TOURISM FOR AUTISM

INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY & AUTISM

ECM – TIC EXPERT MEETING – 25/10/2019

WHAT IS TOURISM FOR AUTISM?

BACKGROUND

Sien Depoortere – Founder of Tourism for Autism

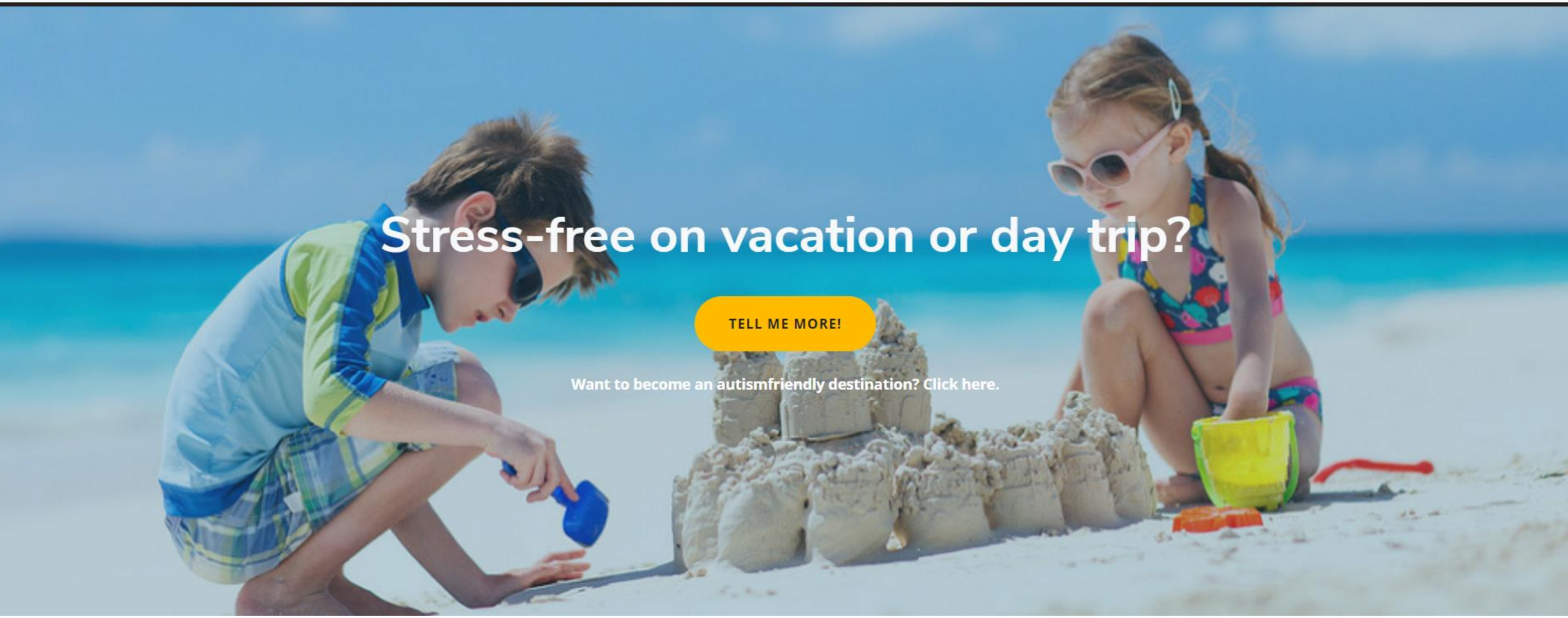
Helping the tourism sector in becoming more autism friendly through workshops, consultancy and the development of visual plans

+60 partners in Belgium

www.tourismforautism.com

Tourism for Autism

TOURISM FOR AUTISM DESTINATIONS NEWS CONTACT



TOERISME VOOR AUTISME

Design Museum Gent

HOE GA IK NAAR DESIGN MUSEUM GENT?

IK GA MET DE TREIN EN DE TRAM

Ik ga met de trein naar Design Museum Gent.

Ik stap op in het station van .....

Het kan zijn dat ik tijdens mijn treinrit moet overstappen.

Ik stap over in het station van .....

