

# autism

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Do you have any comments, suggestions to offer? Information and experience to share? We look forward to our readers' participation. Send letters, articles, illustrations to:

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### Cover Illustration

'Girl with Umbrella'  
by  
Vrinda, a student at Open Door

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PAGE ONE
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*This issue of Autism Network  
is dedicated to B and his family...*

...Few would believe that B was actually a gentle soul. When he came to us the young man had already dropped out of several placements. I had known the family for many years but met the young man for the first time. An intelligent young man whose condition had been aggravated by secondary deficits resulting from lack of proper therapy, who therefore functioned at a far lower intellectual level. Given how able he was, it was a miracle that B had received a diagnosis at all so many years ago. That he had not been dismissed with having childhood schizophrenia at a time when there was minimal understanding of the autistic world. And no understanding of the progress the kids were capable of making. How frustrating it must have been for the little boy dismissed as intellectually unable when actually there was a bright little mind ticking away, trying to cope with a very confusing world.

B's parents had had a rough time trying to do the best for their son who they loved deeply and yet were helpless to assist. As was wont at the time the only information they had access to was often misleading and incorrect.

When he came to us B entered a setting where he had some control. Where people met him half way instead of insisting he do everything their way. He began to smile a lot. He 'chatted' with another young man about trains. He actually held conversations. There was no pushing to acquire academic skills that had no relevance to his life. He gifted us with a glimpse of his sense of humour. On one occasion a therapist turned round to write some instructions on the whiteboard leaving her huge granny glasses on the table. When she turned round B was wearing the glasses and a huge smile on his face.

Then B joined another setting and we consoled ourselves with the thought that he had moved for reasons other than being asked to leave. But we were saddened nonetheless: B still had challenging behaviours, but he had started settling down, and most importantly he was happy. No drugs. No coercion. However B moved on. His anxious mother did the best she could, and kept in

touch especially when there were pressing concerns. Often I had to repress the urge to say – Please send him back to us. That would have been unprofessional. So we tried not to interfere.

Did we do the right thing? Did we not do enough? Would we have really made any difference? We will never have the answers. B took his life two days ago. A victim of depression that strikes so many very high functioning young people on the spectrum, who find it hard to live with the extreme loneliness of their existence, where few understand their world.

A therapist and mother who knew, loved, and had worked with B wept: What should we do? I don't know. With our limited resources I know that we will never be able to help all the hundreds who need help. The chilling truth is, the more able the young person, the greater the expectations, the more the pressure on the individual. All of us who knew and loved B hope and pray that we wake up to the fact that academics alone will not save our children. No matter how able, they all have crucial deficits in social functioning. It is acceptance coupled with understanding social skills needs, and providing social support that will see our children lead happy and fulfilling lives.

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**Please call Reeta Sabharwal at: 98111 03702**

# Dating, Marriage & Autism: A Personal Perspective

Stephen Shore

*Stephen Shore is on the Board of Directors of the Autism Society of America, and involved in or plays a similar leadership role in other autism-related groups. In addition to consulting internationally on the topic of relationships, among other issues, he is the author of the book 'Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences With Autism and Asperger Syndrome'.*

One doesn't need to be on the autism spectrum to be mystified by what is involved in dating. The challenges of beginning as acquaintances, and shifting to friendship and/or a significant other, requires excellent communication in the realms of the verbal, nonverbal, pragmatics and 'theory of mind.'

THOSE diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder are people too. The variations of strengths and needs non-spectrum people have are just as valid as someone on the spectrum. So by looking at what could make socialization and dating easier for non-spectrum people and by goosing the amplitude some, perhaps it is possible to arrive at accommodations that will not only be useful to those on the spectrum, but perhaps assist a larger population of people, too.

## Background

I was diagnosed at age two-and-a-half as having 'atypical development with strong autistic tendencies,' and, at one point, viewed as being 'too sick' to be treated on an outpatient basis and was recommended for institutionalization. With much help from my parents, teachers, and others, I am currently completing a doctoral degree in special education at Boston University with a focus on helping people in the autism spectrum develop their capacities to the fullest. I am also married and consult internationally on adult issues pertinent to relationships, among other topics. In this article, I talk about how and why developing relationships for individuals on the autism spectrum can be difficult, and I offer examples of the kinds of things I did that helped me make it through my adolescent years and early adulthood.

## Socializing

For starters, 'small talk' can be difficult. Small talk is introductory conversation that doesn't really go anywhere. For example, when passing a co-worker you

may inquire, "How are you?" The response will most likely be "Fine, and you?" Communication with those diagnosed with autism or Asperger Disorder tends to be more direction oriented. Activity-based gatherings are much easier for those on the spectrum, too, rather than socially intensive activities. Examples of activity-based events might include school clubs devoted to certain interests such as computers, math, or even Pokémon; socially-intensive activities include an office party, senior prom, or going to the bar. (For me, a bar is a basketful of sensory violations where observations can be made on non-spectrum interactions... but that's for another article.)

DURING high school, one of my special interests was bicycling. When I started a bicycle club in high school and joined community based bicycling clubs, such as American Youth Hostels, I was able put my interest to use by socializing with others. Perhaps more important, I had a captive audience for my bicycle preservation.

ANOTHER special interest – music – was satisfied when I joined middle and high school musical ensembles. So by making use of and engaging in these special interests, it was the difference between a miserable public school experience versus a tolerable or even great one.

## Demystifying Dating

A lot of thought should go into the process of dating. Hundreds of books have been written on the subject, and there are entire companies devoted to helping people find 'that perfect match.' But how does it all translate to dating?

IN most of Western cultures, the act of dating centers on socially based activities, where a premium is placed on nonverbal communication that buttresses communication of the verbal sort. There are some key things that may make getting to know other people and dating easier. One important aspect is focusing on a mutual interest or a

project, so that the center of attention is not on impressing or otherwise being concerned about saying the right thing at the right time. Even if there is no intent on reaching 'significant other status' with the other person, doing things with others can result in more friends and additional circulation in the community, as the probability of meeting others increases as one circulates with others.

JERRY Newport, a well-known person with Asperger's Disorder, indicates that he met his wife, Mary, at an Asperger's support group meeting. Both of them engaged in activities they liked, socialized with other like-minded individuals, and eventually they married.

### Types of Dates

There are three types of 'situations,' which I loosely classify as 'dates' – play dates, home work dates, and serious dates. These are activities where people get together with the goal of accomplishing a task and/or getting to know each other.

#### • *Play Dates*

The first of this type of activity are the play dates. At the elementary school age, due to today's busy life style, it is common for parents to set up play dates for their children. Parents of two or more children schedule a time for their young ones to get together for the purpose of playing.

#### • *Homework Dates*

The second category is the homework date. The homework date is an extension of the play date. Usually this happens unintentionally as students of middle or high school and college levels agree to meet to work on an outside-of-class assignment. This is how my wife, Yi Liu, and I met. Having, by chance, ended up in a music class, we agreed to meet regularly for mutual assistance. Since my wife-to-be had only recently arrived from the People's Republic of China, it was difficult for her to understand the instructions our music professor was giving, and, for her, it was a significant challenge. However, her musical ability somewhat exceeded that of our instructor, as she served as principal harpist of the Beijing Symphony for nine years before coming to the United States to further her education.

