

THE ASC GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust
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WELCOME TO THE ASC GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Welcome to the ninth issue of *The ASC Good Practice Guide*, a free monthly resource for individuals with an autistic spectrum condition, professionals, and parents.

Which organisation does this Guide come from?

The Guide is written under the banner of the St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust, a non-denominational North-London based ASC and special needs charity.

Who writes and edits the Guide?

The Guide is written by Christine Haugh, and edited by Chris Mitchell.

Christine Haugh's two sons are diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions. She works at Middlesex University as Disability Development Officer for Aimhigher London North Partnership, a DfES-funded organisation. Her duties include Project Management of the Partnership's activities for learners with special educational needs, including autistic spectrum conditions. Christine is currently completing her MEd Autism (Distance-Learning) at University of Birmingham.

Chris Mitchell was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome at University, at the age of twenty. For the first twenty years of his life, Chris felt that he was someone who didn't exist, trying to fit into a social environment he couldn't understand. However, once diagnosed, he found a reason for who he was and his self-confidence returned. Since his diagnosis, Chris has completed his MA (Hons) in Information and Library Management at the University of Northumbria. He has also become an advocate for Asperger Syndrome. Most recently, he has published the autobiography *Glass Half-Empty, Glass Half-Full*. Currently, he works as a clerical assistant with Durham County Council's Special Educational Needs Department. He also speaks about his experiences of Asperger Syndrome at various events and conferences throughout the UK, including the 2005 Aimhigher "Transition to University" Summerschool for students with autistic spectrum conditions, where Chris and Christine met, and at an annual lecture at the University of Northumbria. Additionally, Chris coordinates training workshops for professionals who work with ASC.

To enquire if Chris is available to become involved as a trainer or a speaker at your event,

please visit his new website, at www.chrismitchell.org.uk, or contact him at ChrisMitchell@mitchell17.wanadoo.co.uk

To ensure accuracy and relevance, prior to its publication, the Guide was read and feedback was contributed by a range of individuals including relevant education and health professionals from a number of different Boroughs, individuals with autistic spectrum conditions, and parents. Each issue of the Guide will continue to be "proof-read" in this way.

What is the purpose of the Guide? The purpose of this Guide is to provide practical support in the form of a one-stop-shop of information on existing good practice in the field of Autistic Spectrum Conditions, in relation especially to Transitions. "Transitions" is a broad term, encompassing phase transfer to nursery, primary, or secondary schools, as well as to further and higher education and even adult learning opportunities. "Transitions" also covers the area of transition between types of placement, for instance from specialist to mainstream, or from home education to school-based provision. Information provided in this guide will come from a range of reputable, identifiable sources, such as the DfES. Whenever possible, links to relevant websites will be included alongside the information provided. Always, the intention is to empower the audience by keeping them informed of existing good practice.

How can you subscribe to the Guide? To receive the free monthly Guide, simply email ahaughc@aol.com with the words "Subscribe to Guide" as the subject! If you would like the Guide posted rather than sent via email, simply include name and postal address in your email.

How can you help this Guide? Any reader, whether a professional, an individual diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition or a parent, who is aware of any existing best practice relating to autistic spectrum conditions and who would like to share this information with others, is welcomed to contribute an article to this Guide! Please email Christine on ahaughc@aol.com if you would like to contribute an article. Also feel free to email if you wish to get involved with the Guide in another way, such as helping to reformat or distribute it! All help is greatly appreciated!

NEWS: THOUGHTS ON 2nd WORLD AUTISM CONGRESS, BY WENDY LAWSON

The 2nd World Autism Congress took place in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2006. *The ASC Good Practice Guide* warmly thanks Wendy Lawson for sharing these thoughts on the Congress with all of our readers unable to attend the event:

"The Title of the 2nd World Autism Congress was aptly named 'Discovering New Territories'. There were speakers from over 50 countries representing autism in all its guises; from individuals, families, organizations and professionals. For me there were two highlights. The first one was the opening ceremony featuring children from two schools. All the kids were autistic of varying ages from 5 to 15. Their common language was that of drums and dance. They were in perfect time with each other and thoroughly enjoyed the activity even though it was under bright lights and in front of more than a thousand people.

