



SCOTTISH AUTISM SERVICE NETWORK

Welcome to the bumper Christmas edition (issue 3) of *Network News*, the newsletter of the Scottish Autism Service Network.

We are pleased to include the latest updates and information about ASD and related topics and in this edition, you will find reviews, research particulars, details about forthcoming events and activities, examples of good practice from those who are involved with the Network and information about consultations and report reviews.

We would like to thank all those who have submitted information for this issue and encourage Network members to submit information for future editions of *Network News*.

The focus of the Network for the following year will be about bringing together professionals working in the field of ASD through networking groups and forums, and to collate and impart information on good practice. You will find information about some of these in this edition of *Network News*.

Please note that you can also access this and previous editions of *Network News* on our website at www.scottishautismnetwork.org.uk/newsletter or phone us for more paper copies to be sent to you on 0141 950 3072. If you know someone who would like to subscribe to *Network News* or become a member of the Network, please see our contact details on the back page.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Network News* and wish you a happy Christmas and New Year!

Dawn Larman, SASN Manager

Feedback from the Scottish Autism Service Network 'Promoting Good Practice for ASD in Scotland Conference'



The Scottish Autism Network held its 2nd conference on 30th November 2006 with a focus on providing an opportunity for those working in the field of ASD to share good practice and for practitioners to meet with others from the professional sector across Scotland.

The conference was a huge success and over 30 organisations and services from across Scotland displayed examples of their work and good practice in the field of ASD. There were also a range of interesting workshops and forums, some of which it is hoped that we at the Network will be able to develop into ongoing Networking opportunities.

Dame Stephanie Shirley, the IT entrepreneur-turned-philanthropist and UK Chair of Trustees for the charity Autism Speaks gave an inspiring talk about her life with a son with autism and her aim since his death to fund enough quality research into autism. She was joined on the programme by Hugh Morgan, the Chair of Autism Cymru, who spoke about examples of how working together has improved support services in Wales.

The Scottish Autism network team would like to thank all those involved in making the day a success, especially those workshop speakers and forum facilitators from across Scotland who gave their time and expertise on the day.

Please see inside for Information about local groups and services, research, events and conferences and other interesting articles.

ASD Sexuality working group

During its development, the Network has had contact from various experienced professionals expressing an interest in developing resources and training regarding ASD and sexuality. Following discussions regarding this, we have decided to set up a working group of interested professionals with experience of working with young people with ASD or their family members regarding sexual health, sexuality, personal relationships etc.

The group will aim to collate and create good practice guidance, resources and training that could be utilised by themselves and other professionals. They will also benefit from visiting speakers who are experienced in working with individuals with ASD around these topic areas.

If you are a professional with experience of working with individuals with ASD or their families regarding the persons' personal relationships, sexual health and/or sexuality and would like to be involved in the group, please contact Dawn on 0141 950 2071 or e-mail d.larman@strath.ac.uk. It is hoped that the first meeting will take place towards the end of January 2007 (date TBC).

Forum Group for Individuals with ASD

Are you an individual on the autism spectrum who has an interest in guiding the practice of professionals working in the field of ASD and raising awareness of ASD across Scotland? If so, you may be interested in joining our forum group.

Following various forum events over the last few months where people with ASD have come to give their views to the Scottish Autism Network, we have decided to build on what they have said by developing a regular forum group. The forum will initially focus on 3 areas:

- Creating good practice guidance for professionals working in the field of ASD from the viewpoint of those with first hand experience of ASD
- Helping to develop a post diagnosis pack for newly diagnosed adults with ASD based on personal experience of those on the autism spectrum
- Looking at ways of positively raising awareness of ASD across Scotland from the person with ASD's point of view and consider planning events and awareness raising for Autistic Pride day in June 2007.

An initial meeting will take place in Glasgow in early 2007 (date to be confirmed), but the location of future meetings will consider where those involved live and so may be held in different locations across Scotland (to be advised). If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Dawn at scottishautismnetwork@strath.ac.uk or telephone 0141 950 3071.

The Publicity Register and Touchbase

The Publicity Register is a mailing list of advisers, intermediaries and other professionals who want to receive updates and information about changes in benefits, allowances, legislation and other relevant information about Government services from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Those signing up to the Publicity Register will receive regular copies of 'Touchbase', a magazine containing information about benefits, pensions, the New Deals, employment issues and tax credits, in order to assist people in their work with clients. They aim to provide information about changes, signpost people towards further information and alert people to future developments. It is mailed free of charge to anyone who joins the Publicity Register.