AT predetermined times we met at school, or at one of our homes, to work on the assignments. While I helped her understand the language aspects of the coursework, she assisted me in better understanding music. These

homework dates gave us a way to share a common interest (or project) and allowed us to know each other better. As with the play date, the activity was primary with the act of getting to know each other secondary. However, this secondary benefit of getting to know others in this manner is very important for anyone challenged by the 'standard' ways of meeting other people. Homework dates are one way to increase socialization with others.

#### • *Serious Dates*

These are situations where the goal of meeting is to get to know someone better for the express purpose of moving toward significant other status. This type of dating requires very good reading of subtle social situations and nonverbal cues; which can often be very difficult for people on the autism spectrum to perceive and decode accurately. Due to this difficulty in using the subtle nonverbal and verbal social cues that are often such an important component of the non-spectrum dating scene, I feel it is important for people on the spectrum to get to know others from a position of strength; things and/or through events where social interaction is secondary to activities at hand.

### Obstacles To Be Aware Of

There are obstacles that might affect your child's ability to develop relationships.

#### *Detecting Interest*

As I have written in my book, *Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome*, I depended on the women I dated to use the 'cranial concussive therapy method' in order to let her intentions be known to me. In other words, a woman would have to explicitly tell me and/or give me a hug to let me know that she desired to date me. Being unable to read the numerous dating-related nonverbal cues involved made it impossible for me to determine whether another person was interested in dating me, and I was very fortunate that no one took advantage of me given the situation.

#### *Reading Nonverbal Cues*

With that said, difficulty reading nonverbal cues related to dating can pose additional challenges for those with autism, particularly those desiring to meet others and establishing intimate relationships. For men with the disorder, this is especially hard. In society today, men are expected to make the first move; however they do so, they need to be able to detect the gesture will be welcome.

#### *Bullying*

Bullying by one's peers is a serious problem and can have

a life-long affect on someone's self esteem and how one interacts with others in the environment. An example of bullying is when a friend of mine on the autism spectrum was not only forced into and trapped in a school locker, but also locked into a dark room. As a result, she experiences a traumatic stress syndrome related effect if she feels she is locked in any room against her will. One time, when locked in a hotel room, it was all her friend could do to prevent her from trying to escape out a window...which was several stories above ground. I experienced bullying all through elementary school, even up until today. While in middle school when a group of children began to bully me, my math teacher handled the situation in an interesting fashion. First, he brought me into his office and asked for a list of children who were giving me a problem. I was very nervous at his proposal that we call each one down to his office and confront them individually. Eventually, though he talked me into pursuing these confrontations.

WITH sweaty palms I waited as my math teacher, who turned into my very own protector, called the first one of the students who had been bullying me to join us. Once in the room, my teacher explained to this person that even though I 'seemed a little different' there was no need to 'tease,' and he made it clear that further teasing would not be tolerated. At the end of the 15- minute session, the administrator asked both of us to shake hands and, down the road, those who were my enemies began to talk to me in a more reasonable fashion and were much friendlier.

### **Marriage**

Marriage to me, is very interesting, to say the least. The guidelines for maintaining a good marriage are similar to those who are not on the spectrum. They include a lot of hard work, honesty, and not depending on the other person to 'mind read' the other's desires and intentions. It is important for my wife to tell me if she is angry with me, rather than to depend on my trying to figure out her state of mind by her actions. If something is upsetting to another person or if they would like their partner does something, it is best for them to just directly talk about it in a calm manner.

FOR example, there is a windup travel alarm clock my wife uses to time her practice sessions on the harp. While most people may like the sound of a ticking clock, for me, it draws all of my attention and makes it impossible to concentrate on anything else such as reading or resting. Aural sensitivities make it difficult to

keep background stimuli out of the foreground and are common to those on the autism spectrum (*Smith-Myles, Cook, Miller, Rinner & Robbins, 2000*). My solution was to close up the clock and stuff it under the cushion of a chair.

SO when I would arrive home after a long day of work or studying, I'd find an angry wife storming around the house, demanding to know what I had done with the clock that was now missing. Although telling her where the clock was during the day solved the problem of locating the clock, it didn't resolve her anger at my moving her belonging. After some discussion about sensory sensitivities common to those with autism, she realized why I hid the clock and now knows that when the clock is missing, which chair cushion it most likely will reside under. Domestic tranquility at last! A more proactive step might have been for me to realize that while I may have had good reason to move the clock out of 'earshot,' it would have been important to tell my wife what I had done with the clock and why. It is important to realize that people with autism often perceive the environment and express their emotions differently; their thought processes are not similar to those not on the autism spectrum.

### **Advice for Parents**

Learning how to develop relationships can be difficult for any young person, and it can be especially hard for individuals with autism. Parents can play a crucial role in helping their child with autism develop the skills he or she needs to build any relationship, from friendship to romance. Tips I offer to parents are as follows:

1. Take an active role in learning more about the subtleties of adolescence and relationships. Tap into resources that you find most comfortable, whether books, the Internet, other parents, educators, counsellors, etc.
2. Encourage your child to get involved with activities of interest that involve interactions with other people either in group or club-like settings. This way, interaction with others will center on the activity or interest at hand without the pressure of social interaction being the primary reason for getting together. The automatic commonality between people who have gathered together for this reason can, and will, lay the groundwork towards closer relationships with others.

*cont on facing pg.5...*

# LETTERS

Thank you for all of your efforts helping our lost children. We live in the US, and are fortunate of the awareness in our community compared to the situation in India. However, even here the mainstream medical community is not aware of early signs of diagnosing autism or the advantages of early intervention. Our two year old son Ranvir (Ryan) was just diagnosed this past December at 26 months of age. I knew something was not right with him at 20 months of age. If we would have been asked the CHAT test when he was eight months old it could have been diagnosed earlier

Michelle Singh  
USA

Just take a look at what this lady is charging for Auditory Integration Training (10 day program of two 30 minute training sessions per day at \$1200 US). In India, of all places! What percentage of the population do you think will be able to afford this?

I'm being blunt here, but I've put Divya through AIT. And I am firmly convinced there is nothing in the equipment, the approach, nor the involvement of the therapist that justifies this scale of extortion.

People should be focusing on widespread education of the parent and adult population in more effectively

...cont from pg.4

3. Teach your children how to interact with others when a romantic interest is present. In addition, teach the importance of not forcing oneself on another and being able to recognize a lack of interest. That said, it can be a challenge for people on the autism spectrum to know how to ask a person on a date more than once and that continued queries become a bother or perhaps worse, considered harassment. Note that there are many more issues related to dating. Useful ideas on encouraging appropriate behavior for men and women can be found in the book:

*Autism-Asperger's and Sexuality: Puberty & Beyond* by Jerry and Mary Newport.

dealing with the kids, rather than on coming up with ways to leech off unquestioning and desperate parents. In an ideal world, which of course this is not.

C RAMAN  
diskrybe@yahoo.com

Let me congratulate you on getting the recognition (Rotary Service To Humanity Commendation) you rightly deserved. I certainly hope that there will be many such occasions in future. I am sure that Action For Autism would continue to provide selfless service to the society for the cause you have taken up. Please feel free to ask me for any thing that I can do. Once again, congratulations on getting the award. That must make you really proud as we all are proud of you

M VERMA  
DELHI

## Sponsorship for MOTHER CHILD PROGRAMME

The AFA Mother Child Programme teaches focused, one-on-one intervention on a daily basis over a three month period and aims at training mothers to go back able to take charge of their child's development.