The second highlight was Rita Jordan's take on the issue of 'disorder or difference'. Currently, surrounding the ASD label, there is much debate as to whether or not ASD is a disability or a difference. Although in my own work I often speak about 'diffability' (being differently abled) I have always said that as an autistic individual I am disabled due to the non-accommodation of my difficulties. However, I also teach that ASD is a particular learning style, and as such, needs recognition as part of the neural diverse world we humans occupy.

For some, autism is not seen as 'a different way of being' nor is it thought of as 'neural diversity'. It is, however, extremely handicapping and a severe disability. Rita's presentation at The World Congress clearly acknowledged this. In her usual wisdom and professional capacity, Rita summed up how autism could be either of these. In the slide below, taken from her talk, Rita writes under the heading of: Alternative role of diagnosis & identification

- Psychological definition of ASC
- Medical diagnosis limited to ASD
- Both respected as part of human diversity

As Rita explained it she believes autism spectrum could be experienced by individuals in one of two ways. It can be experienced as a different learning style that, when accommodated could be thought of as autism spectrum condition, (ASC) part of difference and neural diversity. Or, if this learning style is not accommodated and catered for the individual could develop a disorder and this could be thought of as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Put differently, for example, Rita commented that severe autism, at times compounded by intellectual disability and sensory complications can leave an individual deeply handicapped. If this is not recognized and appropriate supports put in place, the individual could then be experiencing a life 'disorder' which needs medical intervention.

I really appreciated this concept and can only add that, at times, AS (autism spectrum) could be thought of as ASC or ASD depending upon the individual's experience. Meaning simply that, through one's life, we can move between the two!

I am only too aware of the power of words. When one hears words like difference and diversity one feels a sense of colour and excitement. When one hears words like disorder and deviant, one feels fear and suspicion. Rita encouraged us all to focus upon strengths and to the accommodation of ASC's so that individual lives might have every opportunity to develop in a fulfilling way.

I have lots of wonderful memories of this time in South Africa. Not only of the many, many posters of various interventions (from dietary to computer assisted learning) and of presentations by autistic, family, professional and agency folk, but also of the common community feeling that we were all in this together. Ours is a common fight for justice and understanding with a real emphasis on uncovering individual potential and using it to the max. In the past, as an autistic individual at so many other conferences, I have felt a sense of 'us and them'; a sense of being dehumanized and simply a statistic in someone's research. As such, I have felt like a mutant who doesn't belong on Planet earth. At this conference, despite its size and not always sufficient provision for my special dietary needs, I felt included, appreciated and accommodated. We sure have come a long way in the last decade. I know we still have a long way to go, but my heart is sure we will get there."

RECOMMENDED ASC READING AND RESOURCES

MY FUTURE CHOICES- THE MAGAZINE OF THE TRANSITION INFORMATION NETWORK

Published by the Transition Information Network, *My Future Choices* is a quarterly magazine featuring opportunities for disabled people throughout the United Kingdom. Relevant articles from young people and professionals are welcomed by the Editors.

In its own words, the Transition Information Network (TIN) is:
"an alliance of organisations and individuals who came together with a common aim: to improve the experience of disabled young people's transition to adulthood."

The information in *My Future Choices* has relevance to young people with ASC who are in the process of making the transition to adulthood, as well as to their parents/carers and professionals working in the area of transitions and ASC.

To find out more about *My Future Choices* and TIN and to receive free copies of *My Future Choices* as well as updates from TIN, please register at www.myfuturechoices.org.uk or www.transitioninformationnetwork.org.uk, or contact:

Transition Information Network
 8 Wakley Street

London EC1V 7QE
(0207)843-6006

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks TIN's Lucia Winters and Jo Marriott for providing this information. Please refer to the Conference/Seminar section of this Guide for information on a forthcoming **FREE** TIN Seminar taking place in Birmingham on 25th October.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH SERVICES

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY: MAKE SCHOOL MAKE SENSE CAMPAIGN (ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND)

The purpose of the National Autistic Society's *make school make sense* campaign is for every child to receive the educational provision appropriate to meet their individual needs.

On its website, The National Autistic Society points out that:

“Local provision for children with autism is often limited, teachers’ training in autism is inadequate and children and their families struggle to access the entitlements that are their right.

It is vital that the good practice that exists in some areas is extended to all schools in all areas so that every child with autism gets the education they deserve.

Until then, we need your help to campaign for change.”

The National Autistic Society urges people and organisations to support the campaign. To find out further information on the *make school make sense* campaign and how you can support it, please contact the National Autistic Society Campaigns team on campaigns@nas.org.uk or call the team on (0207)923-5799. The team can provide information for people campaigning in England, Wales, and Scotland.

