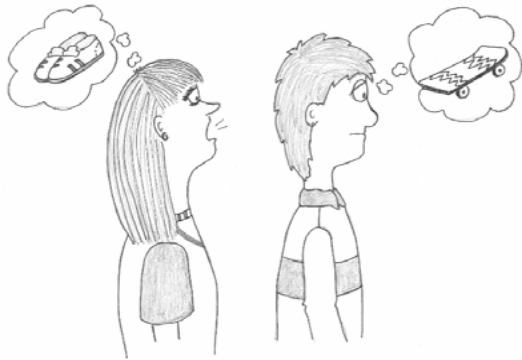
Social Interaction & Understanding in individuals with ASD

- Usually placed in mainstream
- Difficulties viewed as subtle and underestimated
- Judged by typical rather than atypical expectations
- Leading to higher demands
- Wish to make friends but lacking skills to do so-More reflective, and aware of failure

The three things

Important areas to work on

- Emotional Understanding
- Conversations
- Social Understanding & Friendships

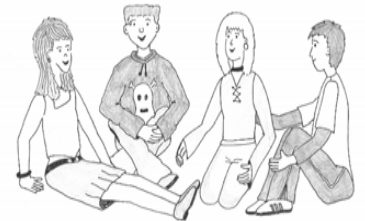


Aspects of each area

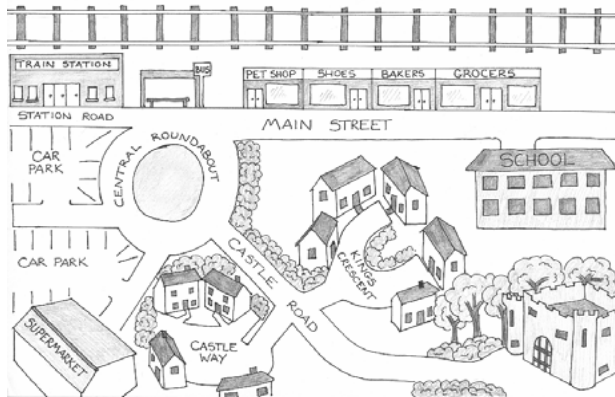
- *Emotional Understanding & Perspective taking*: all about feelings, recognising differences, perspective taking
- *Conversations*: non verbal skills, structured approaches, semi-structured approaches, understanding conversation
- *Social Understanding & Friendships*: structured support-playing together, social problem solving, understanding friendship

The capacity of group experience to support the development of social interaction and understanding

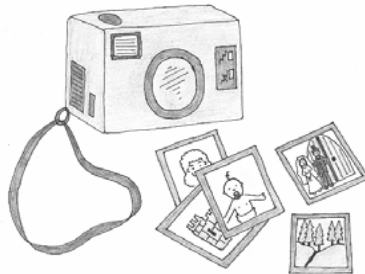
- Being part of a social group is challenging
- A range of interventions are open to us (Rogers, 2000)
- Socio-emotional understanding and social interaction can be fostered in social situations (Bauminger, 2002)
- Examples: sharing responsibility for running the group; role-play; jokes



Finding a shared project



- Primary: the road map and how it built up: houses, street names, street signs, cars, road making, motorway
- Secondary: a photography project: cameras, processing, talking through, exhibiting, invitations
- Processes & outcomes- Separate starting points, showing interest, negotiating, planning, sharing, fun

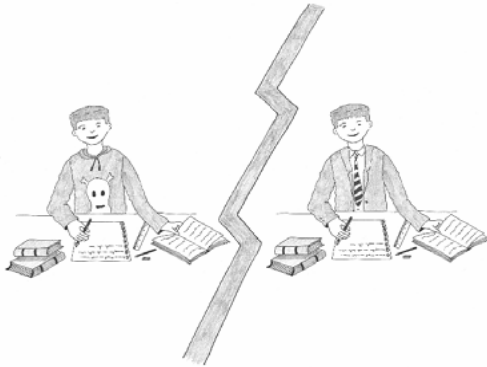


Photography

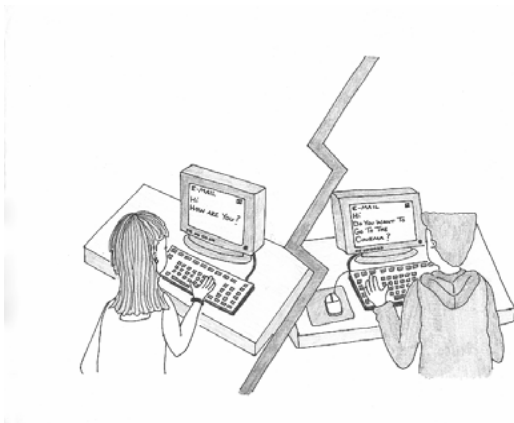
- Bringing everyone's interests in- cats, girls, Korn, independent travel, isolation, food, chilling out, chess, money, Harry Potter collection

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Some day-to-day skills



- Homework

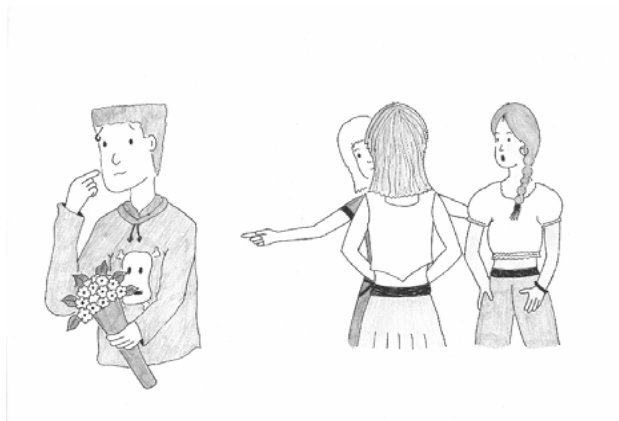


- Making contact-
email first, phone
later?

Reading the situation

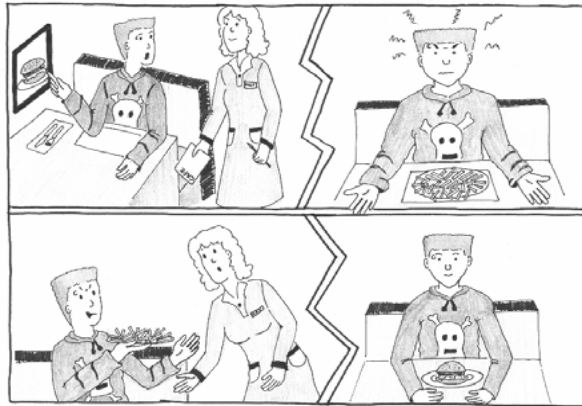


- What do they mean?



- Why are they being like that?

Difficult situations: visual stories



- What do you do if the waitress brings the wrong food?



- Taking goods back to the shop.

The challenge of generalisation into everyday life

- Range of skills could be infinite. Generalisation is difficult (Strain, 2001)
- Teaching of splinter skills is unhelpful in terms of generalisation
- Skills and understanding developed and practised in meaningful everyday contexts can be positively helpful
- Examples: rules & their adaptation; facial expressions, the puppet play, researching family feelings; planning the programme together; folder system