AFA supported by the ADB will sponsor a few families to attend the programme. For families coming from outside of Delhi accommodation, travel and course costs will be entirely sponsored.

Please send applications marked '*Mother Child Sponsorship Scheme*' to AFA indicating which course you wish to attend (October 04 / January 05/ July 05 ).

## Librarian Required at AFA

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- running the reading room
- issuing books
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- ordering and cataloguing
- maintaining press cutting files.

Contact Aran Corrigan at AFA Tel: 29256469, 29256470

## Misdiagnosis: Its Impact on Aspies and Their Families

*Those with Aspergers Syndrome continue to either 'slip the net' of diagnosis or receive an incorrect diagnosis of schizophrenia, conduct disorder, ADHD, and so on. As a result of the latter they are put on medication, while their core difficulties are not addressed. This combined with inappropriate expectations often lead to a breakdown in the individual's ability to cope. While the situation is common in India, it is not uncommon elsewhere as the following excerpt from 'Private Eye', June 2004, illustrates.*

After years of campaigning by the parents of Piers Bolduc – a young man with Asperger's syndrome who was incorrectly diagnosed as schizophrenic and incarcerated ( for nine years) in Broadmoor prison – health chiefs have finally promised that moves are in hand to secure his release. Stephen Ladyman, minister responsible for mental health, told Piers' MP David Liddington that he would ensure the 28-year-old was released as 'expeditiously as possible'.

THAT was more than a month ago; since when official inertia has meant that a precious place secured for Piers at The Hayes, a special centre in Bristol for those with Asperger's has gone to someone else. Thus Piers remains wrongly locked up for slightly wounding a young man with a penknife while taking powerful anti-psychotic drugs he should not have been prescribed.

PIERS' case is far from isolated...31 people with autism, 21 of those with Asperger's, are held in three special hospitals. But many more are inappropriately detained having suffered misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment, often with powerful anti-psychotic drugs. The one positive aspect of Piers' detention in Broadmoor was that his condition was recognised and steps were taken to wean him off the drug cocktail that had worsened his condition.

The same cannot be said for Matthew Thomas, now 43, who has been in and out of hospital since he was 17. Matthew was sucked into the mental health system in 1978 when a breakdown during his exams led, as with Piers, to a wrongful diagnosis. His parents have been unable to get their son out of the system. Even though Asperger's was finally diagnosed nine years later, Matthew remained on the cocktail of anti-psychotics, tranquillisers and anti-depressants he has taken most of his life. To his parents Matthew had always appeared a 'bit different'. But it was not until he was studying for his 'O' levels that he suffered what everyone thought was a mental breakdown. He was taken into 'The Priory' in Roehampton and was diagnosed as schizophrenic. His parents, then knowing nothing of Asperger syndrome, went along with the diagnosis. It led to two prolonged

sessions of electro-convulsant therapy and a cocktail of powerful drugs – no fewer than 23 different ones. As he got worse, only one Registrar dared challenge the diagnosis and suggest Matthew's schizophrenia was "atypical." His already skeptical parents read everything they could and became convinced Matthew was not schizophrenic. They sent him to the US where the diagnosis was finally overturned. Back in the UK a year later at the Maudsley (Hospital), he was officially diagnosed with Asperger's and his parents were told he "did not have one schizophrenic feature."

NICK Priechenfried was only 14 when he was given his first dose of anti-psychotic drugs by a GP. Although another doctor took him off them, the reprieve was short-lived. Nick was correctly diagnosed with Asperger's but seven years later he was still sectioned and diagnosed as schizophrenic and put on the cocktail of psychiatric medicine his mother says wrecked his life. He ended up in the Medium Secure Unit at Horton Hospital Epsom, with very ill and disturbed patients. Even though leading autism experts confirmed the diagnosis of Asperger's, Nick's treatment with powerful anti-psychotics continued. Following other disastrous placements, Nick eventually went to the Eric Shepherd Unit in Hertfordshire. Three years ago, psychiatrists there weaned him off all medication, resulting in a huge improvement in both his mental and physical health. As Nick says: "*If you are put on anti-psychotics when you do not need them, you soon develop a psychosis.*"

WHAT has happened to people like Piers, Matthew and Nick is nothing short of scandalous. But it is a simple message that they and their parents have been trying to convey to Stephen Ladyman and his fellow health chiefs. NOT only is the continuing misdiagnosis, treatment and inappropriate placements for people with Asperger's devastating for those involved, it actually costs millions.

An investment in proper services now – particularly with the huge increase in children being diagnosed on the autistic spectrum – would save money in the future. *Why isn't the government listening?*

## *She's No quitter*

Chitra Raman

*When Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, he had tried over 2000 experiments before he got it to work. A young reporter asked him how it felt to fail so many times. Edison said, "I never failed even once. I invented the light bulb. It just happened to be a 2000 step process."*

Moral: *A winner never quits and a quitter never wins.*

Here's my own story of a little Winner. On Friday, I found out that the school system had let my daughter down – yet again. At the beginning of the school year, I had made it clear to her music teacher that in order to be successful, Divya needed one simple adaptation. She had to have the song lyrics word processed. That's all. My daughter has autism.

A few weeks ago I heard that Divya wasn't singing along in choir at all, and I found out only because I happened to run into the music teacher. Last week on Thursday I was told to bring Divya to final rehearsal on Tuesday this week. On Friday I asked her music teacher if I could bring Divya to the rehearsal anyway and could she hold the lyrics in her hand and sing?

"Well I don't know about that because she has never opened her mouth to sing in choir," the music teacher said.

"Maybe if she had the lyrics..." I began.

"Oh we've tried that. It's no use. She rips them up or crumples up the paper," said the teacher.

I froze, and asked her, "What have you been giving her?"

"Well, the sheet music of course. I even had her aide hold it for her but she doesn't care to look down." I was beginning to feel really sick. "But I thought I had made it clear that she is confused and intimidated by sheet music, that she needs the lyrics word processed," I said. "Nobody told me," she replied.

Fortunately for me, I had a copy of an email I wrote to her at the beginning of the school year in which I had made crystal clear what sort of adaptation Divya needed to be successful. Fortunately that email had also been

copied to half a dozen members of staff so she couldn't claim she hadn't received it. But at the time I was not thinking of this whole episode beyond a depressing round of futile meetings to come, with me talking about lost opportunities and systemic callousness, and them justifying and defending the status quo.

Then I came home. I word processed the lyrics. Divya and I went to work on Saturday. As soon as I put the words in front of her, she began to sing along with the taped music. In half an hour, she had mastered the most complicated song...she had trouble keeping up at first because it is very word-intensive and she had trouble articulating and keeping up the pace but her pitch and melody were pure and perfect. Within the next half hour she had nailed the whole song. On Sunday we did the second and third song. She got both in roughly an hour. One of the songs was in Hebrew, which I can't make sense of leave alone her, so I word processed the lyrics phonetically, changing the spelling and breaking up the word as necessary so that the syllables made sense to her musically.

So in effect, in two and a half hours she did for me what they had not managed to draw out of her in the last five months. Not because I'm some wizard, but because I give a damn, and because she has it in her.

Well, we went to the rehearsal Tuesday morning, and the music teacher was so taken by Divya's transformation that she declared Divya could be in the Final Concert. The Final Concert was that very evening.

