

AUTISM AWARENESS

Did you know that there are over 600,000 people with autism in the UK?

What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. It is part of the autism spectrum and is sometimes referred to as an autism spectrum disorder, or an ASD. The word 'spectrum' is used because, while all people with autism share three main areas of difficulty, (social communication, social integration and social imagination), their condition will affect them in very different ways.

People with autism have said that the world, to them, is a mass of people, places and events which they struggle to make sense of, and which can cause them considerable anxiety.

In particular, understanding and relating to other people, and taking part in every day family and social life may be harder for them. However, despite these challenges, people with autism:

- **are often very creative**
- **can work in a very focused way**
- **may be high achievers in their area of interest as teenagers and adults**

Children with autism often find it difficult to:

- recognise or understand other people's emotions and feelings
- express their own feelings
- predict what will happen next, or what could happen next
- understand the concept of danger
- cope with new or unfamiliar situations.

Parents of a child with autism may have to cope with managing tantrums, disturbed sleep, fussy eating, socially inappropriate behaviour, communication problems and their child's difficulties in developing friendships.

It can be hard to create awareness of autism as people with the condition do not 'look' disabled: parents of children with autism often say that other people simply think their child is naughty; while adults find that they are misunderstood.

Want to find out more? Visit <http://www.autism.org.uk>. This is the website for the UK charity for people with autism. The charity provides information and support to people with autism and their families.