

## Asperger's Syndrome and Mental Health in College Students

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### **DO NOT REPRODUCE**

1. Do you know this student?
  - Won't read the text because it's "wrong"
  - Scored 800 math SATs
  - Can't get off the internet long enough to study
  - Fluent in four languages (self-taught)
  - Can't turn in the paper because it's not perfect
  - Gets into minor and major wrangles on campus
  - Doesn't learn from mistakes
  - Can't "repair" or change course after acquiring new info
  - Can't remember to refill or take their meds
  - Has a 150 IQ
  - Gets lost on campus on daily basis
2. A Favorable Prognosis
  - Older, smarter, milder better
  - Student with AS who complete college may have the best prognosis & employment outcomes
3. Definitions & History
  - Hans Asperger 1944
  - American Psychiatric Association 1994
  - Autism "epidemic" 2010?
  - What will happen 2012?
4. Pervasive Developmental Disorders per DSM-IV
  - Autistic Disorder
  - Asperger's Disorder
  - PDD-NOS
  - Rett's Disorder
  - Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
  - DSM-V??
5. Numbers going up
  - Spike in decade
  - Textbooks 4/10,000
  - Current estimate 1/100
  - Why didn't we see before? Cause?
6. Spectrum Revolution
  - Challenged classic view
  - Severe to mild (diagnoses, symptoms & impairments)
  - Numbers increase as severity decreases
7. Three Domains of Functioning
  - Social
  - Language
  - Behavior
8. Other Associated Features
  - Motor clumsiness

- Sensory sensitivities
- Self-regulation deficits
- Depression & anxiety
- 9. Keep in Mind
  - Each domain varies along its' own spectrum
  - Shifts with development and treatment
  - Moving targets
- 10. "Big" Problems
  - Poor integration & synthesis
  - Rigid
  - Social
  - Planning, shifting, prioritizing
  - Perspective taking
  - Motivation
  - Common sense
- 11. Social Markers
  - Eye contact
  - Social language
  - Inappropriate questions
  - Shared attention, pleasure, comfort
  - Facial expression (giving & getting)
  - Initiating & engaging
  - Interest & approach
- 12. Neurocognitive Processing
  - Widespread neurointegrative deficit
  - Facial processing
  - Executive dysfunction
  - "Theory of Mind"
  - Decreased empathy & increased systematizing
- 13. Etiology
  - Neurodevelopmental
  - Genetic (twin & family studies)
  - Sex differences
  - Similar phenotypes can occur in medical conditions
- 14. Nongenetic Hypotheses
  - Immune
  - Dietary
  - Referral bias
  - Over-identification
  - Vaccinations
  - Thimerisol (Hg toxicity)
- 15. Wide Range of Needs
  - Academic
  - Behavior
  - Co-curricular
- 16. Common Academic Difficulties
  - Overwhelmed
  - Time management & organization
  - Initiation & follow-through
  - Exams (though not usually time)
  - Using strategies flexibly

17. Academic Accommodations for AS
  - No guidelines
  - Understand diagnosis & student:
  - Fundamental requirements
  - Resources & policies on campus
18. Classroom Behaviors
  - Interruptions or speaking out
  - Correcting instructor
  - Ad hoc breaks
  - Eating
  - Sensory integration materials
  - Classmates' reactions
19. Residence Issues
  - Making friends, socializing, free time
  - Roommate
  - Sensory issues
  - Stalking, respecting personal space
  - Laundry & hygiene
  - Sleep/wake cycles
20. Judicial Affairs
  - Conduct codes applied
  - Disability not excuse for conduct breach
  - Student must understand rules & consequences
21. Clear Behavioral Requirements
  - Behavioral standards & expectations explicit
  - Student & family understand
  - Standards not subject to accommodation
22. Newness of campus
  - Size & culture
  - Navigating campus
  - Unfamiliar terms
  - Campus & faculty expectations
  - Different schedules
23. New + Change = Bad
  - Change or novelty
  - Increased anxiety
  - Atypical behaviors & increased symptoms
24. Stress Management
  - What precipitates crisis?
  - You know when student stressed?
  - Student knows when stressed?
  - Behaviors? Interactions?
  - Calming methods
  - Medications?
25. Treatment
  - Psychopharmacology per symptoms & comorbidity
  - Educational interventions
  - Behavioral (ABA)
  - Adjunctive (S/L, OT, PT)
  - Alternative (dietary, homeopathic, chelation, AIT, etc.)
  - Early and intensive

26. SEADs
  - “Strategic Education for students with Autistic Disorders”
  - Wolf & Thierfeld Brown, 2005, 2007
  - Existing interventions do not address needs of population
  - Targeted intervention specifically designed for college students with ASD
27. Training Campus
  - Upper Administration
  - Student Affairs (Dean of Students)
  - Academic Affairs
  - Enrollment & Registrar
  - Student Health & Counseling
28. Start with Student Affairs
  - Most out-of class contact with students
  - Many problems nonacademic
29. e.g. Res. Life Training
  - Fact Sheets
  - Definition
  - Role plays
  - Typical symptoms
  - Issues & behaviors
  - Strategies
  - Train directors, RAs, etc.
  - Support residence hall transition & accommodations
  - Serve as resource and go-to for residential issues
30. Positive College Adjustment
  - Accepts and understand disability
  - Sets realistic goals
  - Self-advocates
  - Uses resources
  - Develops advanced social skills
  - Seeks training in skills and strategies
  - Knows rights and responsibilities
31. Successful AS Students
  - Start transition process early
  - More resilient & flexible
  - Possess motivation, self determination & self efficacy
32. Intrinsic meets extrinsic
  - Intrinsic (student variables)
  - Extrinsic (institutional variables)
  - Service delivery & accommodation involves a dynamic interplay between these domains