

# ADHD...

# ...and Autism



**Aaron King**  
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## Beyond 25% extra time...

Aaron King  
director@9000Lives.org



# ADHD and Autism beyond 25%

## Aims

Have a better understanding of ADHD & autism so that we can:

- Be even better at supporting our apprentices.
- Get even better outcomes for all our learners.

## Benefits

- You'll have extra knowledge to help you to support apprentices even better.
- Outcomes for apprentices become even better.
- Zero learners who have ADHD or autism drop out.



# ADHD: True or False?

1. One in 30 adults have ADHD.
2. ADHD is detected more in females than males.
3. ADHD was first written about in 1798, during the rule of George III.
4. The term ADHD was adopted in 1980.
5. People 'grow out' of ADHD.



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# What is ADHD?

## ADHD is diagnosis that describes people who display:

- Overactive behaviour (overactivity)
- Impulsive behaviour (impulsivity)
- Difficulty paying attention and distractibility (inattention)

## There's three subtypes

1. ADHD (overactive subtype)
2. ADHD (inattentive subtype)
3. ADHD (above two combined)

## 'Attention deficit' is an imperfect term...

1. For some, they may have too many things going on in that moment to be able to concentrate on the new thing.
2. For some, they may be so focused on one thing that they struggle to focus on anything else.
3. For some, the term attention deficit does fit ok.



# ADHD in Numbers

How common is ADHD?

**1 in 30**

UK adults are believed to have ADHD.

(NICE - CKS, 2024)



Is ADHD more common in males?

**It's 3:1**

males vs female in the UK.

(NICE - CKS, 2024)

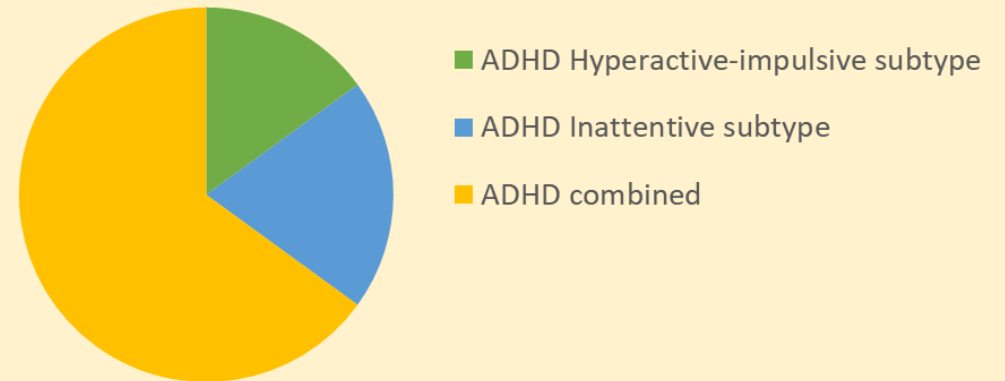


There's three subtypes

1. ADHD (overactive-impulsive type)
2. ADHD (inattentive type)
3. ADHD (both the above combined)

How common are the ADHD subtypes?

(NICE, England, 2024)