Het kan ook zijn dat ik tijdens mijn treinrit niet moet overstappen. Dan blijf ik zitten op deze trein tot ik aan de halte ben van mijn bestemming.

Ik stap uit in het station van .....

Ik wandel naar de tramhalte van tram 1.
Ik stap op de tram.
De rit duurt ongeveer 15 minuten.
Ik stap af aan halte 'Gent Gravensteen'.

Als ik van de tram stap, moet ik nog een beetje stappen tot de ingang van Design Museum Gent.

MIJN BEZOEK AAN DESIGN MUSEUM GENT

IK BEZOEK HET MUSEUM ZONDER GIDS

In deze gang staan 5 zuilen. Bij elke zuil kan ik een andere brochure nemen die een andere route voorstelt. Elke brochure volgt een weg tussen verschillende kunstwerken die bij het thema van de zuil horen.

Bij elke zuil liggen brochures in de kleur van de zuil.

Ook speelt er een filmpje over het thema van de zuil.

De gele zuil is bedoeld voor kinderen en is onderdeel van het museumspel. In deze collectiepresentatie wordt het museumspel uitgebreid. De uitleg voor het spel kan je in de brochure lezen.

CONTENT

- Tourism for Autism?
- **Intellectual diversity & Autism**
- Challenges for people with autism when travelling
- How to improve TIC's services and publications for people with autism?
- Questions

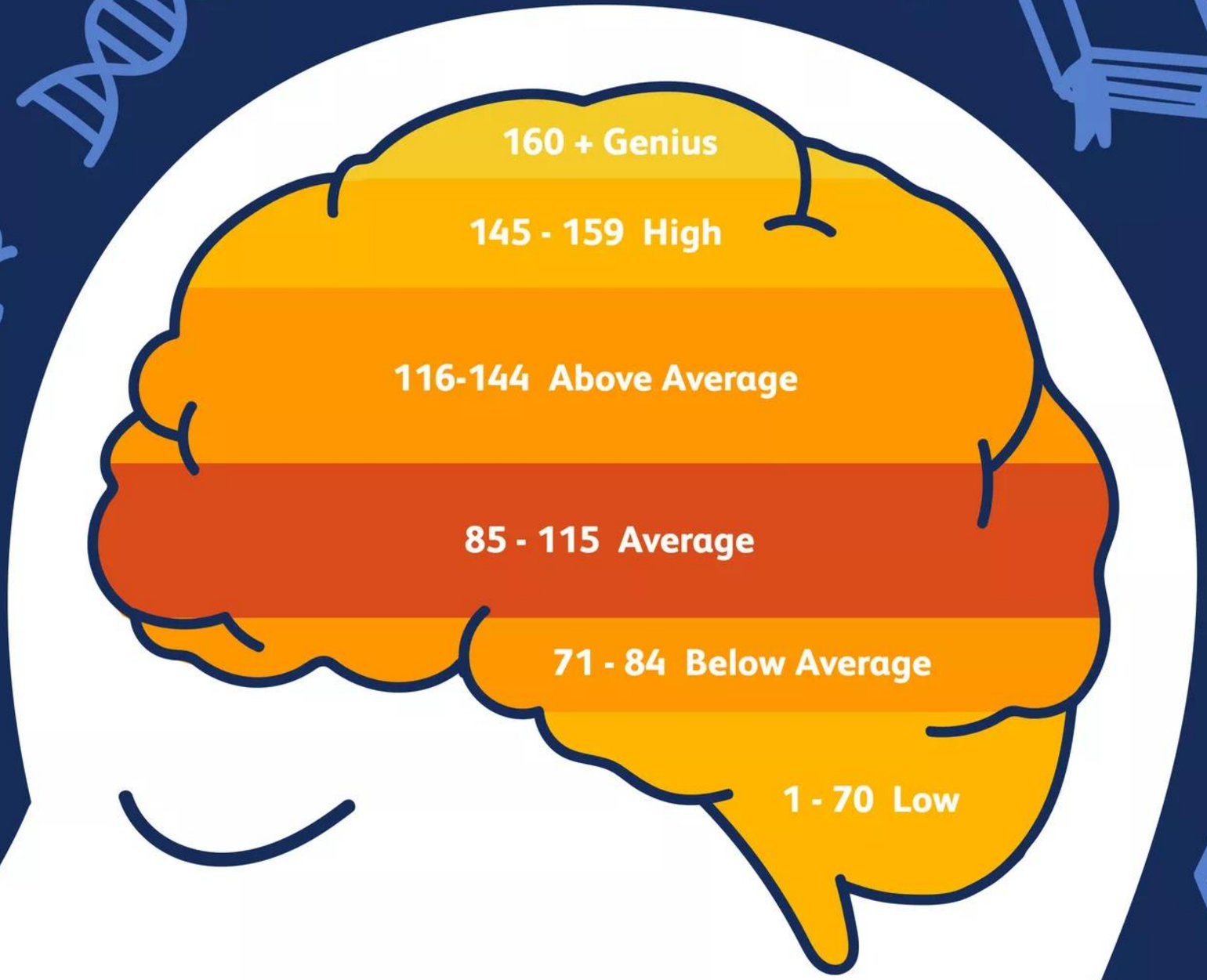
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

- Characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning (IQ < 70) and adaptive behavior (social and practical skills)
- Challenges while travelling: Poor attitudes by staff, information is difficult to understand, fear of travelling alone…
- Adaptations made for people with autism can be useful for people with an intellectual disability

BUT!

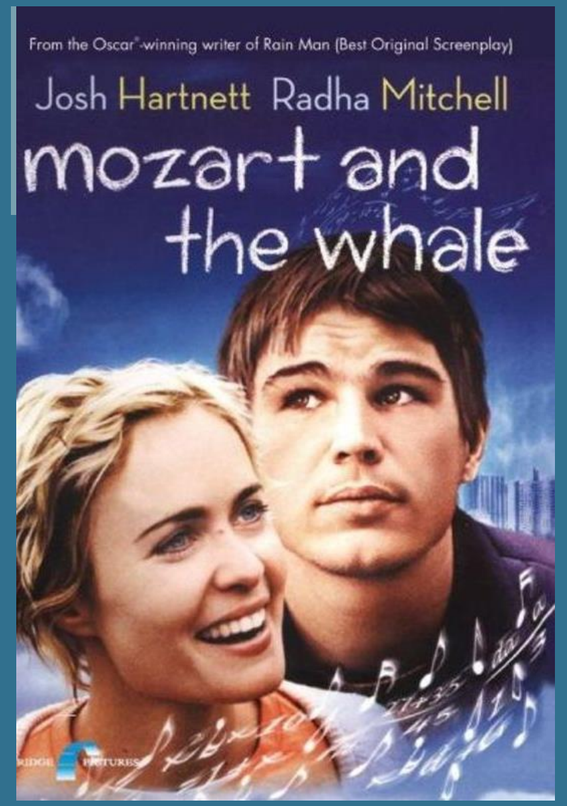
- They don't pay attention to detail – Aim their attention
- Provide information in the here and now
- Mood sensitive – Pay attention to your appearance (e.g. irritated)
- Explore sensory experience