The *make school make sense* campaign is being launched in Northern Ireland on 28th November.

TRANSITION GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH ASC

AIMHIGHER LONDON NORTH PARTNERSHIP

The London North Partnership of Aimhigher is launching a **FREE** new resource entitled “A Guide to the Successful Transition into University for Students with Asperger Syndrome”.

This is the third academic year in which the Partnership has engaged in working directly with students who have Asperger Syndrome. This Guide's content is based upon this work with the students.

Although primarily aimed at supporting students, the Guide is also intended to be a resource for parents and professionals.

Enquiries regarding further information or requests for free copies of the Guide should be directed to Christine Haugh, Aimhigher London North's Disability Development Officer, on (0208)411-6308 or via email to C.Haugh@mdx.ac.uk

ADULTS- IMPORTANT POLICY QUESTIONNAIRE FROM ASPECT

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Genevieve Edmonds for contributing this

information:

CALLING ALL ADULTS WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME...WE NEED YOUR HELP!

***NEW* Extended deadline for submitted completed questionnaires
30th November 2006**

**Would you like to have your say in improving supportive services for Asperger adults?
READ ON!**

A small group of volunteers with an interest in pushing forward supportive services for adults with Asperger Syndrome (AS) organised an event entitled ASPECT Action Day (Asperger Syndrome People Each Contributing for Themselves) which was held in Manchester on 27th April, 2006.

One of the main objectives of the event was to highlight the issues faced by adults across the UK in getting appropriate, timely and helpful support. At the event a questionnaire was introduced which was prepared in order to collate the responses from adults (rather than professionals or carers speaking on their behalf) across the UK with AS (diagnosed or not).

The responses from the questionnaire are required in order to put together a **free report** outlining in truly representative fashion what the needs of (adult) individuals with AS are. The report will be prepared by Luke Beardon, Senior Lecturer in Autism, Sheffield Hallam University, and Genevieve Edmonds of 'Asperger Strategies and Solutions.'

The report will consist of responses to the questionnaire by adults with AS. Thus, it aims to be truly representative of what adults with AS actually require, as opposed to what other people think or assume. Every response will be included in the report, so this really is a genuine chance for all adults with AS to make their voices heard, should they wish to do so.

Once the report has been written it will be **available on the internet** for anyone to download. It is hoped that it will be used by individuals and organisations to drive forward the support needs agenda at all levels from local authority to government. The report will also be used to feed into the **Working Party on Autism and Neurodiversity** at the **Disability Rights Commission (DRC)**.

The more people who fill in the questionnaire, the better. We would like as large a number of respondents as possible, to get the best possible representative picture. Please pass on details to as many adults with AS as you can. We hope for this to be the world's biggest ever consultation process for Asperger adults. Once completed, we hope that the report will be a beneficial tool for activating appropriate change.

Where can I complete the questionnaire?

On line at www.aspectaction.org.uk (from where you can alternatively download a paper copy); or if you do not have internet access, please send a stamped addressed envelope to: **ASPECT Questionnaire, Suite 2 York House, Vicarage Lane, Bowden, Altrincham, WA14 3BA.**

SERVICES FOR ADULTS

CROSSROADS CARING FOR CARERS ASPERGERS SOCIAL SKILLS PROJECT (CHESHIRE)

The ASC *Good Practice Guide* warmly thanks Esther Fletcher, NAS Chester Branch, for contributing this important information, written by Lucy Whiting, South Cheshire Crossroads Caring for Carers:

Following a successful bid to Cheshire County Council, the four Crossroads schemes within Cheshire have been awarded funding to establish social skills groups across Cheshire for Adults with Aspergers Syndrome.

The groups will follow the highly successful project originally piloted by Chester Crossroads where the group has already been running for 3 years. The groups will meet on a monthly basis, and will provide services for 6-8 young Adults aged from 18 onwards. The groups will be situated as follows;

- One group in East Cheshire
- Two groups in Central Cheshire
- One group in West Cheshire – referrals would come to this group from both Chester & Ellesmere Port.

The groups will be managed by Crossroads Staff, with individual group sessions facilitated by a Speech and Language Therapist. The SALTs will be responsible for a range of tasks relating to the delivery of the groups, including taking appropriate referrals, assessing clients needs and the completion of appropriate paperwork. They will lead the sessions, with support from a SALT Assistant and from a suitably trained Support Worker from Crossroads. There will be an open referral process and referrals will be taken from a range of sources including; Carers and their families, local Carers groups, National Autistic Society, Health professionals, Social Care agencies. The service is free to adults with Aspergers and their families.