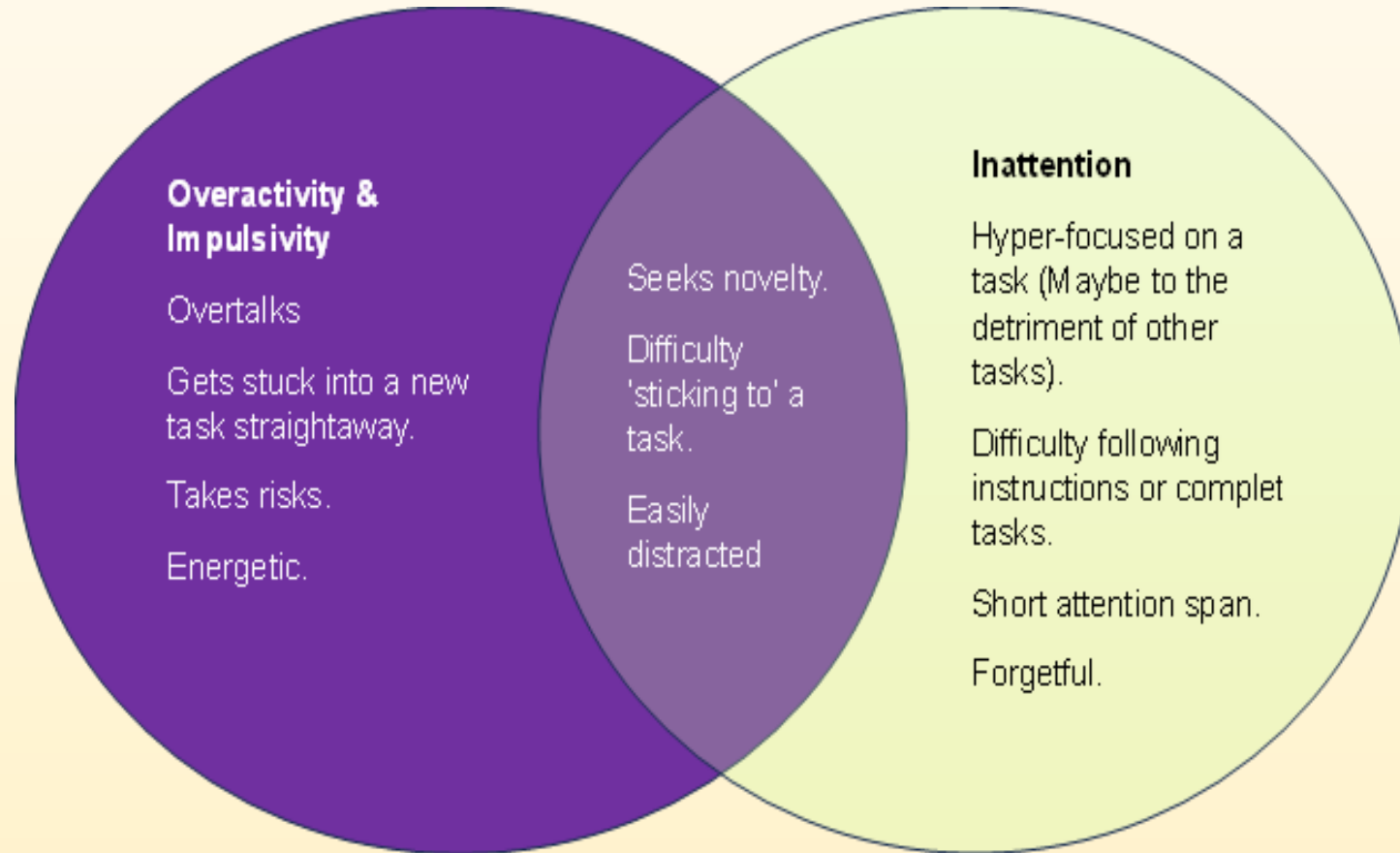


<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/background-information/prevalence/>

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# ADHD in History



# Case study – Declan, who has ADHD



During group sessions, sometimes it seems like Declan's not paying attention. He's submitted two tasks that are very similar to another apprentice in his workplace.

Other work is completed incorrectly, despite your multiple attempts to talk with him and give additional help. Work is often completed late. Declan reports that all the work is taking ages (and much longer than you consider anticipate yourself).

**Q.** What aspects of ADHD do you think may be driving this?

**Q.** What are you going to do next?



# Case study – Declan, who has ADHD



## Tasks that are very similar to the other apprentice

- Don't assume it's Declan (rather than the other apprentice) but definitely follow this up. "The two pieces of work have a similar structure between you and Isaac – did you work together on this? etc

## Explore issues that might affect group session inattentiveness.

- Ask "I've noticed that it sometimes seems like your attention levels drop during the session – have you noticed that? Talk to me about why you think that is?"
- If the session is remote, can he share his screen with you? Does he have email notifications popping up? Any other distractions?

## Check on note taking and time planning

- Do we need to talk about & do a bit of coaching on this?

