

## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER – RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

### REPETITIVE INTERESTS AND STEREOTYPE BEHAVIOURS:

Repetitive behaviours may include spinning objects, flicking objects such as a piece of string, hand flapping, rocking, head banging and complex body movements. People with ASD perform these for a number of reasons: for pleasure, as a calming strategy to cope with stress or anxiety, as a means to get more sensory input and also as a means to reduce sensory input. The need for sameness can mean that routines and play can become ritualistic, needing to be carried out in the same manner each time. People with ASD can develop very rigid preferences and intense interests can lead to obsessions. These obsessions, repetitive behaviours and routines are a means to manage anxiety and gain control over what is frequently a very confusing world.

### SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES:

Many people with ASD have difficulty processing everyday sensory information such as touch of clothing, smells of food, bright lights etc. they can be over- or under-sensitive to all or any of the seven senses (touch, smell, sound, sight, taste, body awareness, balance)

### MOTOR CO-ORDINATION AND ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS:

Children with ASD's co-ordination may be immature and as they get older they may lack fluency and efficiency in their movements. Children may need support in learning activities that require manual dexterity such as using eating utensils and dressing. Teachers frequently notice difficulties with fine motor skills affecting handwriting. Co-ordination difficulties may be evident during sports and playground games for example ball sports. In adolescence and adulthood organisational difficulties become more evident, with difficulties in planning, time management, understanding abstract concepts and problem-solving.