



Autism Services of Saskatoon



AUTISM SERVICES OF SASKATOON

WHO WE ARE

Autism Services is a Saskatoon-based, charitable organization dedicated to providing advocacy, support, and services to individuals with autism and their families.

We were established in 1979 by a group of parents and community members, and are celebrating our 40th Anniversary this year.

VISION STATEMENT

That all individuals with autism have the opportunity to live with dignity and to reach their full potential.

MISSION STATEMENT

Autism Services continuously strives to deliver the highest standard of support, advocacy, and service to individuals with autism and their families and caregivers.



OUR PROGRAMS

- ***Autism Intervention Program***

Provides therapeutic and educational programs for individuals with ASD, and their families and support teams. Services can begin as early as 18 months, and continue until the individual is 18 years old.

- ***ABA Little Tots Program***

The Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Little Tots Program is an early intensive behavioural intervention program (EIBI) that is based on the principles of ABA and consists of treatment, for children 48 months or younger, and 25 hours of therapy per week. It is a scientifically validated treatment for young children with Autism.

- ***Family Programs***

Autism Services of Saskatoon offers recreational, educational and social support programs for individuals with autism and their families, throughout the year. Programs include swimming, adult club, music therapy, and summer camps.



OUR PROGRAMS

- ***Adult Support Programs***

Supported Living: Autism Services of Saskatoon has been providing home support for over 20 years. We currently operate 5 homes, and a supported independent living apartment, and support 20 adults.

Day Program: We have 11 individuals in our community based day program. Individuals participate in a wide range of work, recreation and skill building activities.

Comprehensive Personal Planning and Support policies and Gentle Teaching are used to work with the individuals to meet their personal goals and support needs.



WHAT IS AUTISM?

- Autism is a lifelong neurological disorder
- It affects development and how the brain processes information.
- Symptoms of this developmental disorder may be diagnosed as early as 18 months.
- Two people diagnosed with autism can be dramatically different from each other.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JdCY-cdgkI>

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism Spectrum Disorder primarily affects:

- Communication
- Social interaction
- Behaviour



STATISTICS ON AUTISM

United States 2010 – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- About 1 in 68 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDMM) Network.
- ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
- ASD is almost 5 times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189).



CONCERNS

Individuals with autism who experience challenges in accessing healthcare in typical settings, often end up with ongoing health issues.

Lack of preventative healthcare (annual physicals, routine dental care, ongoing bloodwork, regular psychiatric care), often leads to individuals experiencing emergency medical situations.

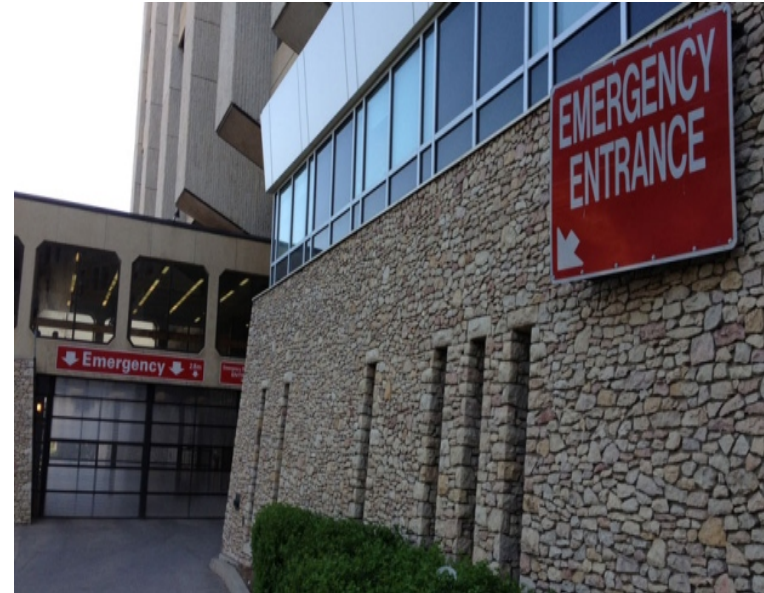
It is often much more difficult to treat an individual with autism in an emergency healthcare setting, and is much more costly to provide this care.



AUTISM AND HEALTHCARE

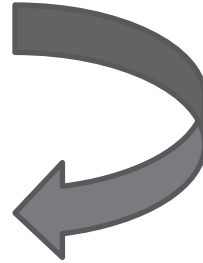
Many individuals with ASD experience a number of co-existing symptoms, and may have difficulties with typical healthcare settings:

- Sensory processing disorder
- Seizure disorders
- Side effects of medications
- Past traumatic experiences
- Intellectual disabilities
- Communication challenges

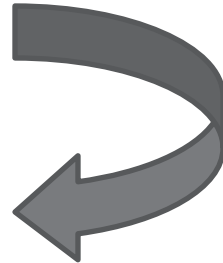


WHAT HAPPENS IF WE CAN'T COMMUNICATE?