The benefits of this project are not only to improve the social skills, confidence and independence of the adults attending, but also to offer essential respite breaks to families and Carers.

It is hoped that the project will commence shortly but referrals are already coming in! If you would like further information about the project or would like to make a referral, please contact your nearest scheme.

South Cheshire Crossroads Caring for Carers (incl. Crewe, Nantwich, Sandbach & Vale Royal) - Lucy Whiting on 01270 753487

Chester Crossroads Caring for Carers (incl. Ellesmere Port, Neston and Wirral) – Tom Livingstone on 01244 346699

East Cheshire Crossroads Caring for Carers (incl. Macclesfield Borough) – Andrea Kinsey on 01625 511044

HOFFMANN FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM: COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR ADULTS (LONDON, NW10)

COUNSELLING

The Hoffmann Foundation for Autism provides counselling for people with Aspergers syndrome and high functioning autism



Counselling provides 1:1 support in a confidential and non-judgemental setting for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome and high-functioning autism. The aim of counselling is to provide an opportunity for the individual to work towards living in a more satisfying and resourceful way.

Counselling can only help, however, when the individual decides when to attend, and agrees the goals of the counselling session. The relationship between counsellor and client is based on trust, confidentiality and agreed rules, rather than friendship. It is a working relationship with an agreement where the client presents a need and the counsellor uses his/her expertise to facilitate understanding, change or improvement.

Other services

Learning new skills, changing behaviour and developing strengths can take some time because it may be difficult for the individual to transfer these to new situations or environments. So counselling is sometimes linked to outreach work or social skills groups, with practical support and/or training provided in real situations out in the community.

Who and Where

Counselling is provided by qualified and trainee counselling psychologists. All our psychologists have experience of and an interest in autistic spectrum disorders.

Counselling takes place at our head office, details below.

For further details please contact us on:

Hoffmann Foundation for Autism
4th Floor, Cumberland House
80 Scrubs Lane
London NW10 6RF
Tel: 0208 964 6650
Fax: 020 8969 9091
Email: aspergers@hoffmannfoundation.org.uk

HOFFMANN FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM: SOCIAL SKILLS AND PEER GROUPS FOR ADULTS WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME AND HIGH-FUNCTIONING AUTISM (LONDON, NW10)

ASPERGERS SOCIAL SKILLS AND PEER GROUPS

The Hoffmann Foundation for Autism runs social skills and peer groups for people with Aspergers syndrome and high functioning autism

Social Skills Group

Groups are generally made up of 5-10 people and focus on learning social skills, such as:

- Making friends
- Recognising and dealing with anxiety
- Reading body language and facial cues
- Communication: conversation and listening skills
- Sharing and turn taking



Peer Group

Groups are generally made up of 2-5 people and deal with issues in more depth, such as:

- Communication: recognising voice intonation and non-verbal cues
- Anxiety management
- Understanding appropriate conversations
- Attending job interviews
- Social settings
- Assertiveness rather than aggression



The themes of the groups can vary and are often determined by the individuals themselves. Both groups include one community outing, which is paid for separately.

Groups are held at our head office at Scrubs Lane.

All groups allow individuals to spend time with others as well as experiencing a group environment that is respectful, non-judgemental and safe. The groups are facilitated by qualified professionals, with extensive experience of working with people on the autistic spectrum.

For further details please contact us:

Hoffmann Foundation for Autism
 4th Floor, Cumberland House
 80 Scrubs Lane
 London NW10 6RF
 Tel: 0208 964 6650
 Fax: 020 8969 9091
 Email: aspergers@hoffmannfoundation.org.uk

ASC PARTNERS' GROUP (LONDON)

In the September Edition of *The ASC Good Practice Guide*, readers were asked if they were aware of a Group running specifically for the Partners of persons diagnosed with an ASC. Although no readers were aware of such a London-based group, one of our readers has taken the initiative of launching a London-based Partner's Group.

The groundwork for the Group is currently underway, with a venue being sought for monthly meetings.

For further information, or to assist with the process of launching the group, please contact either The ASC Good Practice Guide at ahaughc@aol.com or the group founder, Delyth, on delyth@daviesbolt.com.