When I came back to where Divya was sitting in the auditorium I found her singing along to another song being rehearsed by her classmates on stage. I realized she knew the song, just from hearing it at school, she just needed the words. So I word processed the lyrics and after she came home from school rehearsed it with her once and pointed out a couple of timing flaws. She got it in her second attempt.

Shankar and I sat in the second row of the auditorium. Divya came up on stage and took her place. She sang along perfectly with her classmates and stepped down from the riser and walked off after her three songs were done. Shankar and I were so proud of her for overcoming not just her natural limitations but those wantonly created by the very people supposed to be 'helping' her!

*She's no quitter!*

## Man with Autism is Inspiring Advocate for His Disorder

(Miami Herald March 2004)

Perhaps more than anyone, 36-year-old Kent Schomber knows what it takes to be an advocate for the autistic. He knows, because he himself was diagnosed autistic at the age of two.

TODAY, after 34 years of dealing with the disorder, Schomber has established the kind of life that could be a model for younger autistic people anywhere. He also works extra hard trying to raise money for treatment and research.

IN doing that, he has become an inspiration to those around him - including Michael Alessandri, Schomber's boss at the University of Miami's Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, better known as CARD.

"I have known Kent for eight years. He's been here longer than I have - he could be my boss," Alessandri said. "He knows everyone around here. Kent has managed beautifully. He is on his own and in control of his life. Autism varies in many stages, but Kent's case is extraordinary."

SCHOMBER doesn't see anything extraordinary. He says, with some modesty, that he is doing what he believes in, working for people he cares about - people like him. "[I want to] help those who are struggling and didn't really get a chance or a family, like me," he said. Besides his job at CARD, Schomber maintains his own home and works to lead a routine life - a victory in itself. When he is not looking to help people, Schomber loves to fish with his favourite fishing friend, his brother Scott.

SCHOMBER said he wouldn't mind being famous for his fishing. "I want to continue participating in fishing tournaments so that one day I can make lots and lots of money and be the party king," he said in an energetic voice. "And I won't have to raise the money [to fight autism]. I'll already have it."

SCHOMBER's odyssey began when he was about two. His parents noticed with alarm that he wouldn't talk or communicate and was given to sudden violent outbursts. "I would fight people off me and didn't talk at all. I could stare at things, especially round things, for hours,"

Schomber said. "It still comes back to me a little, the symptoms, like being afraid, or checking something obsessively, hand flapping, or washing my hands over and over, but I learn to control it. I think I surpassed it with love. My mum and dad just didn't let me get used to living in a bubble."

ALESSANDRI gives a lot of credit to Schomber's parents, Jean and Robert. "His parents did all the right things," said Alessandri. "They kept him involved and social as a child. They gave him love, and it worked for Kent." His parents also stood by later on, when Schomber was working toward something important to him - a high school diploma. "I did home school until my parents got the school board to give me an opportunity to get a diploma and be in a smaller special classroom," he said. Jean and Robert Schomber managed to get their son into a class at North Miami High and on track for a regular diploma. Not that it was easy. "There were people at school that made fun of me," Schomber said. Now, though, he added: "I feel sorry for them because they didn't understand. They just need to get educated, because what if they have a child one day with autism? What will they do then? Make fun of him?"

AFTER graduating from high school in 1985, Schomber went out into the real world in search of a steady job. "I didn't want to go to college because it's so expensive and I don't have that kind of money - yet," he said. "Also, they make you take these long math tests, like the ones that take you like four years to finish. It's crazy. I would probably be dead by the time I was done." But stepping out into the real world opened his eyes to the plight of disabled people. "I didn't get a lot of jobs because I am disabled and autistic. I realised that people don't understand that we are all different, and if we weren't, wouldn't that be boring?"

IN 1986, Schomber got a job at CARD, where he runs errands, files and types, among other things. The best thing, he says, is that the job gives him freedom and motivation to do other things he believes in.

"I still have time to raise a lot of money for autism and other disabilities. I walk in walk-a-thons for the National

Alliance for Autism, raise money for the epilepsy foundation, help sponsor dinners and a lot of other things. I even help friends with their political campaigns, and anything really, anything that needs me to be there for them. I'm only giving back."

MUM and dad are proud of their son. "Kent is a loving, sweet and positive person," said Jean, adding: "It's been an amazing journey." Kent's father agrees. "When he was first diagnosed, the hospital suggested us to institutionalise him," Robert Schomber said. "We just could not bear the idea. So we started running the 'Schomber University' at home. When the school system stepped up to the plate, Kent picked himself up from there."

NO matter what he did when growing up, Kent needed extra attention, his parents say. "He did not speak for a very long time, but I just put him on my lap and cupped his face next to mine and whispered: 'Kent, I love you, I

love you, Kent.' He grew up with the sense of knowing that people are here for him; still to this day Kent hugs me and says: 'Mum, you guys never gave up on me, did you?'" said Jean Schomber.

ROBERT added: "One of the hardest things was – and is – people's unwillingness to realise that each child is different, special, not better or worse, just different. When they are given what they need, each child blooms in their own special way. We are so very proud of our son."

NOW Schomber is working on his next big project, a fund-raiser called Tropical Nights for Autism Research. "You eat and dance, and it's so awesome. Everyone would love it. I'll be there."

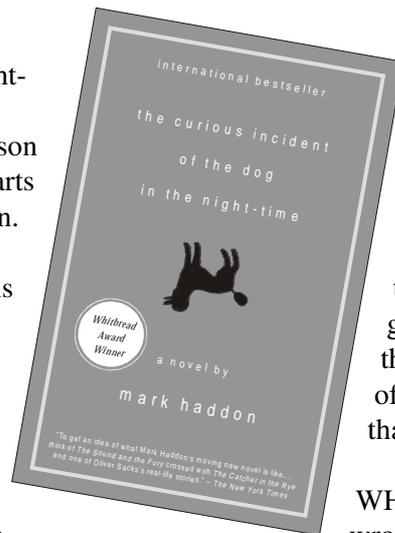
AS for his plans for the future, Schomber doesn't really know. He likes to live one day at a time. "Life has so many secrets," he said. "There's too much I haven't done, too much I want to give back."

## Reflections on 'The Curious Incident...'

Indrani Basu

I just finished reading the book 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time' and was overcome with a strong sense of déjà vu. Having a 21 year old son with Asperger's, there were so many parts of the book that reminded me of my son. For instance, when Sam recounted any incident from his past he recalled details like the type of clothes the characters involved wore, or the colour of their garments, or what was written on someone's t-shirt. My son often does the same. If I wear an old sari he will say, "When you wore this last..." which may have been four or five years ago, "I remember you did this and this." And he would remember the incident that took place, what I said, who was there, everything.

I also like the part where after solving the problem of reaching the station Sam had to buy a ticket. When asked whether he wanted a single or return, Sam was quite confused. To help him on the man at the counter asked how long he intended to stay in London. Sam replied: *until he went to university.*



THIS is so much like my son who misses out on the simplest and yet the most vital aspects of life. I was once reading a book on nonverbal communication and he asked me what I was reading. I told him it was a book on non verbal communication and he wanted to know what that was. I explained that it was such things as expressions, gestures, a shrug of the shoulder, the roll of the eyes, etc. And he said, "But what's the use of reading that? No one ever understands that."