## Instructions

- Trial shorter deadlines. Make them as concrete as possible (e.g. Get your introduction to me by Fri 4th).
- Play back your own instructions. Listen carefully – how concise are you?
- If 1:1, help Declan's memory by asking him to repeat back instructions.



# THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE®

A SIMPLE METHOD TO BALANCE FOCUS WITH DELIBERATE BREAKS

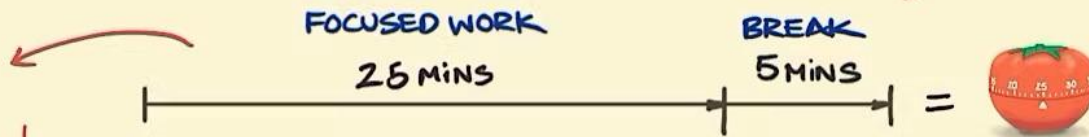


1 PLAN YOUR TASKS  
How many pomodoros might you need?

2 DO 1 POMODORO  
Time for 25 mins then take a 5 min break

NO SNEAKY  
WORKING!

PROTECT  
YOUR POMODORO!



3 REPEAT x 4 POMODOROS  
Then take a longer break



## POMODORITO TECHNIQUE




1. EAT DORITOS FOR 25 MINUTES
2. WORK FOR 5 MINUTES
3. REPEAT STEPS 1-2 FOUR TIMES
4. TAKE A LONGER BREAK TO GO TO THE STORE AND BUY MORE DORITOS

# Tech for ADHD - Forest App



- Forest is an app that lets you set time challenges on your phone to focus on tasks
- Each block of time you focus for gives you a tree, bush or toadstool to add to your forest.
- If workmates are doing this too, you can connect with them and compete to grow the better forest each week.
- It's mostly free. There's an upgraded version for about £3.00 (so less than a pint) that gets you extra fauna and extra music options.
- Also good for your own teens who need to put down their phone and do their work: ADHD or not!

Forest is an app that helps you stay focused on the important things in life.



Whenever you want to stay focused, plant a tree.

Your tree will grow while you focus on your work.

Leaving the app halfway will cause your tree to die.



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# ADHD Check In: Four Quick Retrieval Questions.



**Answer these on a note pad:**

1. What are the three components of ADHD?    O \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What are the three subtypes of ADHD?    O \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_, C \_\_\_\_\_.
3. How does ADHD manifest itself in terms of making it harder to succeed in the apprenticeship or workplace (Give three ways).
4. What can you suggest in terms of mitigating some of the above barriers to an apprentice meeting their full potential (Give three ways).



# Reframe the ADHD in your head?



If the apprentice...	Then, think of that as...
interrupts	being really keen to contribute
is easily distracted	
is restless	
goes off at a tangent	
forgets things	





# Autism

## True or False?

1. Autism is lifelong.
2. Autism is a disability.
3. You can have autism or ADHD but not both.
4. Most autistic people mask their difficulties.
5. Autistic people have a special skill.

For a bonus point, name the autistic footballer pictured.