To register telephone 0845 602 44 44 or visit

https://secureonline.dwp.gov.uk/publicity_reg/checkdetails.asp.

Summary of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill will bring in new laws that will fill gaps in current legislation. Some people already have protection from the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act or the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act, but not everyone does.

The Bill aims to make sure that people are not hurt or scared by the people who look after them or other people who they spend time with, like other people that use the same service. The Bill describes why someone could be scared or feel that a person who looks after them may hurt them or things that might make them upset. It also says what makes someone more likely to be 'at risk' from being harmed or scared in this way.

Under the Bill, the Council has to do what the person who might be being hurt or is scared wants them to do. Sometimes though, people are scared to say if someone is doing something to them – like being bullied – and if that is happening then there are things in the Bill that will let Councils help people even when they are very frightened of the person who is hurting them.

The Bill is presently at the Scottish Parliament and will be looked at over the next few months by the Health Committee. The Committee will decide if it does everything that it needs to do to protect people from harm and is fair to the different people who could be involved. When the Parliament is happy with the Bill it will be given 'Royal Assent' and then called an 'Act'. The Executive will then start working on implementing the Act, which means making the things written in it into things that happen for real people and supporting and training social workers and other people to meet the requirements of the Act.

For further information email ASPUnt@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or phone 0131 244 5491.

To view the bill visit <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/62-adultSupport/b62s2-introd.pdf>

There is also an easy read version available on the Scottish Consortium for learning Disability's website at www.sclcd.org.uk.

Christmas Information

Christmas and autistic spectrum disorders information sheet

The National Autistic Society have produced an information sheet that offers practical advice on how to make Christmas less stressful and confusing for people with an autistic spectrum disorder.

Christmas can be an exciting and fun time, but it can also be stressful. People with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) may be confused or distressed by all the new activity in the household at Christmas and this can be upsetting for the rest of the family. The information sheet should provide some tips which might help.

Visit <http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=1065&a=8460> to access the information sheet, e-mail autismhelpline@nas.org.uk or telephone the NAS on 0845 070 4004 to receive a copy.

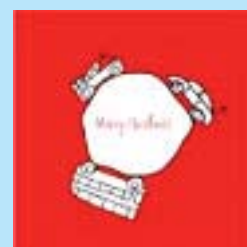
Innocent Greetings



'Christmas Dazzle!'
Designed by Rhona Watt

Innocent greetings is a new non profit organisation that promotes art work via the internet for children and young people who have autism and Downs syndrome. Their aim is to raise awareness of these children as budding artists by promoting and marketing their work in the form of greeting cards.

The organisation actively supports and has received support from the Downs Syndrome Association and the Autism Initiatives and their Logo's will appear on the back of all cards. For more information or to purchase the cards visit www.innocentgreetings.org.



Round & Round We Go! -
Designed by Justin Fielding

Local Services and Groups



Number 6: One Stop Shop for adults with Asperger's Syndrome and High Functioning Autism throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians

Number 6, the One Stop Shop, provides support to clients who have been diagnosed or who are in the process of being diagnosed, with Asperger's Syndrome or High Functioning Autism and work towards clients fulfilling their potential and improving their lifestyles.

The centre opened in February 2005 and in that short time 180 service users have benefited from the support given and the support offered extends to parents, carers and families. Funded by The Scottish Executive, Number 6 is only one of two services in Scotland specifically focused on adults with Asperger's Syndrome or High Functioning Autism. The service minimises the need for costly and intrusive intervention by the health service, social work services and the criminal justice system and by employing a multi-discipline approach, individuals can access a number of services simultaneously.

The services offered were developed in conjunction with clients and include:

- Access to social activities: visiting art galleries & museums, 10 pin bowling, quiz and film nights etc
- Support with independent living, assistance with benefits, housing and employment issues
- Social Skills Groups
- Assistance entering educational programmes, volunteering and maintaining employment
- Specific therapeutic groups and one to one sessions
- An Outreach service for clients who cannot access the centre
- Befriending opportunities

The ability to offer such a wide range of services despite only having a small staff of five is due to the help of over 25 trained and supported volunteers.

Number 6 is based at: 6 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7JA and can be contacted by telephone on: 0131 240 2370, email: oss@autisminitiatives.org and website: www.number6.org.uk.

Bigger Picture Group

Professionals from several agencies in Inverclyde attended the 'Social brain 2, See The Bigger Picture' conference at the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow in March 2006.

