

AUTISM

Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by a withdrawal from one's surroundings and a delving into the world of imagination and thought. It is observable in childhood, most often from the age of three years on. Autism has many various forms, which depend on the degree of severity in the areas it affects, including relationships, communication with others and interests. Most often, autism can be seen in the following forms: infantile autism, high-functioning autism (as a subcategory of infantile autism), atypical autism and Asperger's Syndrome. People with autism can, but do not necessarily, have a lower level of intelligence.

Each one of us is different. There are no two people with autism who are exactly the same.

ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

People with Asperger's Syndrome live normally among us. They study, work and start families... "Except" that they receive and process information differently. They are often labeled as odd, "badly brought up" or less socially adept because of an inability to understand how others think, to predict others' behavior or because of insufficient social skills. Similar to people with infantile autism, they tend to be sensitive to sensory input (noise, light, smells, tastes). People with Asperger's Syndrome can be gifted in certain areas and can excel in mathematics, literature, logical thinking or musical composing. Many well-known personalities from history, such as Albert Einstein or Andy Warhol, had Asperger's Syndrome.

INFANTILE AUTISM

People with infantile autism experience the most significant difficulties in relationships with others and in understanding those relationships. They are unable to communicate their needs or desires and thus express them in their "own" way. In an effort to be understood and to achieve a feeling of security in the world and in relationships, they exhibit various repeated behaviors, make strange movements and create rituals for themselves, so that the world becomes more predictable for them. For this reason, they can better orient themselves according to what they see rather than what is said. They react differently, often very sensitively, to sensory stimuli around us (noise, light, touch...). People with infantile autism are not able to function independently in adulthood. They require special lifelong care and education, thanks to which they are able to understand to a certain extent "our world" or fragments of it.

HIGH-FUNCTIONING AUTISM

High-functioning autism is among the "less severe" types of infantile autism and is often called Asperger's Syndrome. When compared with Asperger's Syndrome however, people with high-functioning autism have much more significant difficulties in social relationships and communication, lower intellect and a greater need for assistance in everyday life.

ATYPICAL AUTISM

This type of autism is different from infantile autism in that a child's problems appear simultaneously in all three of the areas mentioned (relationships, communication and interests), or the first signs of it can appear after the third year of a child's life.

More information about autism at www.andreas.sk