WHEN people see my son they wonder what's wrong with him. He speaks fluently in three languages, can hold a conversation. Yet he misses out on what I call the little links in life. That's the way I see his difficulties.

WHAT he does not have is nothing to do with language. Its to do with something more abstract but something that we take so much for granted. Amitava has no social timing. Its like dancing out of step. Everyone else is dancing in step and he is dancing out of step. When everyone is turning right he is turning left.

# प्रारम्भिक विकास लेखा

इन्दु चसवाल

ऑटिज़म से प्रभावित शिशु जन्म से ही विकास के कुछ क्षेत्रों में पीछे रहते हैं जो कि आगे चलकर स्पष्ट दिखने लगता है। प्रत्येक ऑटिस्टिक बच्चे में तीन परम क्षेत्रों में (समाजिक व्यवहार, सम्प्रेषण, काल्पनिक शक्ति) विकारता रहती है, परन्तु प्रत्येक बच्चे में इन गुणों की विकारता होने के फलस्वरूप जो व्यवहार प्रकट होते हैं वह भिन्न होते हैं। नीचे एक संदर्शिका (गाईड) दी गई है जिसमें कुछ ऐसे व्यवहारों की सूची है जो ऑटिज़म होने की सम्भावना का संकेत देते हैं।

## १. जन्म से अठारह महीने के शिशु में ऑटिज़म के कुछ संभव और विशेष लक्षण:-

- विलम्बित मुस्कान या बिल्कुल भी नहीं मुस्कराना।
- प्राथमिक देख भाल वाले व्यक्ति माता, पिता और परिवार के अन्य सदस्यों के साथ लगाव – व्यवहार की कमी या अभाव होना।
- स्वयं को दूसरो द्वारा ताकने पर नज़रे चुराना । आँखों से सम्पर्क न बना पाना
- उठाये जाने की प्रत्याशा में दूसरे की ओर बढ़ने का अभाव।
- आराम, सुख, सन्तावना के लिये दूसरे के पास ना जाना, बहुत आसानी से शान्त न होना।
- अकेले रहना पसन्द करना / अपने में लीन रहना, लिपटना, गले लगाना, सटकर लेटना या छाती से लगना नापसन्द करना। ऐसी नजदीकी से बचने की कोशिश करना
- शरीश को लगातार एक ही तरह चलाना:- उदाहरण,
  - आगे-पीछे झूलना
  - दाएं-बाए डोलना
  - बाहों को हिलाना
- किसी वस्तु को लेकर लगातार एक ही क्रिया करना उदाहरण:-
  - खिलौने (गाड़ी, ट्रक) के पहिये को लगातार हाथ से घूमाते रहना:
- अपनी दिनचर्या में या अपने वातावरण में बदलाव को अत्यधिक नापसन्द करना।
- (non-verbal communication) अमौखिक सम्प्रेषण का आभाव।

◦ इशारों द्वारा बात न समझाना दूसरों द्वारा किये गये इशारों, संकेत या अन्य प्रकार के शारीरिक भावों को न समझ पाना।

- दूसरों द्वारा किये गये चहरे की अभिव्यक्ति और इशारों का अनुकरण न करना। (जैसे कि सरल क्रियाएँ, ताली बजाना, हाथ हिलाना, तर्जनी (index finger) द्वारा संकेत देना)।
- दूसरे शिशु के साथ किसी प्रकार का सम्प्रेषण न बनाना या दूसरे शिशु द्वारा सम्प्रेषण की कोशिश के प्रति कोई प्रतिक्रिया न दिखाना।

## २. डेढ़ वर्ष से चार वर्ष की आयु में ऑटिज़म के कुछ संभव व विशेष लक्षण:

- अकेले रहना। अपने में लीन रहना। आराम या संतावना पाने के लिये किसी के पास न जाना। चोट लगने पर या बीमार होने पर भी ऐसी कोई चेष्टा न करना।
- दूसरों के व्यवहार या दूसरों द्वारा की गई सरल क्रियाओं का अनुकरण करने का पूरा आभाव या सीमित क्षमता।
- नज़र मिलाने में कठिनाई।
- देसरो की उपस्थिति के प्रति अभिज्ञता (unaware)
- दो वर्ष से चार के बालक में लोगों को स्वागत (नमस्कार, हैलौ, हाथ मिलाना) करने में असमर्थता। खेलते समय या दूसरों के साथ सम्पर्क बनाते समय बारी लेनी की कला (turn taking skills) का आभाव।
- भाषा के विकास में विलम्भ।
- भाषा को समझने में कमज़ोरी।
- शब्दों, वाक्यांशों (phrases) या वाक्यों का प्रयोग सम्प्रेषण में सही ढंग से न कर पाना। शब्द होते हुए भी उनका प्रयोग उसी वस्तु को मॉगने के लिये न कर पाना। उदाहरण:- बालक गाड़ी 'या' कार' शब्द जानता है और बोलता भी है परन्तु जब बाहर घूमने जाना चाहता है तो कार में चलो 'या' कार में जाना न कहकर अपने माता पिता का हाथ पकड़ कर गाड़ी की तरफ ले जाता है।
- उचित इशारे करने का आभाव।
- बालक की आरम्भिक भाषा में विचित्र शब्दों का बोलना।
- दूसरो द्वारा बोली गई बातों को दोहराना (echolalia)

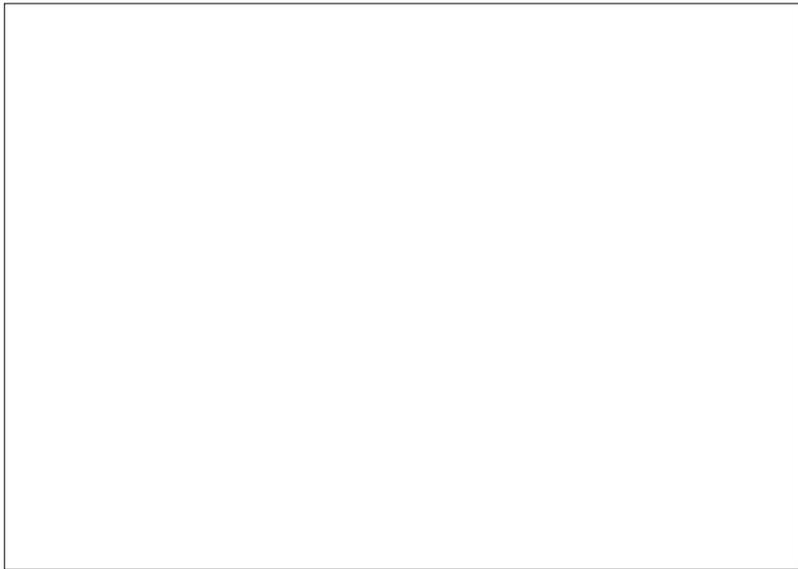
- बात करने का विचित्र ढंग — बोली में एकस्वर, कोई उतार चढ़व नहीं बहुत ही बारीक स्वर या गीत गाने जैसे स्वर में बात करना।
- वस्तुओं को अटपटे ढंग से चलाना — जैसे की घूमाते रहना (spinning) या उन्हें पंक्तियों में या किसी अन्य निश्चित ठंग से लगाना।
- अटपटे या विचित्र तरीके से शरीर को चलाना। जैसे — हाथों को मोड़ना, झटकना, पूरे शरीर को चक्कर खिलाना, सर पटकना इत्यादि।
- वस्तुओं के केवल किसी विशेष अंश पर ध्यानमग्न रखना।
- वस्तुओं के प्रति तीव्र और अनोखा लगाव।
- अपने आस पास या अपनी दिनचर्या में होने वाले मामली या तुच्छ बदलाव के प्रति कड़ा विरोध करना या परेशान होना।
- दिनचर्या में होने वाली क्रियाओं के क्रम और उनके साथ जुड़ तुच्छ और सूक्ष्म वर्णन (minute insignificant details) पर विशेष ध्यान देना और इनको एक सा स्थिर रखने का प्रयत्न करना।
- शौच प्रशिक्षण में कठिनाई।
- अत्याधिक भय या डर।
- वस्तुओं को छूना या उनपर हाथ चलाकर स्पर्श करना।
- कानों पर हाथ रखना।
- वस्तुओं को सूँघना।