The Event was organised by the Scottish charity Mindroom and brought together 40 international experts on a wide range of neuro-developmental issues involving current thinking and research into the Human Brain and the co-existence and overlap of disorders of social development including autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, DAMP and related conditions such as Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

Following the conference an interest group in Inverclyde was set up to discuss matters raised at the conference & the feasibility of taking any of these forward in terms of service delivery in the local area.

The group would be interested to hear from colleagues in other areas who also attended the conference would like to explore issues raised from the inspiring conference.

You can contact the Inverclyde Bigger Picture Group on telephone 01475 714713 or 01475 714726.

Glasgow Autism Resource Centre Reference Library

The reference library at the ARC contains a range of books, videos, DVD's, journals, policy documents and leaflets of relevance to parents and professionals working with adults and children under the age of 16. Service users can borrow items and anyone else can spend as long as they like in the library reading, and can photocopy items (providing that they adhere to copyright restrictions) and rooms can also be booked for people to watch videos or DVDs on autism. You can visit the ARC at The

Quadrangle, 59 Ruchill Street, Maryhill, Glasgow, G20 9PX or contact Elizabeth Finnen,

4 Information and Education Officer for more details 0141 201 6247.



Chatability

'Chatability' (www.chatability.org.uk) is a secure internet chat room for disabled children and young people throughout Scotland. Its aims are to decrease isolation, improve literacy and IT skills and provide a forum for consultation.

The service provides hosted discussions with high profile experts from a variety of walks of life from sport, music and television to public policy. Chatability is co-ordinated by a team Leader and facilitated by a virtual Youth Worker. The virtual Youth Worker facilitates live on-line discussions and supports young people in talking informally with one another. They also encourage participation in formal hosted discussions as well as direct conversations in the initial stages until the young people become proficient enough to do this for themselves.

All young people taking part in Chatability will be given a voice and will share learning through discussion on a wide range of topics.

To find out more about Chatability, contact Derek Powell, Chatability Team Leader, Corseford School, Kilbarchan, Tel: 07843367394.

Post School Autism Spectrum Open Forum (PSASOF) (Fife) September 2006

As a group of interested multi-agency representatives, the PSASOF was originally set up in 2003 to examine transition issues in connection with the Beattie Report. Then chaired by Marion Baron, Careers Scotland (Fife), it became apparent that post-school / adult services and addressing the needs of those on the Autism Spectrum were somewhat disparate and, in some instances, non-existent.

Subsequently, a conference was organised with the main aim of mapping existing services, and to ascertain gaps in provision. Running parallel to this, members had examined paperwork relating to a proposal for an Autism Coordinator post in Fife. Written by Fife's multi-agency Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Steering Group, addressing childhood and adolescent services, it was agreed that the post, having an over-arching view of all ASD services from 'cradle to grave', would be of great benefit.

Presently existing as a sub-group to Fife's Learning Disability Strategy Implementation Group (LDSIG), and with membership increasing, the group is now jointly run by Stella Macdonald (NCAS Teaching Associate & chair of PHAD (Fife)) and Ken Keighren (Depute Principle Educational Psychologist). It continues to meet regularly creating an opportunity to network and, more recently, consulted prior to submission of a proposal, produced by the LDSIG, to the Scottish Executive ASD Reference Group requesting assistance with initial funding for an Autism Coordinator post. Provisional agreement has been obtained and we await further news.

Culminating from the: Beattie Report; conference findings; and the Public Health Institute in Scotland's Needs Assessment Report for those on the Autism Spectrum, the group is considering with Dr. Wendy Simpson (Public Health Scientist) the design of a piece of research with a focus on transition into post-school / adult services. This follows research carried out by Wendy in 2001, on families' views of childhood and adolescent services for Autism.

It is anticipated that findings from the study will aid in identifying existing services and good practice, along with desired services and any difficulties experienced by service-users and their families. Armed with this information a Care Pathway may be developed to cater for this important and challenging transitional stage, ensuring that services are both effective and suitable for the needs of those using them. We look forward to making progress.

Make school make sense

On October 31st, the National Autistic Society (NAS) Scotland launched its first ever education campaign, *make school make sense*, at a reception in the Scottish Parliament.

Education is the one of the most important issues facing children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. However, reported failures in the education system are causing misery for many of the estimated 8000 school-age children with ASD and their families in Scotland. The *make school make sense* campaign aims to improve educational provision for children and young people with ASD. Through the campaign we aim to motivate and support individuals and groups to put pressure on their local and national decision makers to implement the campaign demands.