# Autism

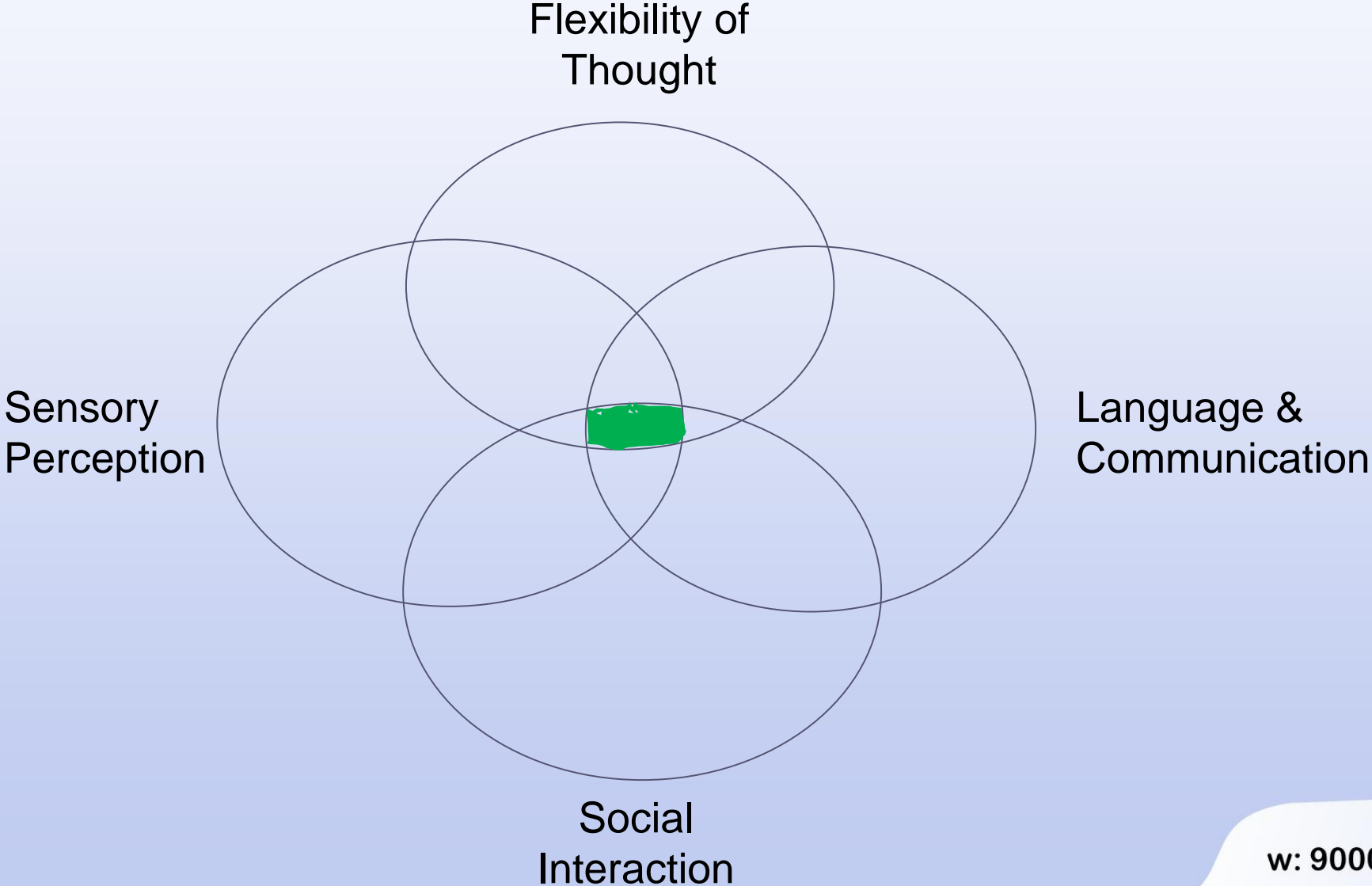
Before we dive in, what is autism?



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LinkedIn: Aaron King



# The Areas of Difference



# Language & Communication



Activity: How do we communicate?

Find 7 ways...

## Verbal

- Words

## Non-verbal

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Body language
- Body position