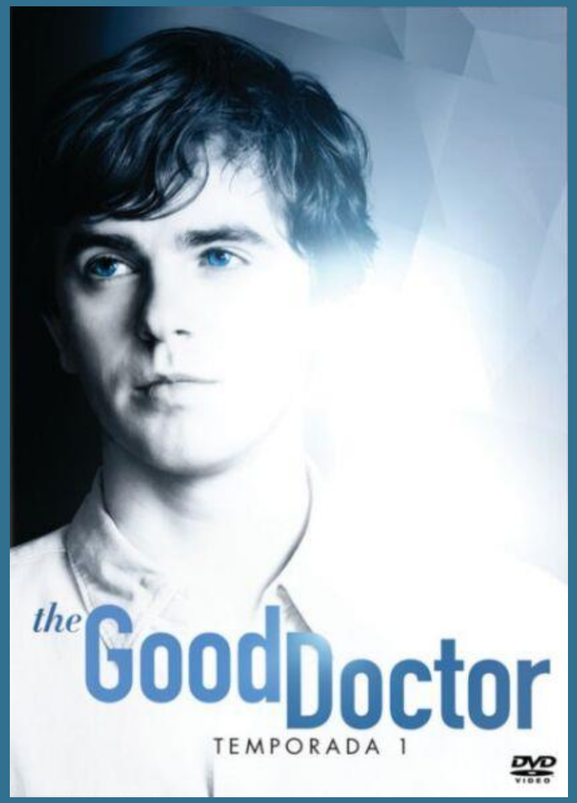
IQ Scores

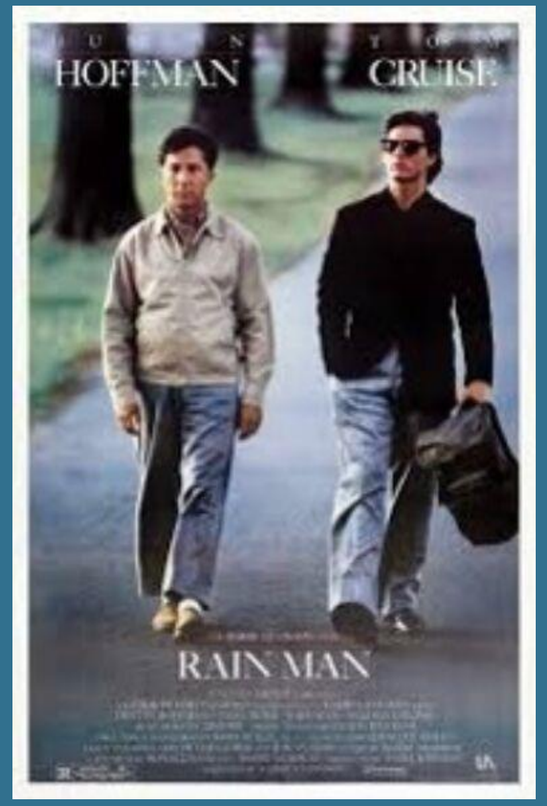


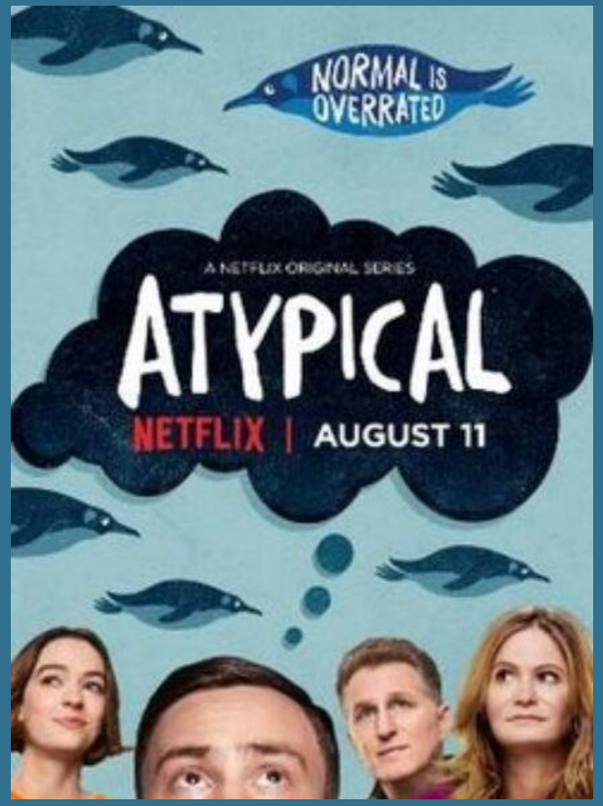
verywell

What is autism?