NAS Scotland has published a report based on responses from a membership survey on the issue of education. This report reveals that over a third of families surveyed had to wait longer than a year before their children received any support at school; over a third of children surveyed have been bullied at school; and that although 1 in every 110 children has ASD, there is currently no requirement for teachers to undertake any training in autism. Just one in three parents surveyed is satisfied with the level of understanding of autism at their child's school.

The campaign is centred around three key demands:

- The right school for every child
- The right training for every teacher
- The right approach in every school

The aim of the campaign is not only to outline the barriers which children with ASD face in accessing an appropriate education, but also to promote good practice and to disseminate this practice as widely as possible. Where good practice exists, the NAS Scotland want to highlight it so that it can be replicated throughout Scotland and beyond. As part of this, they are asking people to nominate a *make school make sense* hero – someone you know who has made a positive difference to the education of a child or young person with an ASD.

For many children with autism, it is the dedication of one individual that transforms the school experience to allow them to succeed. If you know of someone who has made a positive difference to your experiences at school, or the experience of your child with autism, this is your opportunity to recognise them as a *make school make sense* hero!

Your *make school make sense* hero might be a teacher, a school student, a local authority representative, or anyone you feel has made a difference to your educational experience or the schooling of someone you know. You can nominate a *make school make sense* hero, and also find out more information about the campaign, on the NAS website at www.autism.org.uk/campaign.

The HMIE publish report on 'Education for Pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders'

This report was produced and published in October in response to the request of the Scottish Ministers that HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) carry out a task to evaluate and report on the educational provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Scotland. The report makes 8 recommendations for education authorities and schools and a full copy can be accessed at: <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/epasd.pdf>.



As part of that task, HMIE was charged with identifying good practice and making recommendations for moving forward. The HMIE also commissioned the National Centre for Autism Studies to produce a literature review (available at www.hmie.gov.uk) which provides a background to ASD and includes 6 information about the range of approaches used to teach children with ASD.

National Centre for Autism Studies: Service response to HMIE 'Education for Pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders' Report.

Educational services will be in a process of responding to recommendations made in the HMIE 'Education for Pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders' Report and The National Centre for Autism Studies (NCAS), at the University of Strathclyde, may be able to help. NCAS can provide advice on autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in education.

The range of advice includes strategy development, training for staff, support for parents and families, and advice on pupil support for all autism spectrum presentations including Asperger's. NCAS have a multi-disciplinary team who provide expertise in the theory and practice of autism, research in autism, social interaction and understanding, play in autism, emotional well-being, behaviour, communication, and all aspects of autism and school education. They work in collaboration with a wide range of partners including the main autism organisations in Scotland.

For more information contact Prof. Aline-Wendy Dunlop at a.w.a.dunlop@strath.ac.uk, or on 0141 950 3742, or Charlene Tait at charlene.tait@strath.ac.uk or on 0141 950 3522.

Research

Participants sought for workplace study

Dr Elisabeth Hill, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology at Goldsmiths, the University of London, is involved in setting up a study to find out about the experiences of parents of children with ASD and of adults with ASD in the workplace. Participants would be required to complete a short questionnaire on the internet which will take between 5-15 minutes. Participants do not need to be in current employment to take part in the study. Contact Dr Hill at 020 7919 7886 for further details or you can access the questionnaire at <http://homepages.gold.ac.uk/autismandemployment>

Benefits of Parental Involvement in an Occupational Therapy Group for Children with Sensory Processing and Related Behavioural Difficulties

A pilot study took place in February 2006 of Parental Satisfaction of the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service (POTS) in Edinburgh's Child and Family Centres and produced some very interesting and informative results, (Brownlee and Munro 2005.) 75% of parents were keen to be given the opportunity to attend their children's OT sessions and 67% expressed a wish to attend a practical advice group, at which they could meet other parents of children with similar needs. As a result of the main findings of this study the team have decided to respond to the expressed parental preferences to treatment approaches. Moreover, a commitment has been made to follow through with the proposed 'future study', looking at stress levels experienced by parents of children who require OT intervention.

Further details of the study will be published on the Scottish Autism Service Network website research section in due course and the POTS team can be contacted on 0131 657 1364.