## Para-verbal

- Tone of voice
- Speed of voice
- Pitch of voice

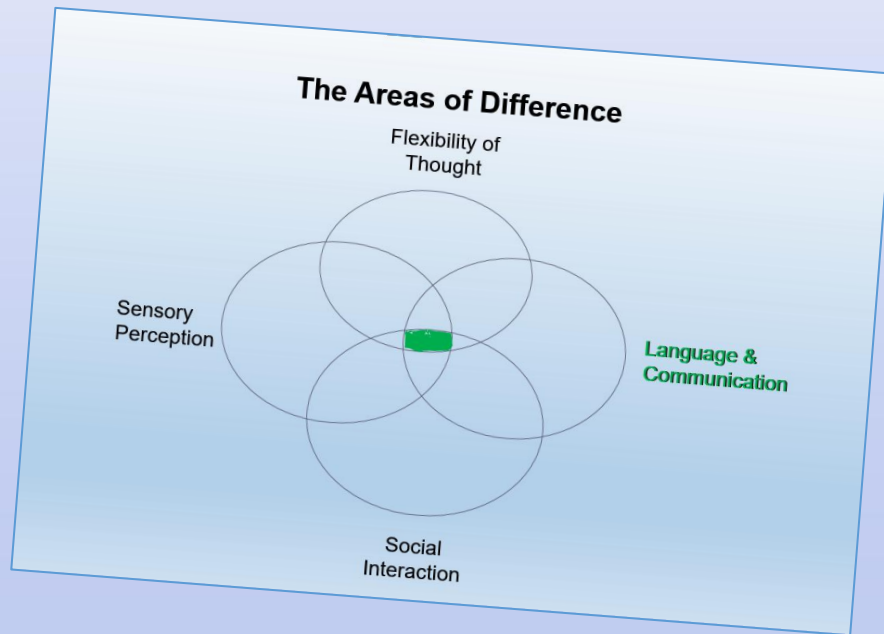
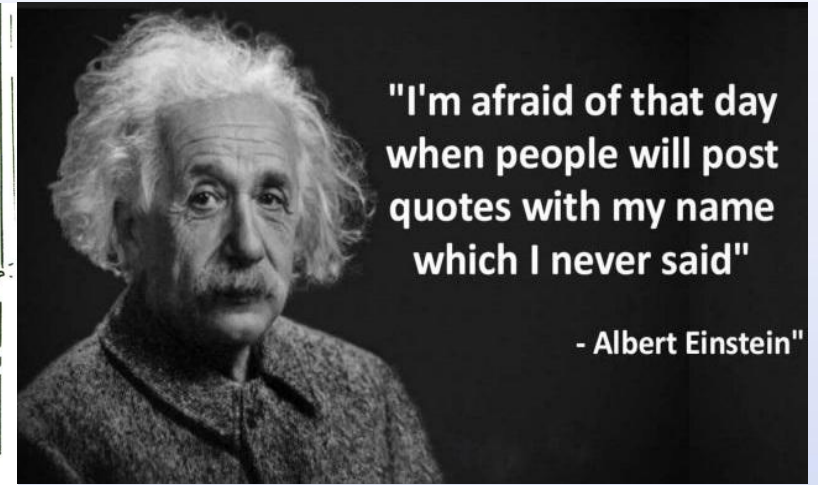


# Language & Communication

Wide variety in difficulties with language and communication.

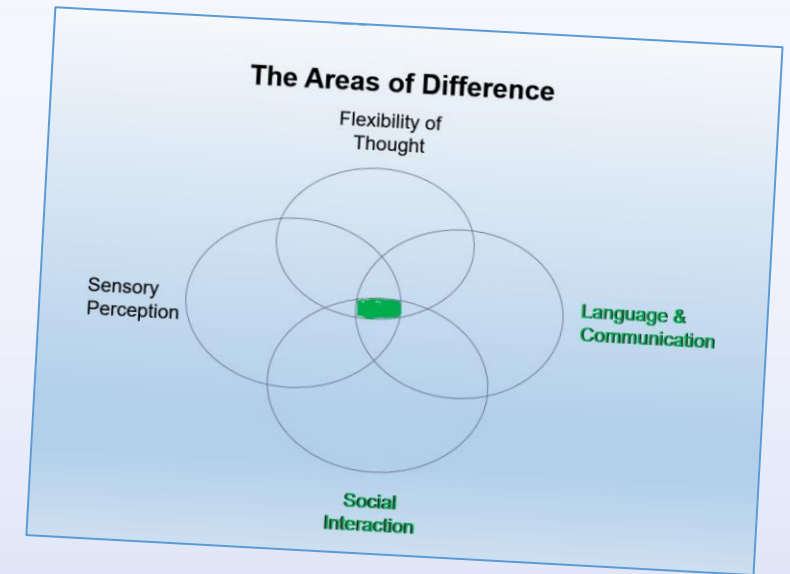
For example:

- 1/2: Language delay or disorder.
- 3. Literal understanding of language
- 4. Slower processing speed



# What are Social Skills?

- Compromising
- Respecting personal space
- Sharing your interests
- Making small talk
- Showing empathy
- Mimicking / reflecting the mood of others
- Appearance



**Look at the pictures. What do you see?**



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# What are our Senses?



