

- 1  The Importance of Social Pragmatic Communication to Life Success
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- 2  Appropriate social skills are dependent upon:
  - motivation to “fit in”
  - accurately perceive situations
  - decode information from others
  - perform the necessary social skills
  - recognize social feedback
  - act upon the social feedback
- 3  Why is it so important?
- 4  Individuals who recognized the need for improved social thinking had higher salaries than those who didn't recognize the need.
  - Howlin, P., Alcock, J., Burkin, C. (2005). An 8 year follow-up of a specialist supported employment service for high-ability adults with autism or Asperger syndrome. *Autism* 9: 533-549.
- 5  Those lacking social cognition had less positive employment experiences and showed more preference for solitary activities.
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  - Jennes-Coussens, M., Magill-Evans, J., Koning, C. (2006). The quality of life of young men with Asperger syndrome: a brief report. *Autism*. 10: 403-414.
  -
- 6  Outcome in AS was good in 27% of cases. However, 26% had a very restricted life, with no occupation/ activity and no friends. Why? Poor awareness of social thinking.
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  - Cederlund, M., Hagberg, B., Billstedt, E., Gillberg, I. C., and Gillberg, C. (2007). Asperger Syndrome and Autism: A Comparative Longitudinal Follow-Up Study More than 5 Years after Original Diagnosis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.
- 7  What's important
  - Adolescent viewpoint:
    - nonverbal comprehension
    - perspective taking

- vocal tone interpretation
- Teacher viewpoint:
  - turn-taking
  - perspective taking
  - logical communication
  - clarification

## 8 What's unimportant

- Adolescent viewpoint:
  - eye contact
  - narrative
  - humor comprehension
  - topic maintenance
- Teacher viewpoint:
  - humor comprehension
  - slang usage
  - nonverbal comprehension
  - topic maintenance

## 9 How often do we communicate?

Yorkston, K., Eadie, T., Baylor, C., Deitz, J., Dudgeon, B., Miller, R., Amtmann, D. (2006) Developing a Scale of Communicative Participation. ASHA 2006 Annual Convention. Miami Beach.

- 80% of waking hours are spent communicating
- - Listening
  - Speaking
  - Reading
  - Writing

## 10 It's a function of deficits in:

- Theory of Mind
- Executive Functions
- Central Coherence
- Emotional Intelligence

## 11 Theory of Mind

- 12  "A nosey girl in my class butts into everyone's conversation with her nonsensical questions and doesn't listen to anyone but herself! Shut up and mind your own business!"  
 – Ticked Off! The Orlando Sentinel, April 19, 2003

## 13 Theory of Mind (ToM)

- Uta Frith
- Definition

- The Sally–Anne Test (Baron–Cohen, 1985)
  - false order belief
- “The Borg” and networked wiring

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- perspective taking
- deficits in perspective taking create:
  - topic domination
  - difficulty with empathy
- “Mr. Tim’s 2 conceptual levels”

15  Level 1 ToM

- “I know that not everyone thinks the same way that I do.”

16  Level 1 manifestations:

- ignoring listener’s perspective
- inappropriate provision of information
- confusing “old” and “new” information
- overuse of non–specific information (e.g. “it” or “thing”)
- “everyone thinks like me”
- inability to engage another outside are of interest
- inability to recognize locations/situations have multiple expectations


17  Level 2 ToM

- “I know that what I do (or don’t do), impacts your decision to want to be my friend (or not be my friend).”

18  Level 2 manifestations:

- poor hygiene
- “I don’t care if you don’t want this, I’m going to complete it”
- hyper–emphasis on penmanship negatively impacts content
- overwhelming ideation (“I can’t go to school – my shirt’s dirty!”)
- lack of joint attention
- inability to recognize facial expressions

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20  Because it’s outside the zone of social expectations

21  Filters

- Knowing what “filter” to put on helps you determine how to “fit in”

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- individuals with social thinking problems have difficulty with the term “think” (Ziata, Durkin, and Pratt, 2003)
- they need more prompts to solve questions (Kaland, 2002)

23  Requirements for ToM

- for individuals to be able to recognize and act upon assumptions acquired from observations, it is critical that they understand the nature and causes of emotions (E. Silliman, S. Diehl, R. Bahr, T. Hnath-Chisolm, C. Zenko, S. Friedman, 2003)

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- creates increased paranoia (Blackshaw, 2001)

25  Deficits Related to ToM  
(B. Myles and J. Southwick, 1999)

- difficulty explaining own behaviors
- difficulty understanding emotions
- difficulty predicting the behavior and emotional states of others
- problems understanding the perspectives of others

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- problems inferring the intentions of others
- problems differentiating fiction from fact
- problems with joint attention and other social conventions
- lack of understanding that behavior impacts how others think and/or feel

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- compliments are nice to receive
  - presence of hyper-logical thinking and deficient ToM creates a lack of “need”
  - types of compliments (C. Gray, 1999)
    - character
    - ability
    - appearance

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- use topic boxes to:
  - generate opinions about a topic
  - determine student’s current knowledge about a topic
  - generalize new information to outside settings
  - only work if one uses “active listening”