### ३. चार वर्ष की आयु से बड़े बच्चों में ऑटिज्म के संभव लक्षण:

- दूसरों के व्यवहार का अनुकरण करने का आभाव।
- दूसरे लोगों के साथ इस तरह पेश आना जैसे कि वह लोग न होकर वस्तुएं हो।
- दूसरों की उपस्थिति और भावनाओं का सीमित ज्ञान।
- दूसरे बच्चों के साथ न खेलना।
- सीमित या अटपटी प्रतिक्रिया— भावनाओं के प्रती।
- सामाजिक रूप से अप्रतिक्रित।
- दूसरों द्वारा स्नेह और मोह दिखाने की भौतिक क्रियाओं के प्रति नकारात्मक व्यवहार दिखाना या उन्हें न समझ पाना।
- मित्र बनाने में कोई रूची न होना।
- सामाजिक प्रथा या रिवाज को न समझना। बनुयादी सामाजिक रिवाजा व नियम जैसे बारी लेब, इन्तजार इत्यादी समझने में कठिनाई।
- दूसरों के साथ पारस्परिक सम्पर्क न बनाना।
- भाषा की सीमित अभिव्यक्ति (limited expressive language)
- सामाजिक रूप से पिछड़ापन या अटपटा व्यवहार।
- भाषा विकास में विलम्ब।
- सर्वनाम, कथन और प्रश्नों का अनुचित प्रयोग।
- वार्तालाप आरम्भ करने में असमर्थ ।
- अनोखी, अटपटी या विचित्र बातें कहना।
- विचित्र स्वर में बात करना या विचित्र लय में बात कहना।
- भाषा का अर्थपूर्ण प्रयोग न करना।
- दूसरो द्वारा कही गई बातों या टिप्पणियों को दोहराना।
- प्रायः बेतुकी टिप्पणी देना।
- निराकार भाषा को समझने में परेशानी। (जैसे — सहानुभूती, क्रूड, देशभक्ति, आत्मा, अनुशासन, इत्यादी)
- कुछ ही संकीर्ण या तंग विषयों और वस्तुओं में रूची रखना और उन्ही में लीन रहना। कुछ उदाहरणः—
  - गाड़ियों,
  - रेल
  - कागज — कलम
  - टेलिफोन डाइरेक्टरी
  - कमप्यूटर
  - क्रिकेट
  - धागे या लकड़ी के टुकड़े
- समानता की अत्यधिक आवश्यकता। स्तिथी या दिनचर्या में समानता बनाये रखने पर जोर देना।
- अनोखी व विचित्र वस्तुओं के साथ अत्यधिक लगाव (जैसे कि खाली बोटल, ढक्कन, धागे के टुकड़े, कागज के छोटी—छोटी कतरने)
- अपने आस पास होने वाले तुच्छ बदलाव होने पर बहुत अधिक व्यथित और परेशान होना।
  - लकड़ी के टुकड़ों को घूमाना और कागज के टुकड़ों को फड़फड़ाना या थपथपाना।
- घूमती हुई वस्तुओं से मोहित होना। जैसे पँखा, पहिये इत्यादी। स्वयं चीजों को घूमाते रहना।
- निश्चित नित्यक्रम और दिनचर्या के साथ जुड़े रहना।
- बहुत अच्छी समर्ण शक्ति। रट कर याद करने में सक्षमता। टेलिफोन नम्बर, पिन कोड नम्बर, सूची में लिखे गये नाम व अँको को याद रखना।
- दूसरों के साथ अपनी सूची, खुशी, उपलब्धियाँ और किसी प्रकार की जानकारी को बाँटने का पूरा आभाव या सीमित इच्छा।
- मुलायम सतह वाली वस्तुओं पर हाथ चलाकर स्पर्श लेना।
- भीड में जाने से डरना या विरोध करना।
- कुछ विशेष ध्वनियों के प्रती अती संवेदनशीलता।

# National Centre for Autism

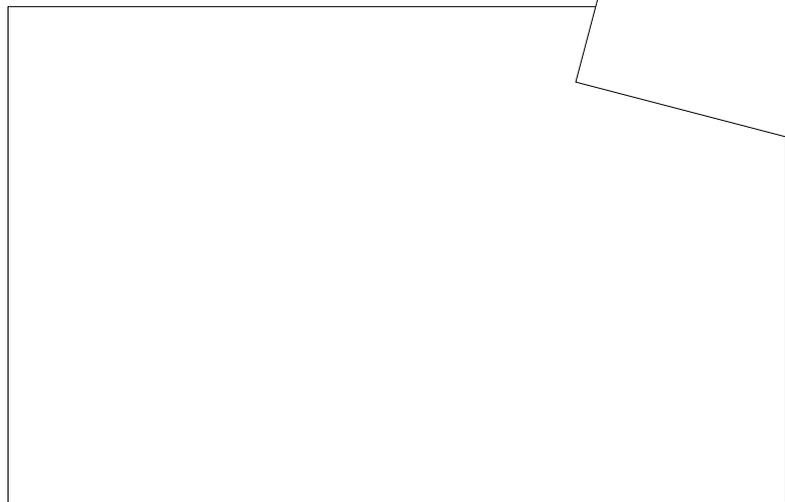
The Chief Minister of NCT Delhi Smt Shiela Dixit unveiled the foundation Stone of the AFA National Centre For Autism, on the 9 July 2004, at Jasola Vihar New Delhi. The construction of the **Action For Autism National Centre** marks an important and long awaited milestone for AFA and the entire autism Community. On the



*Smt Sheila Dixit unveiling the foundation stone of the AFA National Centre with Anand Sharma & SHovana Narayan on her left*

occasion Mrs Dixit strongly encouraged the project and pledged the support of the Delhi Government. This support is all the more pertinent in light of the Finance Ministers announcement in the Budget Speech that the government is extending the benefit of section 80DD and section 80U to persons with autism, cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities. However in order to avail of the benefits under these sections, the individual with autism or cerebral palsy must have a disability certificate. Without this document these benefits cannot be availed. AFA urged the

*Smt Sheila Dixit discussing the model of the National Centre with the Action For Autism team*



government to follow up on this very proactive step by accelerating the decision on a protocol for issuing disability certificates to persons with autism.

Smt Shovana Narayan, eminent artist and supporter of Action for Autism, led the unveiling with an eloquent and heartfelt invocation to the Lord reciting slokas . Several

students sang 'Mindblind' a song about the complex world of autism and a favourite with our youngsters.