Face processing in Asperger syndrome

Collaborative research is taking place between Stirling and Edinburgh Universities whereby tasks will be carried out by individuals with Asperger syndrome to build a profile of abilities regarding the interpretation of faces and non-face objects. The overall profile of skills will be compared to the abilities of two individuals who exhibit an interesting relationship between their familiar face processing ability (related to a known deficit called 'prosopagnosia') and their diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. The overall aim is to identify how these two individuals differ from other people with Asperger syndrome.

The researchers would like to recruit a number of adult participants (aged 20 to 45) who have a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. The researcher will carry out a number of face-related tasks with the participant, in a session lasting approximately 30-60 minutes. The research can take place in Stirling, Edinburgh, or if convenient and practical the researcher could visit the participant at their home.

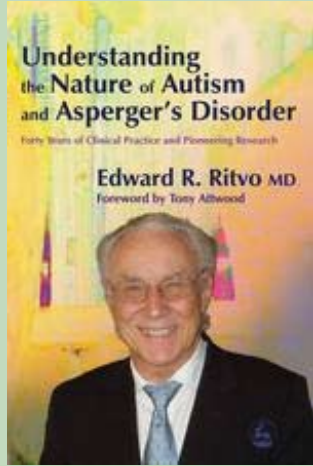
For more information please contact Debbie Riby on 01786 466 375, email deborah.riby@stir.ac.uk or visit: <http://www.psychology.stir.ac.uk/staff/driby/index.php>.

New Books and Resources

Please note, we do not specifically endorse any of these books or publishers and the information provided is not our opinion, but information taken from publishers and written by Network members as reviews. We have provided this information so that Network members are kept up to date about new books regarding ASD that are being published and can explore them further for themselves.

Understanding the Nature of Autism and Asperger's Disorder

by Edward R. Ritvo



This book is recommended to all those interested in the history of ASD, and, in particular, the chapters relating to pioneering research. Edward Ritvo is an internationally recognised medical expert, researcher and pioneer in the field of ASD and much of what is known about these disorders today is based on his painstaking research and groundbreaking discoveries. This book is written in an “easy to read” style, not without humour and can be enjoyed by both parent and professional. **Review by Ann James of Fife Action on Autism**

ISBN-10: 1-84310-814-3 ISBN-13: 9781843108146

2005 Paperback, 176pp

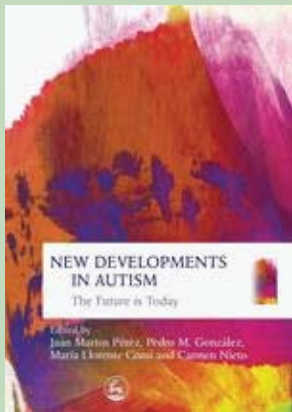
£13.99, JKP Publishing

For more information phone 020 7833 2307, e-mail post@jpk.com or visit:

<http://www.jpk.com/catalogue/book.php/isbn/9781843108146>

New Developments in Autism: The Future is Today

edited by Juan Martos Pérez, Pedro M. González, María Llorente Comí & Carmen Nieto



This international collection provides an overview of cutting-edge research on autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) by well-known experts in the field, stressing the importance of early diagnosis and a good working relationship between parents and professionals. The contributors cover a wide range of aspects of ASDs, from early assessment techniques, neurodevelopment and brain function to language development, executive function and genetic research. They explore how individuals with ASDs think and give evidence-based guidance on how to handle difficulties with social interaction and language development using appropriate interventions.

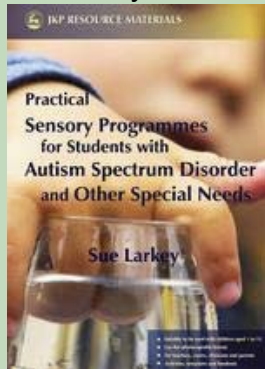
ISBN: 1 84310 449 0

£29.99; Jessica Kingsley Publishers

For information visit <http://www.jpk.com/new/1-84310-449-0>, phone 020 7833 2307, or e-mail post@jpk.com.

Practical Sensory Programmes for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Special Needs

by Sue Larkey



Children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) often have sensory processing difficulties and may be very sensitive to particular sounds or materials, or unresponsive to injuries most children would find painful. This practical book offers a six-step approach to developing a successful programme to help children cope with sensory input they find overwhelming, and to identify activities they may find relaxing or rewarding.

Sue Larkey draws on her experience of working with children with autism to offer more than 30 activities using touch, sound, taste, vision and movement, and gives advice on how to use these activities as opportunities to improve children's communication skills. She provides photocopiable checklists to assess children's sensory reactions, sleep patterns, sense of movement and use of eye contact.