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- develop “Friend Facts”
  - many individuals with social thinking deficits fail to recognize the importance of remembering information about others
  - as a result, they don’t know what is held in common and often interact using inappropriate means

30  Executive Functions

31  Executive Functions

- Definition: how you process, plan, and carryout a procedure to complete a task
- Example: Time Management
- Requires 4 significant skill areas

## 32 1. Flexibility of Thought

- Definition: the ability to determine the best option for a task
- How does AS impact flexibility of thought?
  - thought shifting
  - changing an idea
  - hyper-focus on a specific area (OCD)

33  “One of the reasons why so many of us do not end up in the high-level jobs we are capable of holding is because we are so inflexible during the trajectory towards achieving that goal.

34  People like us tend to waste a lot of time on trying to get people to change their ways if we think those ways are not right.

35  We argue endlessly about all sorts of things that may be important in themselves but are not very relevant to achieving that ultimate goal we set ourselves.”

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- Multiple meaning words require flexible thinking
  - > 50% of English vocabulary is multiple meaning words
- Nonverbal information often missed
  - 60-90% of message!

37  How does one increase flexibility of thought?

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- figure-ground reversal illusions

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- Stroop-like tasks

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41  Teach flexibility of thought

- use set shifting games

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- set shifting games

43  2. Identification of Relevance

- Definition: determining what is important and not important to the task at hand
- How does AS impact identifying relevance?
  - detail oriented
  - fail to see the global picture

#### 44 3. Experiential Learning

- Definition: the ability to learn from and draw upon past experiences
- How does AS impact experiential learning?
  - identifying what works and what doesn't

#### 45 3. Experiential Learning

- applying a skill to a new situation
- difficult to see similarity of old situation and how to apply "old" skills to "new" situation

#### 46 4. Goal Focus

- Definition: the ability to remain focused and on-task, despite presence of competing information
- How does AS impact goal focus?
  - getting stuck in details
  - getting distracted

#### 47 Dropping out of school

- NT reason:
  - addictions
  - boredom
  - deficient intellect
- AS/poor social thinking reason:
  - tangential interests impede academia

#### 48 Comparison of Executive Functions

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#### 50 Central Coherence

#### 51 Central Coherence

- Definition: the ability to integrate details into a larger picture
- How does AS impact central coherence?
  - details rule
  - often have the information but can't integrate it into the big picture
  - seen as inconsiderate & thoughtless to NTs

#### 52 How to "come to the point"

#### 53 Comparison of Central Cohesion

#### 54 Emotional Intelligence

- The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations
- [www.eiconsortium.org](http://www.eiconsortium.org)

#### 55 Emotional Intelligence

- Definition: the ability to perceive, identify, and manage emotion on both a personal and social level
- How does AS impact emotional intelligence?

- ability to adapt to new situations
- coping skills
- job placement

56  AS Manifestations in Personal Competence:  
Self-Awareness

- inability to recognize one's own emotions and their effects
- inability to know one's own strengths and limits
- inability to be sure about one's capabilities

57  AS Manifestations in Personal Competence:  
Self-Regulation

- inability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses
- inability to be honest
- inability to be responsible for one's own actions
- inability to be flexible and open to new ideas

58  AS Manifestations in Personal Competence:  
Self-Motivation

- inability to meet or exceed a standard of excellence
- inability to embrace the goals of the group
- inability to act on opportunities
- inability to continue a goal despite setbacks

59  AS Manifestations in Social Competence:  
Social-Awareness

- inability to recognize others' feelings and perspectives
- inability to anticipate, recognize and meet the needs of others
- inability to recognize what others need to enhance their abilities
- inability to embrace multiculturalism to develop positive opportunities
- inability to recognize a group's emotional currents and power relationships

60  AS Manifestations in Social Competence:  
Social-Skills

- inability to be an effective persuader
- inability to express oneself clearly and effectively
- inability to inspire and guide individuals and groups
- inability to initiate changes in a positive manner
- inability to negotiate and resolve differences
- inability to nurture appropriate relations
- inability to collaborate and cooperate effectively
- inability to effectuate group dynamics to achieve collective goals

61  Do they have AS?

- Hans Christian Andersen • Archimedes • Dan Aykroyd
- Béla Bartók • Ludwig van Beethoven • Tim Burton

- LewisCarroll • Sir Arthur Conan Doyle • Marie Curie
- Charles Darwin • Albert Einstein • Bobby Fischer
- Henry Ford • Bill Gates • Charles de Gaulle • Stonewall Jackson
- Thomas Jefferson • James Joyce • Wassily Kandinsky
- Immanuel Kant • Andy Kaufman • Stanley Kubrick
- Charles Lindbergh • Courtney Love • Herman Melville
- Michelangelo • Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart • Sir Isaac Newton • George Orwell
- Carl Sagan • Vernon L. Smith • Socrates • Jonathan Swift
- Nikola Tesla • Vincent van Gogh • Andy Warhol
- Orson Welles

62  Thanks for coming.