THE building under construction will house the Action for Autism National Centre for Advocacy, Research , Rehabilitation and Training, having function specific units to address needs critical to the development, growth and inclusion of persons with autism spectrum disorders

within the community. The centre will not only enable AFA to continue with its ongoing activities of providing quality care and education to persons with autism, but will

extend its activities in the area of education, training and research. The National Centre will in addition develop pioneering models in the areas of vocational training, employment and independent living for individuals with autism.

The construction of the new centre is hoped o be completed by mid 2005.

(The Brick Ad  
Please take it from the CD)

# HELPLINE



*Q.* My daughter P has difficulty connecting with people. NIMHANS has diagnosed deficiencies in eye contact and speaking ability and advised us to improve eye contact first. After certain efforts we have observed some improvement in her eye contact. Her tantrums have been reduced to some extent. But there is no change or improvement in speech and she is not speaking a single meaningful word.

We have been advised that she be put in a school where there is a Neurologist, Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Speech Therapist, play school and special school meant for autistic child.

I am working in Airports Authority of India and presently posted at Guwahati with all India transferable service. I will be transferred out from Guwahati within one or two months. I am a Bengali with mother tongue Bengali but not settled in any one place due to the nature of my service. I am in a confused state to decide my next posting either at Delhi or Kolkata. Except that in Kolkata my mother tongue will be used, Delhi will be better in all other respects including facilities available. I will be thankful if you kindly advice me for the following:

1. Whether the mother tongue environment is essential for my daughter to develop speech.
2. Is there any play school and integrated/ special school specially for autism run by your organisation or by others at Kolkata.
3. Whether such a school is available near the International Airport, New Delhi
4. Will Delhi or Kolkata be better for my daughter's treatment/ training/ schooling for her overall development?

*A.* Is it most useful to have an environment that only uses the child's mother tongue? That is a difficult question to answer. If your job profile is such that you have to travel around and mostly be posted to larger cities, then chances are you will be mostly in multilingual environments. Whether you communicate with P in her mother tongue or otherwise, what is perhaps most helpful is to communicate in the language that is used the most around her. So as you say her

mother tongue is Bengali, but most people in her environment speak Hindi for instance and Hindi is the language she hears the most, then Hindi is the language that would be most useful to use, initially.

Not all will agree with this view: but as I said this is a difficult question to answer.

However, what is even more crucial is that P understands the purpose of communication. For you see, it is not so much that she cannot speak, as that she does not understand that she could use speech to regulate her environment. Therefore, when she says "Baba" you want to act as though she is addressing you, and respond accordingly. When she says "Ma" her mother has to act as though she has been addressed, and respond accordingly. In addition, keep providing her the words she needs to use in various situations. When P begins to use speech she may begin to follow, and later perhaps may use, more than one language.

There are a few integrated schools and special needs schools for the child with autism at Kolkata. Some schools that have services specifically for autism are Reach, Pradeep, and Autism Society West Bengal. There are a number of others that are meant for children with special needs but also take in children with autism. For more information please contact Autism Society West Bengal at: [autismsocietywb@hotmail.com](mailto:autismsocietywb@hotmail.com)

The International Airport in New Delhi is outside town. The school closest to the airport is the Air Force Golden Jubilee in Dhaula Kuan. It is a mainstream school with a special needs section.

Another difficult question to answer is whether Delhi or Kolkata will be better for your daughter. The answer depends on a number of variables. The quality of the special education that you are able to access, the extended family support that you have, how well the immediate family viz parents are able to educate themselves about autism, and so on. While the advice that P be put in a setup which has the services of a Neurologist, Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Speech Therapist, as well as a play school and special school meant for the autistic child is perfectly valid, it is an utopian situation

that I doubt exists anywhere in India. I may be wrong of course. However while most schools will not have in-house neurologists and psychiatrists many have consultant neurologists and psychiatrists. However there are a few trained setups in the country where though you may not have all of these professionals available, they have excellent therapists and would provide you with holistic training for P.

*Q* I am from Pakistan, father of A. A is four and a half years old with a mental age of two to three years. His problem is that he is hyperactive. Please let me know what type of help can be provided to cure A.

*A* We do not know of a Pakistan National Autism Society as of yet, although we are hopeful that one will begin. We have had families from Pakistan attend our training workshops, which occur each year in September or October, and we have also heard of families in Pakistan organizing some programs themselves. Are you in touch with any other families in Pakistan? Would that be helpful information for you to have? As you may have learned there is no cure for autism, so we cannot provide you with that information. However, early intervention is the best known approach to overall improvement as well as for improvement for hyperactivity.

You could also peruse our site and you will hopefully find some information that is useful, perhaps especially on the pages:

- [http://www.autism-india.org/afa\\_helpline.htm](http://www.autism-india.org/afa_helpline.htm),
- [http://www.autism-india.org/original\\_articles.htm](http://www.autism-india.org/original_articles.htm), and
- [http://www.autism-india.org/afa\\_journalindex.htm](http://www.autism-india.org/afa_journalindex.htm)

*Q* We are members of AFA based at Mumbai. I have some queries regarding the development of our autistic child D who is four and a half. My son is echolalic but does not take any initiative to speak using a variety of words. He utters the same one or two words such as 'papi' (pan i- water) and 'tote' (means chocolate) for all his needs. He has been receiving speech therapy daily for the last one and a half years.

He was fully toilet trained and used to pull us to the toilet with an indicative word like 'susu.' At present he is back to his untrained period and often urinates at any place. He is fully aware of his mischief which he indicates either by shying away or by babbling his protest.

He attends nursery with one-to-one teacher attention and with his mother present. Recently his attention deficit and

the impatient behavior have increased a lot. He is unwilling to sit in the class. His unwillingness to follow instructions often leads to a physical attack on the teacher or his mother such as hitting or pulling their hair. This behaviour was not at all there three months back. We try to calm him down by explaining the situation but he rarely responds to the same.

His emotional imbalance is also on the rise. We seek remedy for the above. Can we come for parent training for handling D?

*A* I am sure you have informed yourself about the ways autism affects an individual. One of these is the different ways from the norm that language develops as well as the persisting difficulties. So while many typically developing children go through a period when they echo speech, in children with autism echoing persists beyond age three when it typically stops. In addition children with autism do not merely have a limited vocabulary, rather there are difficulties with understanding of language, with phonetics, with the rules of communication. It is almost as though they do not understand the purpose of language and how the rules of communication work. There are not just difficulties in communicating but also difficulties in processing and understanding communication.

Explaining things the way we do with regular children does not work with most children with autism. In fact such explanations of why a behaviour is bad or good and therefore etc only adds to the child's frustration. It is difficult for me to say why exactly D exhibits the behaviours he does during one on one. But if I had to make a guess I would say that what you are seeing in your child is not so much emotional imbalance as frustration in not understanding what is expected of him and not in not being able to convey his wants. It would help to try and understand why D does not want to sit. Why does he not want to attend to the task? Is it too easy? Too difficult? Are the instructions too confusing? Is there clarity and consistency of communication with D?

Training yourself is of course the ideal situation. If you want you could indeed receive some training at Action For Autism. This could be a week-long programming for your home, or it could be a three month Mother-child training programme. You could also benefit from attending our workshop in October of which there is information elsewhere in this journal.