CONFERENCES, LECTURES, SEMINARS AND SESSIONS

ACTION FOR ASD- SOCIAL STORIES WORKSHOP

Action for ASD has arranged a workshop produced by Carol Gray's Social Stories Team and presented by Team member Eileen Arnold.

An all-day event, the Workshop consists of lectures, discussions, and practice in writing social stories.

WHERE: NorthBridge House, Elm Street Business Park, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 1PD

WHEN: Wednesday 31st January 2007, 9:30am-4:30pm (tbc, registration from 9am)

COST: Parent Members-£40/Parent Non-Members-£50/Professional Members-£90/Professional Non-Members-£100/Members with ASD-£40/Non-Members with ASD-£50

Payment is by invoice, BACS, or cheque made payable to "Action for A.S.D." (please send cheques to the NorthBridge House address listed above)

For further information, please contact Action for ASD by calling (01282)714-218, emailing info@actionasd.org.uk or visiting the website www.actionasd.org.uk

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Action for ASD's Gemma Sampford and Hanna Ingleby for contributing this information.

**THE ASPERGER SYNDROME FOUNDATION SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTS
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR DIFFICULT MOMENTS: "TRANSITION TO
COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY FOR AS STUDENTS- SHARING GOOD PRACTICE"(CENTRAL
LONDON)**

"Transition to College/University for AS Students- Sharing Good Practice" is a one-day Seminar aimed at parents, carers, professionals, and of course individuals who themselves have ASC.

Speakers: Christine Haugh and Chris Mitchell. Christine Haugh will be sharing some of the many examples of best practice taking place at the schools, Colleges, and Universities she works with, and Chris Mitchell will be sharing his own personal experiences and lessons on best practice he has experienced in College and University as a student with Asperger Syndrome.

WHERE: The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

WHEN: Monday 20th November 2006, 10am-3:30pm (registration from 9:30am)

COST: £25 professionals, £15 parent/carers, free for individuals with Asperger Syndrome (please make cheques payable to the "Asperger Syndrome Foundation")
Sandwich lunches and refreshments are included in the cost.

Please email seminars@aspergerfoundation.org.uk to download a booking form from the Asperger Syndrome Foundation website. This form needs to be returned to the Asperger Syndrome Foundation along with cheque payment, to reserve a place at the Seminar. The Foundation's address is:

Asperger Syndrome Foundation
The Kensington Charity Centre
4th Floor, Charles House
375 Kensington High Street
London W14 8QH

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Asperger Syndrome Foundation's Founder, Beatrice Buisseret, for contributing this information.

BROMLEY AUTISTIC TRUST: ANGER AND ASD CONFERENCE

BROMLEY AUTISTIC TRUST presents

ANGER and ASD

Date: Thursday 30th November 2006

Time: 9:30am-4:30pm

Venue: Oakley House, Bromley, Kent

Speakers: Jenny Ronayne, Dr. Katingo Giannoulis, Luke Beardon, Genevieve Edmonds

What is Anger and ASD? It is a one day conference to look at the needs of young people with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning ASD

The Conference is aimed at parents, carers, professionals and young people with Asperger Syndrome and ASD.

The day will explore what living with AS and ASD can be like, the challenge of daily life, what anxieties are faced, and why anger can often manifest as a result.

Our speakers will offer practical strategies from a personal, professional, and academic perspective on how we can help the young person to reduce anxiety, manage their anger, and seek more productive ways of coping with the rigors of everyday life.

Costs for parents/carers/individuals with ASD £45 Costs for professionals £80

For Seminar/Conference outline, agenda and booking form, please log onto:
www.bromleyautistictrust.co.uk

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Bromley Autistic Trust's Jo Walsh and Jo Parker for contributing the information on the above Seminar and Conference.

(MIDDLESBROUGH) NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY: AIMING TO BUILD BETTER LIVES WITH BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

DATE: Monday 13th November

TIME: 9:30am-12:30am

VENUE: Middlesbrough Teaching and Learning Centre, Middlesbrough

WHO THE EVENT IS FOR: Parents and carers

SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Alan Bicknell, NAS Head of National Services; Chris Gibbons, NAS Campaign Officer; and Matthew Downie, NAS Head of Membership and Branch Services.