Increased frustration

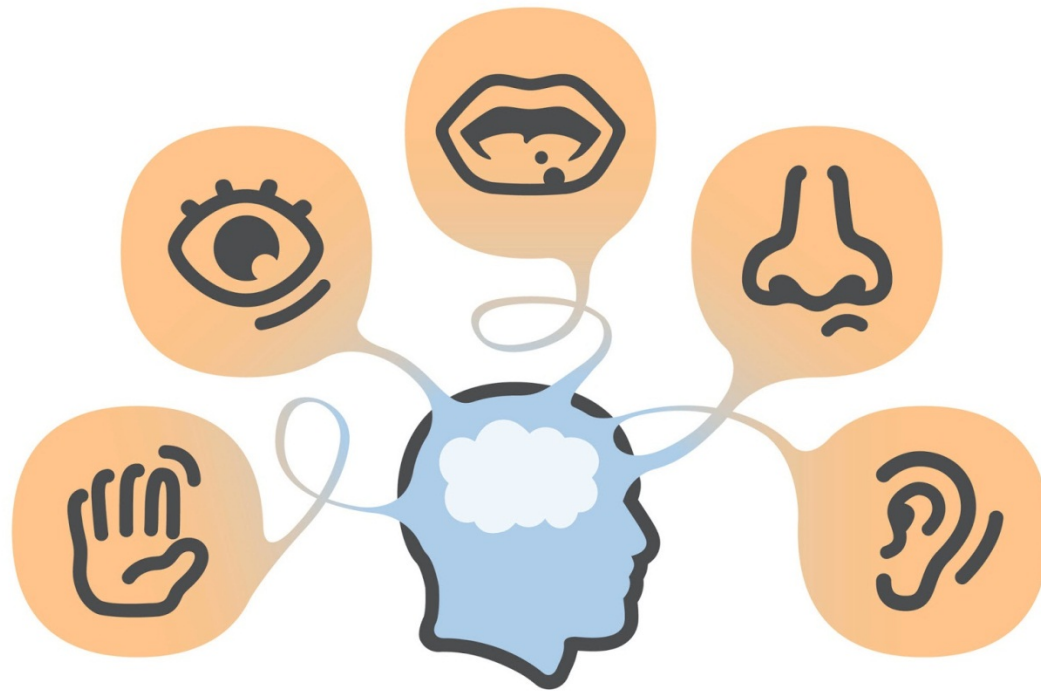


Challenging or inappropriate behaviours



Reduced opportunities to improve communication

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER AND HEALTHCARE



SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

- Sensory processing disorder (SPD) is a condition that exists when sensory signals don't integrate to provide appropriate responses
- We all have different responses to sensory signals, For example, some people find wool fabrics itchy and hard to wear while others don't.
- Individuals with SPD have significant difficulties processing and integrating the sensory information their bodies receive.
- Individuals' may be hyposensitive (very low sensitivity) or hypersensitive (very high sensitivity) to sensory input.



STRATEGIES

Create an individual treatment plan

- Ask the individual or their support team what additional supports are needed
- Provide home visits if possible
- Desensitize the individual to challenging environments or procedures
- Meet with members of the support team without the individual if possible.
- Incorporate consistent approaches (reward systems, consistent language, role-playing) to prepare the individual for healthcare procedures.
- Visit Autism and Health website (www.autismandhealth.org) for resources

STRATEGIES

Be aware that some medications can affect autistic individuals in atypical ways.

Anecdotally, many autistic adults report experiencing unusual side effects of medications—including the side effects listed as “less common” or “rare”. This lived experience is backed up by research on the effects of psychotropic drugs in autistic children (Santosh and Biard, 2001). It has also been observed by some clinicians that autistic people respond differently to drugs than typical people do or that autistic individuals may require lower than usual dosages to obtain the expected results. By communicating with patients regarding the expected effects of a new prescription and following up to identify any unexpected outcomes, doctors can optimize the effectiveness of medications for autistic individuals.

STRATEGIES

Be flexible and creative

- Schedule individuals for first or last appointment of the day
- Allow individuals to wait in the car or at home and notify them when the healthcare provider is ready

Use alternate means of communication

- Visuals
- Gestures and symbols
- Short concise statements
- Concrete terms



CONCLUSION

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder can receive healthcare in typical settings with the right support.

Increased awareness of the challenges that many individuals with ASD experience in accessing healthcare, and strategies that can be used to overcome this, will benefit healthcare providers and lead to more positive outcomes.

Through increased awareness and collaboration we can ensure that individuals with autism are provided with appropriate support to reach their individual goals and needs.





Autism and Dental Care

Creating an Inclusive Dental Office

- + What does it mean to be inclusive?
- + Welcoming and adapting to a diverse set of needs
- + Being prepared to collaborate and modify appointments to best prepare the patient for success
- + Reducing the risk of traumatic experiences
- + Creating the foundation for successful life-long oral health services through education and advocacy

Challenges in the Dental Office

- + Individuals with ASD present with challenges in the dental office
- + Lack of confidence in a dental office
- + Unfamiliar noises and expectations
- + Busy environment
- + Lack of confidence to have an office supporting inclusion
- + Invasive or Encroaching on personal space

Dental Hygiene Diagnosis and Care Planning

- + Assess-data collection
- + Diagnose-identify problems based on assessment data
- + Plan-select, prioritize dental hygiene interventions
- + Implement-activate the plan
- + Evaluate-feedback on the effectiveness



Hospital Dental, General Anesthetic



How can we introduce effective forms of preventative dental hygiene treatment safe for everyone?



Assess

- + During your first appointment with an individual with an exceptionality take time to get to know each other
- Start by meeting the patient, their family or caregiver. Inquire about any dental concerns.
- Educate on brushing and flossing. Sometimes oral hygiene instruction can be most beneficial at the beginning of the appointment



Diagnose



IMPLEMENT

- + Often I start with brushing and flossing.
- + To gain confidence I don't start in the worse area of their mouth. Similar to a NPE. We want them to come back!



Positive Reinforcement







What are your concerns on bringing your son or daughter into a dental office?

- + Lack of compassion to their needs
- + Belittled on how “bad their teeth are”
- + Lack of respect or understanding on the challenges there are around medical appointments
- + Often times medical professionals feel like they have all of the answers. Sometimes they just need to listen to the parent or caregiver to be more successful.

