

# Are you supporting someone with autism?



Autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) or disorders (ASD) include a number of closely related conditions that affect a person's social, communication and imagination skills. Up to one in 100 people are thought to display some ASC features.

ASC occurs across the range of intellectual functioning, with the majority of people having average intelligence. People with ASC are individuals, with their own unique personalities and autism will affect each of them differently.

The Estia Centre – committed to meeting the mental health needs of adults with learning disabilities.

For more information visit [www.estiacentre.org](http://www.estiacentre.org)

## What can you do to support people with ASC?

- Always explain what you are about to do and what is happening.
- Give the person enough time to understand the information you have given them.
- Use direct requests and check that the person has understood you, but avoid being patronising.
- Use concrete language with accompanying pictures where necessary and do not rely on your gestures or body language.
- People with ASC can take what you say literally, so avoid metaphors, words with a double meaning and humour that may be misunderstood.
- Routine and familiarity are important; try to make life as predictable as possible, though people with ASCs may get bored like anyone else!
- Social difficulties may include unusual body language and eye contact.
- Repetitive behaviours and special interests may be a way of coping and should be respected.
- Some people with ASC have heightened sensitivity to light, noise and touch, so pay particular attention to the environment and physical contact.
- If the person's behaviour becomes challenging, consider why this might be in the light of the person's ASC – this might help you to intervene more appropriately.