



OAASIS INFORMATION SHEET

Information for the partners of people with Asperger Syndrome

Office for
Advice
Assistance
Support
and
Information
on
Special needs

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OAASIS
A part of
Cambian Education
Services



Some hints ...

When speaking to someone with AS –

- **Timing:** make sure they are *ready* to listen when you speak to them and give them time to assimilate your words and meaning
- **Clarity:** make sure the information, instructions or requests you give are in clear, simple language; avoid idioms and vague concepts
- **Written lists:** are helpful to back up your requests or instructions
- **Advance notice:** forewarning of changes to their usual routine will help lessen traumas
- **Social etiquette:** if not learnt during childhood can be a minefield for adults with AS. Explain situations beforehand, and offer some guidelines as to what to talk about, what to do, etc. Offer *some* guidance on what **not** to do and say as well, but don't make things too involved. End up with the positives (i.e. what you can do) as these may be remembered better than the things you cannot do and say
- **Own time:** very precious for people with AS. Allow them their own space.

Remember –

- Look after yourself and your needs and take time out to relax and de-stress yourself.
- Talk to someone who knows about the condition so that they can give you advice and support.
- Accept that your partner will probably not be able to change their ways or 'get better' although certain behaviours can be modified.
- Routines and agreed timetables can help you both.
- Try to remember how hard they find the world around them and very often their behaviour or lack of feeling towards you cannot be helped and is not meant personally.
- What you see is not what you get: AS can magnify or cloak their true feelings. Their facial expressions do not necessarily reflect what's inside, so check that things have been understood
- Do not get annoyed with your partner or make them responsible for what *you* are feeling; it is the AS you must deal with
- Don't forget that most AS people are very literal: they say what they mean and unless taught, may cause offence with their opinions on personal themes!
- No amount of hinting, frowns, cross looks, folded arms or deep and heavy sighing will work if you are annoyed about something. Tell them what is making you upset. Also tell them when you are pleased when they have done something good, and tell them if these good actions can be put to use in other situations.
- If you can no longer cope you can consider ending the relationship – you are not solely responsible for them, you are responsible for yourself too.

Sources of help:

The **NAS website** has a section of information for partners. Go to www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=126. The section includes issues for partners, real life stories, useful websites, and an enquiry service.

Derby Relate has counsellors trained in Asperger Syndrome – they offer one-to-one counselling and have a **national telephone helpline** every Tuesday 10.30am to 4.30pm on tel: 01332 349177. They may also know of counsellors in other areas. Some of the other branches offer specialist work with people with Asperger Syndrome – telephone their central number on 0300 100 1234 to find out. www.relate.org.uk

Independent counsellors for adults with AS (a fee will be involved):

Dilemma Consultancy in Human Relations was founded by Prof Digby Tantam and Prof Emmy van Deurzen. Based in Sheffield and London, their counsellors and psychotherapists work in the existential tradition and offer assessment, counselling and psychotherapy services for individuals and couples, including and marital work. Tel: 0114 266 0543. Website: www.dilemmasconsultancy.org

Hendrickx Associates provide advice and support for those affected by Asperger Syndrome relationships – couples or either partner. They also provide specialist Asperger Syndrome counselling and coaching for individuals and family members who require more emotional support. Tel. no. 01273 has a website where you can locate a 711258, website: www.asperger-training.com and email: info@asperger-training.com.

Park Counselling Centre in Coventry is where Maxine Aston is a private counsellor. She has written several books (see below) and has her own informative website on Asperger Syndrome in adults and offers Couples Counselling when one (or both) has AS. She has a website at www.maxineaston.co.uk, email maxineaston@aol.com and tel. no. 02476 224422. There is also information on this site about *Cassandra Affective Disorder* (CAD) – described as the difficulties someone will experience when they are emotionally deprived.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy for a therapist in your area, or you can email them for a paper copy of their directory. Website: www.bacp.co.uk. Email: bacp@bacp.co.uk. Tel: 01455 883300.

Websites/online forums:

- www.tonyattwood.com.au. is the website of Dr Tony Attwood, a well known Asperger specialist, has lots of information on Asperger Syndrome including research and links to other sites.
- www.faaas.org is the website of Families of Adults Afflicted with Asperger Syndrome.
- www.aspires-relationships.com/. ASPIRES is an extensive on-line resource for the partners and families of adults diagnosed or thought to be on the autistic spectrum.
- www.asperger-marriage.info is the Asperger Marriage Website is run by Chris and Gisela Slater-Walker, a married couple, one of whom has AS.
- <http://people.delphiforums.com/mamamarch/aspartners/index.html> an online forum for partners of people with AS.
- www.groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/aut-partners is a discussion/support list for partners of people with an ASD.

Reading: see also OAASIS information sheet ‘Books – where to find them’

The Other Half of Asperger Syndrome: a guide to living in an intimate relationship with a partner who has Asperger Syndrome by Maxine Aston. Publisher: NAS. Priced £8.00.

Aspergers in Love: Couple Relationships and Family Affairs by Maxine Aston. Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. Priced £14.95.

Autism / Aspergers: Solving the Relationship Puzzle by Steven E Gutstein. Publisher: Future Horizons. Priced \$34.95.

Loving Mr Spock by Barbara Jacobs. Publisher: Michael Joseph. The story of an Asperger Syndrome man by the woman who loved him. Penguin, 2003. ISBN 978 1 84310 472 8. Priced £12.99.

An Asperger Marriage by Gizela and Christopher Slater-Walker. Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. Written by an English couple - Christopher was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome when an adult. Priced £12.95.

Asperger Syndrome and Long term Relationships by Ashley Stanford. Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. Written by the wife of someone with AS. They live in the USA. £13.95.

Love Sex and Long-Term Relationships: What People with Asperger Syndrome Really Really Want by Sarah Hendricks. Publisher Jessica Kingsley. Price £13.99.

All books available either through:

The **NAS** - Website: www.autism.org.uk/pubs, HO Publications Dept Tel: 0207 903 3595. NAS books are ordered via Central Books Ltd, Tel: 0845 458 9911, Email nas@centralbooks.com.

or **Jessica Kingsley Publishers** - Website: www.jkp.com, Email: post@jkp.com, Tel: 020 7833 2307.

or Amazon, www.amazon.co.uk.

And *The Asperger Love Guide – A Practical Guide for Adults with Asperger’s Syndrome to Seeking, Establishing and Maintaining Successful Relationships*. The authors, Genevieve Edmonds and Dean Worton, are both adults with AS. Available from Sage Publications www.sagepub.co.uk, priced £17.99.

Cambian Education Services run seven residential special schools and colleges for young people with autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger Syndrome/HFA, severe learning difficulties. OAASIS can give you advice on the schools and send you their prospectuses or visit the website www.cambianeducation.com.

OAASIS produces a wide range of **free Information Sheets**, **8 publications** entitled ‘First Guide to...’ and **wallet sized cards** explaining 9 learning disabilities. Please contact OAASIS (see front of sheet for contact details) for the full list, or view and download them on the website at www.oaasis.co.uk. All sheets are checked annually, please ensure you have the current version.