How to reserve a place at the event

The ASC Good Practice Guide has very kindly been provided with an electronic registration form and will forward this to any interested parties, upon request. Alternatively, queries or RSVPs need to be forwarded to:

Linda Lord, Middlesbrough Social Care Service, 1st Floor, Civic Centre, Middlesbrough, TS1 2XH.

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Lisa Pitkeathly, NAS North East Regional Officer, for contributing this information.

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY (NEWCASTLE BRANCH): "MAKE SCHOOL MAKE SENSE" EVENING

DATE: Monday, 20th November 2006

TIME: 7pm-9pm

VENUE: Thomas Bewick School, Hillhead Parkway, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE5 1DP

WHO THE EVENT IS FOR: Anyone interested in the *make school make sense* campaign

SPEAKER: Chris Gibbons, NAS Campaigns Officer, who will provide information on the campaign and an update on the work and success of the campaign to date

How to reserve a place at the event

The ASC Good Practice Guide has very kindly been provided with an electronic version of the registration form and will, upon request, forward this to any interested parties. Alternatively, queries or RSVPs need to be forwarded **by Wednesday 15th November** to:

Marie Russell, Room 116, The Park Centre, Cruddas Park Shopping Centre, Westmorland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7RW.

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Lisa Pitkeathly, NAS North East Regional Officer, for contributing this information.

PARADIGM CONFERENCE: "NO REASON TO LEAVE US OUT"

Paradigm No Reason To Leave Us Out Autism Policy Conference 21st November London

www.paradigm-uk.org

The conference will set out what the Government expects in relation to services for people with an ASD and that although few agencies meet expectations at the moment, those that do will be there to tell others how they went about it. The clarification note sets out the expectations, but not the "how to's".

As well as offering some demonstrations of current best practice, the conference will be attended by National Clinical Director for Mental Health, Louis Appleby, National Director for Learning Disabilities, who will set out the Government's expectations and underline the importance of clear and unified approaches to providing services for people with an ASD.

The guidance (better services for people with an ASD) is unprecedented in the Department of Health (DoH), being the first publication to be commissioned across Departments.

The conference is therefore heralds the first piece of government backed guidance for this group of people.

What is Paradigm?

Paradigm is one of Europe's leading human service consultancy and development agencies.

When/Where is the Conference?

21st November 2006, 9:15am-4:45pm, in London

What is the theme?

This one day conference focuses on the impact of existing policy in relation to individuals with an autistic spectrum condition. In particular, the conference highlights current best practice in terms of policy implementation, and gives a strong voice to individuals with an autistic spectrum condition.

Who will be speaking?

Speakers include: Louise Appleby, National Clinical Director for Mental Health; Rob Greig, National Director for Learning Disabilities; Trish Bugg, Learning and Skills Council; Genevieve Edmonds, AS Advocate, Author and Consultant.

Who is the Conference aimed at?

The conference is aimed at ASC Service Providers, Social Services and NHS managers, transitions staff, parents/carers, and individuals with an autistic spectrum condition.

What Specific Topics will be covered in the day's talks and workshops?

Topics covered include: national policy and its application to people with an ASC; person-centred approaches; best practice in commissioning and provision; statutory responsibilities.

What are the Conference costs?

Costs per person: £275 + VAT (total £323.13)

Costs for minimum of three bookings: £225 per person + VAT (total £264.38 per person)

Please Note: For every three places booked, Paradigm offers a complimentary 4th place

Free places available for individuals with learning difficulties and for family carers

How do I book a place at the Conference?

Return a completed application form along with payment. Forms can be downloaded from www.paradigm-uk.org and emailed back to admin@paradigm-uk.org

Registration by email and payment by BACs secures a small discount. Bacs payment information is as follows:

Account name: Paradigm **Account #**40187240 **Sort code** 205036 **Ref:** Conf-NR

How can I contact Paradigm for further information?

Paradigm's contact details are as follows:

Paradigm

8 Brandon Street

Birkenhead, CH41 5HN

(0870)010-4933

www.paradigm-uk.org

admin@paradigm-uk.org

The ASC *Good Practice Guide* warmly thanks Genevieve Edmonds and also Paradigm's Daniel Kirkham for contributing this information.

WENDY LAWSON- UK BOOKINGS IN 2007

The ASC *Good Practice Guide* warmly thanks Wendy Lawson for sharing her 2007 tour dates with our readers. Wendy's range of presentations and audiences- from a talk with parents to training for County Council staff- is amazing! The list below does not include Wendy's Singapore, Australian, or other international tour dates, although details are available upon request.