## Home Truths About Asperger's Syndrome

"Your son is on the autistic spectrum." The doctor's statement still rings loud in my ears. It is a statement that turned our lives upside down.

My son was barely three when he was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome. Call it what you may, for I learn now that these labels Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, don't mean a thing. No matter which the label, all it says is that there are certain impairments which my son will have to deal with all his life.

For any parent having a child in the high functioning range of autism this is a statement hard to accept. To me I had a very intelligent son who had this amazingly creative way of looking at things. He seemed to notice regular things in such a scientific way that very early on we had convinced ourselves that my son had a genius mind. And his social inadequacies further endorsed our beliefs.

After we learnt of the diagnosis we took charge of the situation. We put our son on a home program and I started giving him intensive therapy. I could not let my son have problems in school so I focused on honing his academic skills. My hard work paid off. My son was barely three and a half years old when he could work independently on the computer. He picked up reading in a span of three to four months, got the logic of numbers early on.

But even after a year of working hard there was no progress on the social front. But I was not particularly worried. I drew comfort from the generally held belief that 'geniuses are not social beings.' I was convinced that I would be able to develop my son's areas of interest to a level where people would run after him for his exceptional abilities.

After a year of intensive work our therapist informed us that my son had learnt all he could from the therapy she had to offer. And he had indeed learnt a lot. Naturally I did not want this to be the end of my hard work with my

son. Around this time we learnt of an intervention called Relationship Development Intervention, in short RDI. We decided to do this and we flew off to the states. It was there that a lot of our beliefs were shattered. RDI helped me realize now how important it is for us as parents to truly understand our child's problem. I had been working hard with my son. But belonging as I do to the modern age I felt academics was the only solution to my son's problems. Far from it. All I ended up doing was turning my son into this calculating and decoding genius, functions that can be performed equally well by calculators and computers. Do we really need human beings to substitute these gadgets? I don't think so. Yet we marvel at the calculating and decoding genius of our children and all we do to help them is to make them

even better at these areas, realizing very little how unimportant it may be for them in real life.

In real life a person does not need to function as calculators, decoders and computers: they can instead use the gadgets.

Rather, in order to work in a

company he will need to have organizational capacity. He will need to be a problem solver. He will need to be someone who can dynamically maneuver decisions for the best results. He should be someone who can adapt the company in a dynamically changing market. I can see my son doing none of the above. He can read well, he can count well but he still gets upset if his ice cream is served to him in a different cup.

I have learnt from my follies. Now I want to work on the areas that will really help my son. I want him to work in a dynamic environment. For he is not an alien living in another planet. He is very much a part of our society and needs to be able to function within it. He only needs a guiding hand that can help him overcome his resistance to change, someone who can help him understand social requirements, someone who really understands the impairments of his problems. What is important for him is to learn the social rules, and not merely use a social script that cannot be adapted to novel situations. My son is a bright and intelligent kid. But for him this is more important than learning academics.

## AFA's Annual Training Workshop

NEW DELHI: 14 – 17 October 2004

- *Childcare* available during workshop hours through advance registration. Individual consultations available at no extra charge.
- *Accommodation*: Limited rooms available at ISI
- *Workshop Forms* can be downloaded at: [www. autism-india.org](http://www.autism-india.org)
- *For details contact*: Action For Autism Tel: 29256469, 29256470, Email: [autism@vsnl.com](mailto:autism@vsnl.com).

### Workshop on Sensory Integration Therapy and Consultations

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, COMMITTEE ROOM NO 1, NEW DELHI

13 – 14 August 2004

#### The Workshop: 13 August 2004, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

In teaching children with developmental disabilities we are often stumped by difficulties in every day activities such as brushing teeth or holding a pencil; faced by obsessive rocking or head banging; children who cover their ears and cower when a scooter kiskstarts or wail in disconsolate pain when their nails are being trimmed. All these can be due to difficulties in integrating sensory input.

This is a workshop that will help us identify sensory defensiveness in our children and incorporate sensory activities in every day routines of the child and thereby accelerate learning.

#### Registration (including lunch, teas, and workshop materials)

- Rs 600 /- per attendee
- Rs 500/- for Annual and life members of AFA
- Rs 550/- per attendee if more than one person attends from member organization.

#### Consultatons: 14 August 2004, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Families can take individual personalized consultations for their children. Each consultation will be an hour long. To register for consultation, please call Annie Tel: 29256469 for charges and appointments.

**Our Resource Persons:** Dr Anjali Joshi is one of the finest sensory integration therapists for children with autism in the country. An Associate Professor at the Occupational Therapy School and Centre, KEM Hospital, Mumbai she helped set up the Sensory Integration Clinic in KEM Hosptital in 1995. Dr Joshi is a certified Sensory Integration trained Occupational Therapist from the University of Southern California. Dr Joshi has published papers on Sensory Integration in Indian and British Journals of OT.

Ashwini S Vaishampayan is an OT with 13 years experience and has been a part of the KEM team from its inception. She has been giving workshops for parents and professionals in Mumbai and outside.

#### REGISTRATION FORM

Fill this form in BLOCK LETTERS and mail, with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

**Action for Autism, T 370 F Chirag Dilli Gaon, New Delhi 110 017**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

(Tick relevant box) I am a: Parent  Professional  Both  Other

I am a Life/ Annual Member of AFA. My Membership No is: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my registration fee of Rs 600/-, Rs 500/- by Cash/ Bank Draft No: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Bank \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP TO AFA

To continue to receive 'Autism Network' please complete the application below and return it to us as soon as possible

**Or, become a Member of Action for Autism?**

Membership entitles you to concessionary rates for AFA events, workshops and library membership. You will also receive 'Autism Network' three times a year. Members are kept informed of all AFA events and activities.

**Membership privileges:**

- Parents may become Annual Members at Rs 500/- or upgrade to Life Membership at Rs 5000/-
- Professionals may avail of Annual Membership at Rs 1000/-
- Institutions may avail of Annual Membership at Rs 2000/-

New     Renewal    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Pin/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am a: (tick all that apply)

Parent     Relative \_\_\_\_\_

Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a parent of a person with autism, please answer:

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

• I wish to receive three issues of 'Autism Network' and enclose Rs150/- as Annual Contribution for 2003

• I wish to become a member of AFA and enclose:

Rs 500/-     Rs 1000/-     Rs 2000/-     Rs 5000/-

(Please send Bank Drafts Only) Draft No: \_\_\_\_\_

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• I wish to give a contribution to AFA \_\_\_\_\_

Amount in words \_\_\_\_\_

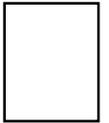
Mail cheque or demand draft payable to:

**Action for Autism**

**T 370 F Chiragh Dilli Gaon, 3rd Floor, New Delhi - 110**

*Contributions are tax exempt under Section 80 G of Income Tax Act.*

## BOOK POST



**If undelivered please return to:**

The Editor, Autism Network,  
T 370 F Chiragh Gaon, 3rd Floor, New Delhi - 110017

### AFA Mission Statement

To facilitate a barrier free environment;  
to empower families of persons with autism;  
and to act as a catalyst for change  
that will enable persons with autism to live  
as fully participating members of the community.



Email: [autism@vsnl.com](mailto:autism@vsnl.com)

AFA Homepage: <http://www.autism-india.org>