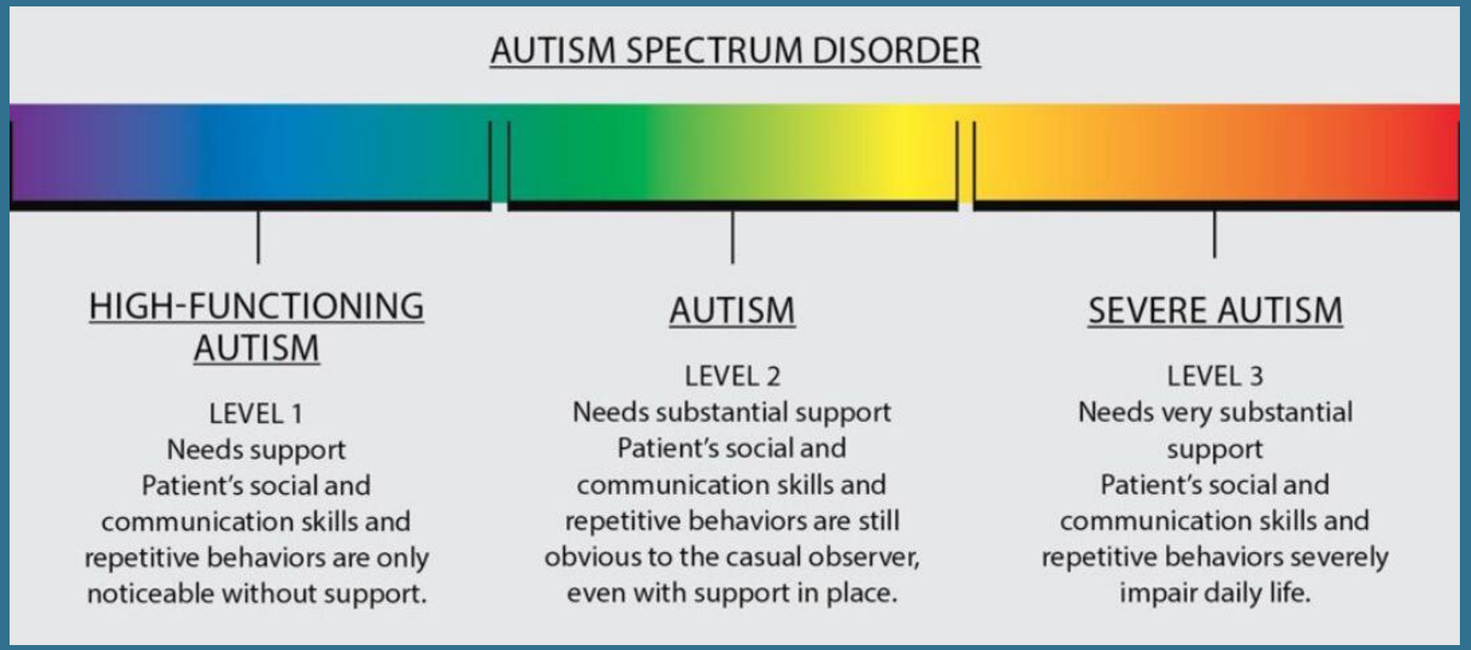




WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
= Pervasive developmental disorder

Autism expresses itself in many ways and levels



AUTISM = DEFICIT ON 2 DOMAINS

SOCIAL INTERACTION & COMMUNICATION

REPETITIVE AND RESTRICTED PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR, INTERESTS OR ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

- Back and forth conversation
- Understanding of language
- Metaphors and sarcasm
- Inappropriate social behavior
- Interpreting body language
- Understanding relationships

REPETITIVE PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

- Stereotype behavior
- Stereotype speech
- Resistance to change
- Restricted interests
- Hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity

CONTEXT BLINDNESS

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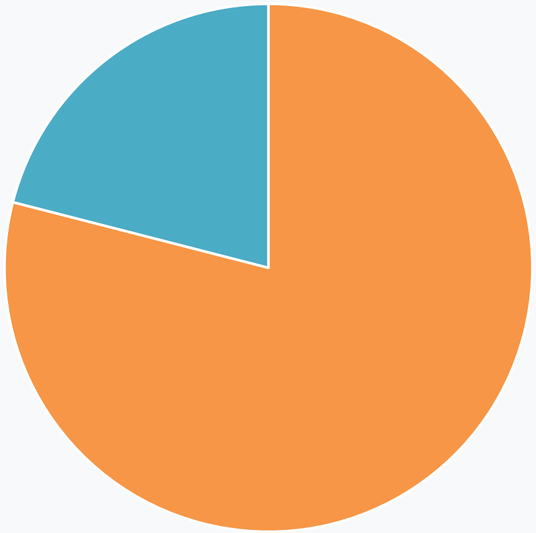
STUDY– NATIONAL AUTISM SOCIETY (2016)