ISBN: 1 84310 479 2

£17.99; Jessica Kingsley Publishers

For information visit <http://www.jpk.com/new/1-84310-479-2>, phone 020 7833 2307, or e-mail post@jpk.com.

Inclusion in the secondary classroom: support materials for children with autistic spectrum disorders by Joy Beaney and PennyKershaw



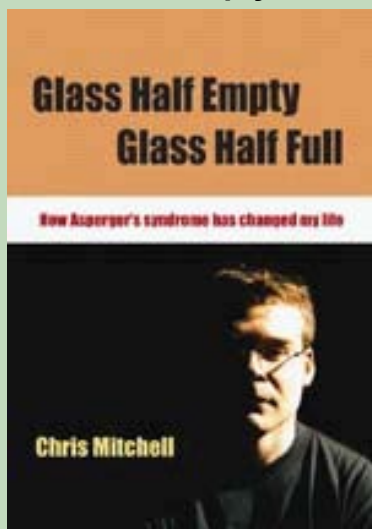
This book contains practical strategies and photocopiable work materials for those working with children with ASD in special schools and for mainstream staff.

ISBN: 1 905722 02 8

£10.99 plus p&p; the National Autistic Society

For information contact Central Books Ltd on 0845 458 9911, email nas@centralbooks.com or visit: <http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=803&a=11394>.

Glass Half Empty, Glass Half Full by Chris Mitchell



Chris comes from the N.E. of England and was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in 1998 at the age of 20. His book is written in 2 parts, the first documenting the years before diagnosis, when family and school life were so difficult and the second describing life after diagnosis and the positive changes in his life which came from the understanding of how A.S. was affecting him. This is a book which can easily be read by those with AS as well as by their family and friends. The heartbreak and despair of living with an undiagnosed disability is well documented but then balanced by the enormous benefits that can follow diagnosis.

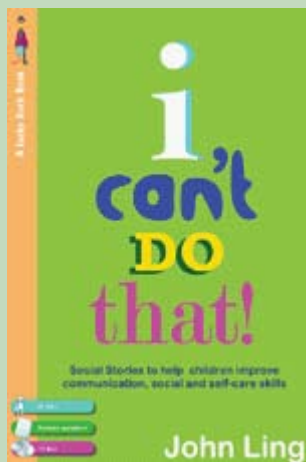
Review by Ann James of Fife Action on Autism

Paperback. ISBN: 1 412911621

£17.99; Paul Chapman Educational Publishing

For more info phone 020 7324 8703, email bookorders@sagepub.co.uk or visit: <http://www.paulchapmanpublishing.co.uk/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book228140>

I Can't Do That! by John Ling



Social Stories were originally developed to help children on the autistic spectrum understand the social confusion that they faced in coming to terms with their worlds. John provides over 80 stories he has used as a teacher in Kirklees for all sorts of children, including those with language delays, communication difficulties, difficult behaviour, antisocial behaviour as well as those with autism.

Examples are provided, but the intention is that the adult and child work together to write a personal story that the child owns. The stories are practical, the language is down to earth and the subjects include those that are often seen embarrassing to deal with.

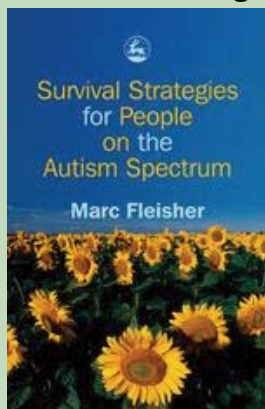
Paperback. ISBN: 9781412919074

£18.99; Paul Chapman Educational Publishing

For more info phone 020 7324 8703, email bookorders@sagepub.co.uk or visit:

<http://www.paulchapmanpublishing.co.uk/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book228418>

Survival Strategies for People on the Autism Spectrum by Marc Fleisher



Marc Fleisher speaks from first hand experience about the coping strategies he himself has had to learn - often the hard way. Written particularly for young people who are just beginning to become independent from their parents, perhaps living in their own home for the first time, this book shows how to approach apparent problems with hope and the expectation of an improved quality of life.

Paperback, ISBN-10: 1-84310-261-7 ISBN-13: 9781843102618

200pp, 2005, £12.99; Jessica Kingsley Publishers

For information visit <http://www.jkp.com/catalogue/book.php/isbn/1-84310-261-7>, phone 020 7833 2307, or e-mail post@jkp.com.