UK Spring

- Feb 26 (Redcar-Cleveland) Elizabeth.Foster@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk 2 talks (repeated sessions) 1-3pm & 4.30-6.30pm.
- February 28th, (Birmingham) All day School Staff training, Contact: steve.tuft@pines.bham.sch.uk
- March 5 (Ramsgate) Evening talk to parents' support group, SPOT: Supporting People On The Spectrum. Contact: b.decomarmond@onetel.net
- March 6th (Gravesend Kent) Evening talk for schools. Contact: elee@ifield.kent.sch.uk
- March 21st (North Tyneside). Conference. Contact: Patricia Ramshaw trishramshaw@hotmail.com A Keynote address & 1 workshop Newcastle united football stadium
- March 23-25 (Birmingham) University of Birmingham Residential weekend
- April 17 (Shillingstone, Dorset) All day training & 18th. (2hr. public morning session) Gay.Waters@cambianguroup.com Forum school.
- April 18 (Portsmouth) Autism Support Group talk, in the evening. Contact: jenndp4@yahoo.co.uk
- April 19-21 (Wales) Two half day seminars on 19th and 20th April

19th April (Cardiff) – subject 'Understanding and working with ASD – take a walk in our shoes' (11am – 2pm)

20th April (Wrexham) – subject 'Life and Learning with Autism and Aspergers' (11am – 2pm) Contact: jennie@autismcymru.org

- April 23rd (Nottingham) Training for Notts County Council staff. Contact: Susie Holt sen.training@education.nottsc.gov.uk
- April 24th (Cheadle) Workshop at the Together Trust Centre. Contact: Joanne Halliwell inca@togethertrust.org
- April 25 leave UK for Singapore
- April 27-28 Singapore talks

Autumn

- October 15th (Cornwall) Contact: Judy Shoten jshorten@cornwall.gov.uk
- October 19 (Middlesbrough) Anna Wood themainproject@hotmail.co.uk

READER FEATURE: "I'M SAFE"- A POEM BY WENDY LAWSON

The ASC *Good Practice Guide* warmly thanks Wendy Lawson for sharing with our readers the following poem, which she has written:

I'm safe... am I?

You're words echo within my head.
What was it you exactly said?

Something about 'turning over a new leaf'
Taking a shower, my bed and beneath?

I ran out into the garden.
You said 'loudly' 'come back now'.
I had the leaf, and then,
You said you'd make me, some how.

I offered you my leaf. It was all shiny and new.
You knocked it out of my hand,
It fell swiftly and hit the harsh ground.
What was it that I was meant to do?

What ever it was, I was sure I'd do wrong.
My room, my sanctuary.
I'd best move along.
I pushed myself past you,
Just keen to escape.
You're hands reached to grab me,
'Oh no you don't mate'.

My hands went to my ears,
as your voice was raised.
I walked in small circles
While your eyes just gazed.

'So, getting off with it again are we?'
Your voice splurged sound.
Life is too difficult,
I'll just walk around

READER FEATURE2: GARRY BURGE/CHRIS MITCHELL: ORCHIDS/FRIENDSHIP

Different individuals with Asperger Syndrome have different ways to relieve some of the stresses and difficulties they go through. For Garry Burge, a 34-year-old adult diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, from Brisbane, Australia, growing orchids is a way to ease tension and anxiety. Here Garry describes his love of these very beautiful flowers:

"Orchids are a beautiful but yet rare plant which produce a flower that has its own unique symmetry. Growing orchids is a way of releasing tension from turbulent periods and with much devotion and attention, they produce beautiful flowers as a result. I have grown orchids since a teenager with my first orchid being a King Orchid, with this collection growing to approximately 100 plants at present.

The thing I like about orchids is that they need little attention in order to grow and they virtually need no medium to grow in, growing on trees or on fence posts. Orchids come in different colours and produce flowers of very interesting and unique shapes. They also respond by flowering and you can put a lot of energy into growing them and achieve great results with flowers and plant growth.

I would recommend growing orchids to anyone that enjoys an activity where you can receive a response and not encounter the hassles of the world around you."

Chris Mitchell first came into contact with Garry in 1999 via Clare Sainsbury's University Students with Asperger's Syndrome E-mailing list. Both were diagnosed during the same year, 1998, and as adults, Chris when 20-years-old and Garry when 26-years-old. They have visited each other in the UK and Australia and have been good friends ever since.

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