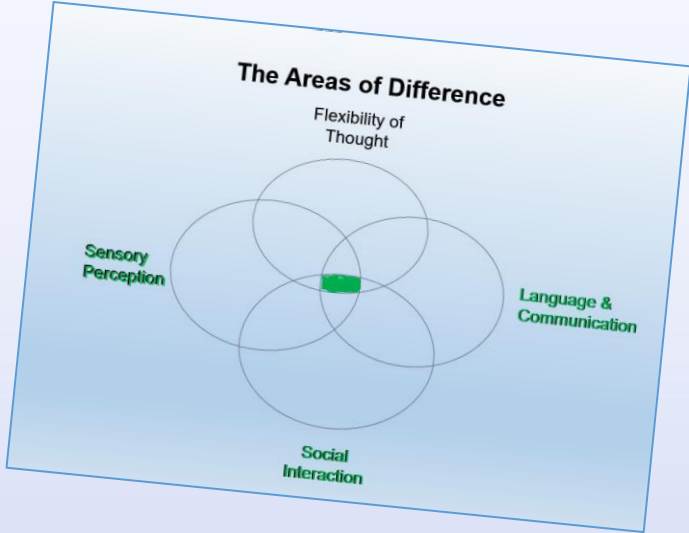
Balance



Touch



Body position



Hearing



Smell

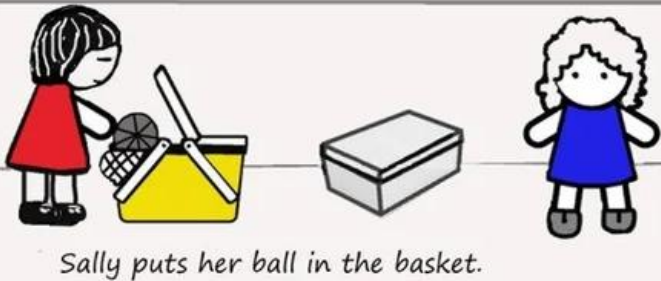
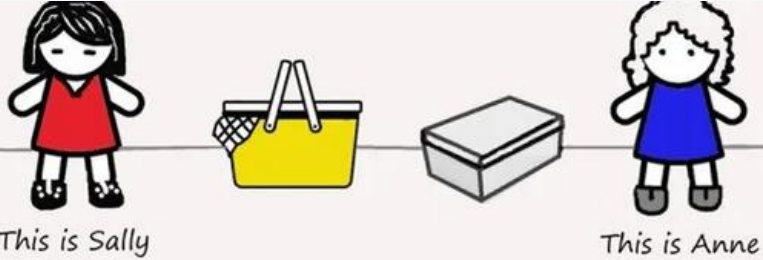