Events

The Multi-Professional Postgraduate Certificate in Autism in Dumfries & Galloway

Applications are currently being taken for an outreach delivery of University of Strathclyde Multi-Professional Postgraduate Certificate in Autism in Dumfries & Galloway that will commence in February. This course will be of interest and relevance to practitioners from a range of health, education, social work and voluntary sector professions. Additionally family members are also welcome. This is a modular programme, and as a number of individuals across the authority have already undertaken the Raising Awareness in Autism Module or Understanding the impact of Autism, if this has been taken at credit level it is likely to count towards the full certificate.

For full details contact Charlene Tait at Charlene.tait@strath.ac.uk or on telephone 0141 950 3522.

NAS Scotland help! Programmes for Early 2007

See details below of NAS Scotland help programmes around Scotland from January until March 2007.

- January 17th: The Anchor Centre, Paisley – 1 day programme
- January 13th & 20th: Skye – 2 day programme
- January 22nd, 29th & February 5th: 3 day programme for parents of teenagers at the ARC, Glasgow
- January 27th & 29th: 2 day programme - Inverness
- February 17th: Anger Management - Inverness
- March 3rd: Anger Management – Caithness
- March 10th: Anger Management – Ross-shire
- March 12th & 13th: Town Hall, Milngavie, East Dunbartonshire
- March 20th & 21st: Loirston Primary School, Cove, Aberdeen

For more info contact: Dawn Edwards (Highland) on 01463 258 802 or dawn.edwards@nas.org.uk, or Lauren Jarvis (rest of Scotland) on 0141 285 7114 lauren.jarvis@nas.org.uk.

Communication and Autism: Promoting Understanding and Participation in the Classroom

Wed 17th Jan 07, New Struan, Alloa

The course aims to explore the diversity of communication differences & difficulties in ASD, the conditions required for functional communication development, the function and form of visual communication, and an eclectic approach in offering practical support to individuals with ASD in their abilities to understand, participate and communicate through their learning. Full details can be found on the Scottish Society for Autism website at www.autism-in-scotland.org.uk or telephone Kerry-Ann MacDonald on 01259 222032 or e-mail macdonald@autism-in-scotland.org.uk.

Adults with Incapacity Act 2000 - 25th January 2007, Glasgow

The aim of this course is to provide participants with an understanding of the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000, the background to it, and the mechanisms introduced by the Act to enable intervention to ensure the welfare of an adult with incapacity and help with managing finances.

For info phone 0141 221 9141, email training@carerscotland.org or visit www.carerscotland.org/Policyandpractice/Training/Trainingcalendar/1110296636.

Carer Awareness - 31st Jan – Edinburgh, 21st Feb – Inverness, 20th March - Glasgow

This course aims to raise awareness of carers' needs amongst those working in the health, social care, education, local authority and voluntary sectors, and enable participants to gain an understanding of what it is like to be a carer.

For information telephone 0141 221 9141, email training@carerscotland.org or visit: <http://www.carerscotland.org/Policyandpractice/Training/Trainingcalendar/1110294269>

Make School Make Sense - Thursday 15th February 2007, Capital Hotel, Edinburgh
This one-day conference will explore the issues surrounding autism and education, highlighting some common difficulties that arise and offering suggestions on potential ways forward to best meet the support needs of children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders. The conference speakers will give an insight into their own experiences and explore ways of recognising and meeting the ever changing and varied needs of these individuals during their time in education.

For info phone 0115 911 3367, e-mail conference@nas.org.uk or visit: www.autism.org.uk/conferences

An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders - Tuesday 27th February 2007, New Struan, Alloa
This workshop is designed for practitioners new to the field of autism. Participants will be introduced to basic concepts and theories relating to Autism Spectrum Disorders. The notion of autism as a spectrum disorder will be explored along with biological, psychological and behavioural aspects of the condition.

Full details can be found on the Scottish Society for Autism website www.autism-in-scotland.org.uk, telephone Kerry-Ann MacDonald on 01259 222032 or e-mail macdonald@autism-in-scotland.org.uk

A Reconstruction of the Sensory World of Autism - Tuesday 6th March 2007, New Struan, Alloa
The course aims to provide understanding of sensoryperceptual problems faced by children with ASDs, awareness of how certain behaviours can develop as a result of sensoryperceptual differences, and awareness of strategies & environmental changes that can help individuals overcome these difficulties.

