

## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

### 1. DIFFICULTY WITH SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

People with ASD have difficulty with verbal (speech) and non-verbal (body language & facial expression) communication. Some people with ASD do not speak or have limited speech and use other forms of communication such as objects or visual symbols to communicate their needs. Other people with ASD may have good language skills but don't understand social nuances or are not reciprocal (to and fro between people) in the manner in which they communicate.

### 2. DIFFICULTY WITH SOCIAL INTERACTION

People with ASD can find it difficult to make friends. Some may want to have friends and interact with others but are unsure who to and often get it wrong. They have difficulty recognising other people's emotions and feelings and have difficulty expressing their own. This can make them appear insensitive or cause them to behave inappropriately. This is made worse by their difficulty understanding social rules that are not obvious for example not commenting on someone's weight, appearance or smell in public.

### 3. DIFFICULTY WITH SOCIAL IMAGINATION

People with ASD have difficulty with flexibility of thought. This means that they have difficulty coping with change or in new or unfamiliar situations. Generalising skills from one situation to the next can be difficult. They can have difficulty understanding and interpreting other people's thoughts and feelings which may cause them to appear unempathetic. Although they can be creative, for example be good artists and musicians, children with autism have difficulty with play because of limited play ideas.