Taste



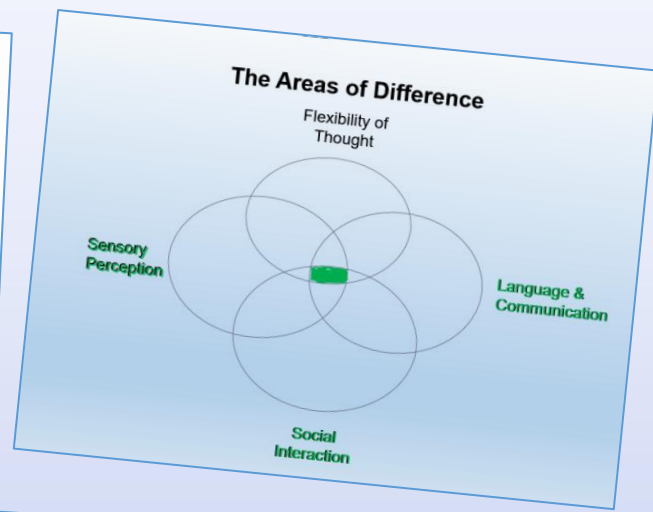
Sight





# Flexibility of Thought

## Theory of mind and rigid thinking





# Advice and guidance

## Browse all topics

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[Autism-friendly guides](#)[Criminal Justice](#)[Employment](#)[Mental health](#)[Resources for autistic teenagers](#)[Strategies and interventions](#)[What is autism](#)[Behaviour](#)[Dealing with bullying](#)[Inpatient mental health hospitals](#)[Physical health](#)[Sensory differences](#)[Transitions](#)[Benefits and money](#)[Diagnosis](#)[Leisure](#)[Positive Behaviour Support \(PBS\)](#)[Social care](#)[Transport](#)[Communication](#)[Education](#)[Loneliness](#)[Related conditions](#)[Socialising and relationships](#)[Ukrainian refugees](#)

# Derbyshire Council's Advice booklet

## A Guide for Employers: Understanding and Supporting People with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

Making employment a positive experience for people living with autistic spectrum conditions and those they work alongside

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/social-health/adult-care-and-wellbeing/disability-support/autism/employers-guide-to-autistic-spectrum-conditions.pdf>



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LinkedIn: Aaron King



# Supporting an apprentice with autism



**“Give me a chance to ask questions and give me clear answers.”**



**“Give me regular feedback and ask me how I would prefer it to be delivered.”**



**“Find out from me if I would like my colleagues to know about my autism.”**



**“Give me clear tasks and structure. What am I doing? Why am I doing it? What do you want the result to be?”**



**“Make reasonable adjustments but don’t treat me differently.”**



**Own the fact that you’ve never worked with that person before.** It might not be perfect first time, but we’ll always work through it.



# Case study: Supporting an autistic apprentice

John is a 28-year-old apprentice who is autistic who has joined your group.

He excels in individual tasks. Work is completed on time, but it seems that there's always far more than is needed for each task, despite being verbally told to write less.

In group sessions, he stammers when asked questions. When 1:1, the stammer is never seen.

In the workplace, his manager had to speak to him about episodes that happened in the break room when he was loudly critical of his team mates to colleagues in the wider organisation.

Team mates have commented that, when he's at his desk, he puts headphones on and seems to cut himself off from the team.

John became upset when a project was introduced with no notice.



# Supporting an apprentice with autism

## Discuss in your groups:

1. What are the biggest issues that risk J failing to complete their apprenticeship?
2. Thinking about a 1:1 session with J, what questions might you use to open up the conversation?
3. What adjustments would you consider?
4. Are there any other issues that you'd need to check out?



# Working Memory

## Improve processing speed and working memory

### Introduction

There's no single thing you can do. Some of this advice might surprise you, because you wouldn't immediately make the connection between processing speed and bedtime. To get the most out of this advice, stop at the end, go back through the headings and reflect honestly on things you could do better. Then pick 2 or 3 actions that you think will make the most difference for you.

### 1. Imagine the brain as a muscle

It's not fixed – you can make it fitter and stronger – or, you can leave it as it is. What will it be?

It can be easy to fall into the trap of assuming your working memory or processing speed are low – and also accept that's just how it is. However, there are things you can do to improve them – just like a person's weight or fitness, working memory and processing speed aren't fixed.

### 2. Move More

**Do more aerobic exercise:** This means exercise that raises your heart rate and is moderate intensity. Examples are running, jogging and cycling. Lots of sports involve some aerobic exercise so hockey, football, badminton etc will all help too.

The reason for this is that research says that activity improves thinking speed. One study examined 1.2 million Norwegian men born between 1950 and 1976. It showed that physical fitness was closely associated with brain performance.

### 4. Sleep

Being tired affects your cognitive abilities (and so your processing speed). The average adult needs about 8 hours sleep each night.

Check out <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/adults/faqs/> for a wealth of information.