Full details can be found on the Scottish Society for Autism website www.autism-in-scotland.org.uk, telephone Kerry-Ann MacDonald on 01259 222032 or e-mail macdonald@autism-in-scotland.org.uk

One-day workshop: Teaching 9 Critical Communication Skills - 21st March 2007, Tulip Inn, Glasgow
This workshop describes 9 critical functional communication skills required by communicators and will distinguish between communication that is spontaneous, responsive, or imitative. When people cannot initiate or otherwise calmly use these skills, many serious behaviour problems are likely to arise. The workshop will describe effective training strategies for children who speak or sign as well as those using augmentative or alternative communication systems.

For details email pyramid@pecs.org.uk, phone 01273 609555 or visit:
http://www.pecs.org.uk/asp/event_view.asp?SeminarCounter=386

2 Day PECS Workshop - 22nd March 2007, Tulip Inn, Glasgow
A 2 day workshop consisting of 13 hours of training on the background, rationale & implementation of PECS. Also covered are the Pyramid Approach to Education; how to create effective learning environments; other visual strategies useful for communication and independence.

For details email pyramid@pecs.org.uk, phone 01273 609555 or visit:
http://www.pecs.org.uk/asp/event_view.asp?SeminarCounter=387.

Transforming Transitions - 11th to 14th Apr 07, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
This International Transitions Research Conference will promote new interdisciplinary research, where instead of treating aspects of transition in isolation an environment is created where the significances of transition may be debated across disciplines and life-stages. By conceptualising transition in this way, it is proposed that transitions are not only transforming but need to be transformed.

The conference invites researchers, policy makers and practitioners to come together to explore significant life transitions, debate theoretical models, contest and stimulate policy and research as well as influence the practical day-to-day experience of individuals, groups and systems in transition.

For details email transitions2007@meetingmakers.co.uk, phone 0141 434 1500 or visit:
www.transitions2007.com.

Learning Resource on ASD's for GP's and Primary Care Practitioners

A new website designed to support Primary Care Professionals was launched by NES in September. The resource provides information which allows primary care practitioners to better understand the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

A scoping exercise in the early part of 2005 first highlighted the need for a resource which could support primary care professionals when trying to sort out routine patient care for patients who have an ASD. The work which was carried out by the National Centre for Autism Studies was then considered by a steering group comprised of representatives from primary care staff, parents and NES. The steering group decided that a web-based resource would be most effective and this was taken forward and developed by the University of Birmingham along with a range of supporting leaflets.

The website does not provide treatment advice but it aims to assist practitioners to support and deliver routine care effectively to people with ASD (and their families) as well as increasing their understanding of when and how to refer on to a specific diagnostic team.

The website offers a series of case studies, scenarios and references as well as a glossary of terms related to ASD and the supporting material designed in conjunction with the website. Simply log on to this address to access it: www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/asd

Leaflets to accompany the web resource and bookmarks with the web address are available from Audrey-Joan.Reyburn@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Leaflets

The following leaflets have been updated by the DWP and are now available: Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Disability Living Allowance for Children and Vaccine Damage Payments. Visit http://www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/leaflets_guides.asp or telephone the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00.

Improvement to the rules for claiming Carer's Allowance

Changes to Carer's Allowance rules were introduced from April 10th 2006 and claims can now be made, without loss of benefit, up to three months after the disabled person who receives the care is awarded: Attendance Allowance, the middle or highest rate of the Disability Living Allowance care component or a qualifying rate of Constant Attendance Allowance. Entitlement will start from the same date as the disabled person's entitlement, providing the qualifying conditions have been met throughout the period. For example, if an individual claims DLA on 17 April 2006, an award of the highest rate of the care component is made, from that date, on 19 July 2006. For further details visit:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/CaringForSomeone/MoneyMatters/MoneyArticles/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=10012522&chk=kAko1j or phone the Carers Allowance Unit on 01253 856 123.

Terminology: We have used the terminology 'Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)' throughout **Network News** to refer to people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and those with related neurological differences. Following consultation at our forums the majority felt that ASD was the most appropriate term. However, some items in the newsletter are written by individuals from other agencies and therefore we have not necessarily changed their use of terminology.

The views, opinions and information contained in *Network News* are not automatically those of the Scottish Autism Service Network or the University of Strathclyde and reference to approaches or views does not necessarily imply that these are endorsed by SASN or the University of Strathclyde. SASN and the University of Strathclyde cannot be held responsible for any incorrect information.

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E-mail: scottishautismnetwork@strath.ac.uk

Visit: www.scottishautismnetwork.org.uk

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