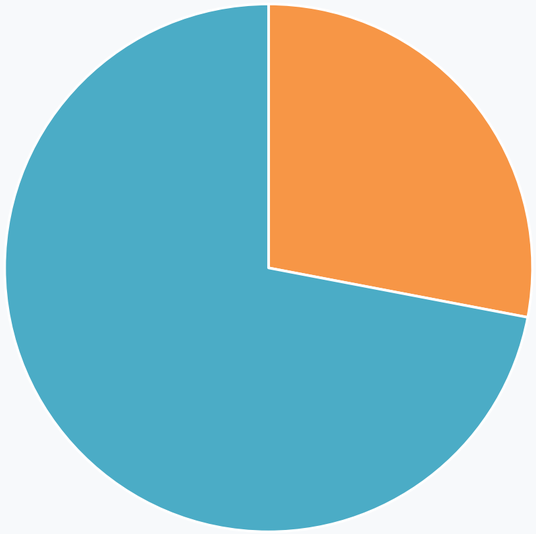


Feeling of isolation

79% of people with ASD feel socially isolated

Staying at home due to lack of understanding

50% of people with ASD don't go on day trip out of fear for reactions of others



Asked to leave public space

28% of people with ASD have been asked to leave a public space due to their autism

DIFFICULTIES DURING VACATION/TRIP

People with ASD experience challenges on a daily basis.

Vacation = Leaving safe and predictable environment.

→

STRESS!

CHALLENGES DURING THEIR TRIP

- Absence of structure and predictability
- Hypersensitivity and/or hyposensitivity
- Disrupted information and communication processing
- Unclear implicit rules
- Judging stares and comments from other visitors

HYPERSENSITIVITY

Over-responsiveness to a wide range of stimuli

4 reactions: Fight – Flight – Freeze – 'Make more noise'

HYPOSENSITIVITY

Under-responsiveness to a wide range of stimuli

2 reactions: Dreamy behavior - Seeking out extreme stimuli

How to handle these senses?

- Be aware
- Reduce stress through predictability
- Take away the source of the stimulation (duration or intensity)
- Give control

WHAT ABOUT A MELTDOWN?

- Cause of the meltdown can be sensorial or cognitive
- Give the person space and time to calm down
- Reduce sounds, lights, smells…
- Be calm yourself and don't judge
- Relaxation techniques:
    - Pressure
    - Focus on breathing

DISRUPTED INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PROCESSING

- Misinterpreting body language
- Autistic thinking – X → Y
- Metaphors, literal language, sarcasm…
- Auditive information <<< Visual information
- Meeting new people

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HOW TO RECOGNIZE A PERSON WITH AUTISM?

- No difference in physical appearance
- Sunflower lanyard
- Headphones
- Parents ask sensory information

COMMUNICATION

- Concrete, short and direct communication
- Don't leave anything to the imagination
- Positive language
- Visualize important messages
- Give the person time to process the information
- Closed-ended questions >> Open-ended questions
- Give the person time to process the question and formulate an answer

CRUCIAL INFORMATION FOR VISITOR WITH AUTISM

- Activities with visual step-by-step plans (a.k.a. social story)
- Activities - Discount with European Disability Card
- Green lungs, churches to compensate for busy city
- Map of the city and/or museums
- Sensory friendly opening hours / quieter times
- Sensory bag filled with autism friendly tools

AUTISM FRIENDLY PUBLICATIONS

CONTENT

Areas where queuing is required

Security checks

Openings hours

Quieter times to visit

Availability of visual plans

Sensory information

DESIGN

Choose a clean and uncluttered design

Avoid use of metaphors and ambiguous language

Best fonts: Helvetica, Verdana, Arial

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CONTACT ME

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LOOKING FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY PARTNERSHIP?

TOURISM FOR AUTISM IS GOING GLOBAL

CONTACT US!

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