- How warm should your bedroom be?
- Can you catch up on sleep at the weekend?
- Are naps bad for you?

They also host the National Sleep Helpline: 0330 3 530 541.

### 5. Diet

There are foods, such as beetroot, that are dubbed *super foods* for the brain. You can spend all your time searching out the perfect super foods, but you're probably better writing down everything you eat for 7-10 days. Then reflect on it. Your brain is only as good as the fuel you put in your body in the form of fuel – so how healthy is the food you're fuelling your brain with?

### 6. Socialise Plenty

Do it face-to-face with people. An active social life is good for your mind. Socialising face to face needs faster processing and reactions than via online messaging – therefore, you get more practice at thinking fast.

### 7. Smoking

Do you smoke? If so, stop.

Every extra cigarette is hindering your brain power. Smoking affects the brain and, in particular, the hippocampus – part of the brain that affects learning and memory.

### 8. Stay away from Nootropics

Nootropics are substances that claim to help your brain. The evidence for them working is doubtful so don't waste your money on these products and their bogus claims.

# Working Memory

## 9. Online Brain Training Games

There's lots of these available. There's some evidence of effectiveness, but this research is often done on elderly people or people with specific conditions (e.g. ADHD). For others, there's no reason not to try, it's just not especially well proven whether it'll work.

A Google user

★★★★★ June 18, 2024

Keeps my brain ticking over and has improved my maths considerably. I have taken up the subscription since I reviewed this back in 2018. Enjoy full access to all the games and the new crossword addition. If I had one complaint, it is that some of the games are repetitive, especially on some of the word games but apart from that I thoroughly enjoy it. Currently on a 448 day streak.

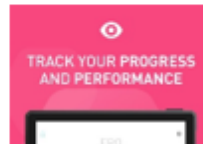
17 people found this review helpful

Did you find this helpful?

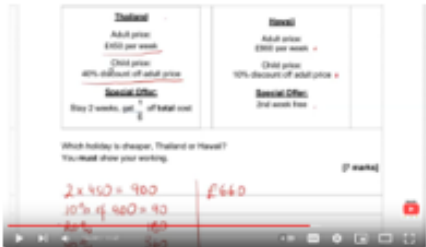
Yes

No

One example that has good reviews is Elevate. This app has over 40 games and assesses you when you first download. It does cost £40 per year (so about £3.50 per month). That's only the cost of a pint per month so not super expensive.



## 12. YouTube Help for maths



Watch maths on YouTube. Pause the video so you can have a go and then un-pause to see how the correct answer is worked out. Mars Maths is one example.

The more you see, the more familiar it becomes and so the more easily you'll be able to succeed when you next sit your Level 2. [www.youtube.com/@MarsMaths](https://www.youtube.com/@MarsMaths)

## 11. Three Brain Games for Working Memory

These are great if commuting by bus, train or tram. You can them up these as puzzle books at your local interchange or search.

Or you can download free apps that specialise in these kind of puzzles.

Sudoku

Logic Problems

Codewords



## 10. Micro-scripts

Micro scripts are lines (or short paragraphs) that you can fall back to get you out of tricky situations. Develop micro-scripts to manage situations where you may be being asked to think faster (or rely on your working memory) more than you are currently able to:

- "I'm about to answer. You've asked a good question. It's important to me and I want to give you the best answer more than only a fast answer. Please give me a moment."
- "We've spoken in some detail. So I'm really clear on what you're asking for me to contribute, are you happy just to summarise the actions please?"
- "I tend to have recording & transcription on teams meetings – that means I can always check back if needed rather than needing to bother you. It gets deleted after 30 days / once I've completed the actions etc is that ok with you?"

# Q&As

“That’s too much for me...”

“I’ll not remember that...”

**There is no  
perfection, only  
beautiful versions  
of brokenness.**

**FLAWSOME**

**(flo-som) adjective**

**an individual who embraces  
their "flaws" and knows they  
are awesome regardless**

## **ADHD** and **Autism** beyond 25%

### **Aims**

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