



INFORMATION SHEET

Age Group: **Adults**

Sheet Title: **Career Ideas**

Asperger's Syndrome was first identified in Germany in the 1940s, but only became widely understood and diagnosed in the English-speaking world about 10 years ago. It is now estimated that as many as one in 200 people, most of them male, may suffer from either autism or Asperger's Syndrome.

The social and emotional cues - the intonation of speech and facial expressions - that most people decode instinctively in their daily interactions remain a mystery to people with Asperger's Syndrome. So while many may have high IQs and be technically and logically extremely proficient, they lack the ability to relate to other people. To the outside world they appear to be geeks, nerds, self-centered or obsessive.

In some careers, this may not matter. Geniuses such as Wittgenstein and Einstein are believed to have had Asperger's Syndrome, while some have speculated a similar diagnosis for Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft. But in other professions, the syndrome can be a massive problem.

"We come across people who fail to get promotion at work because they lack the social skills," says Dr Simon Baron-Cohen, co-director of the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University. "Those with Asperger's Syndrome find it hard to have a casual chat over a cup of coffee. Some may also lack the people skills for management; they tend to be perfectionists who are so focused on the details that they don't make mistakes and they find it hard to accept human error in others."

Social skills are often as important in the workplace as technical or professional qualifications, and there is very little help available for people with Asperger's Syndrome.



Some people with undiagnosed AS start their first job having no idea what to expect or how to perform. Many are unable to keep any job, and many are extremely intimidated by employment.

Careers to avoid – suggestions

Careers that rely on short term memory should be avoided. e.g.:

- Cashier
- Waitress
- Taxi dispatcher
- Air traffic controller
- Receptionist

Career Suggestions for Visual Thinkers:

- Computer programming
- Drafting
- Commercial art
- Photography
- Equipment design
- Mechanic
- Appliance repair
- Handcraft artisan
- Webpage designer
- Video game designer
- Building maintenance
- Building trades

Career Suggestions for Mathematicians or Musicians:

- Accounting
- Computer programming
- Engineering
- Journalist, copy editor
- Taxi driver
- Piano (or other musical instrument) tuner
- Filing positions



Statistician
Physician
Mathematician
Bank teller
Telemarketing