

NOT ALL GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE.

# Understanding Asperger's

Info about **Asperger's Syndrome** and strategies for success

## Asperger's Info

Asperger's Syndrome is a neurological condition. People who have Asperger's are born with it, and have it for life, although as they get older, they may gain new skills or use their strengths to compensate for their areas of difficulty.

The brains of people with Asperger's seem to process information and sensory stimuli differently than other people. This can be a source of difficulty, but it can also be a strength.

People with Asperger's may experience some or all of the following challenges:

- Knowing what to say or how to behave in social situations.
- Difficulty organizing, initiating, analyzing, prioritizing, and completing tasks.
- A tendency to focus on the details of a given situation and miss the big picture.
- Resistance to change. Change may trigger anxiety, while familiar objects, settings, and routines offer reassurance.
- Vulnerability to stress, sometimes resulting in additional problems including low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

## Teaching the Student with Asperger's

Although all students are different, here are some things to try:

- **Make it visual.** Access to notes, powerpoints, or other visual aids before and/or during lectures will help students keep on track during the lecture. Encourage students to use student planners, visual schedules and graphic organizers to plan their day and to organize information from class.
- **Provide time for student access.** Students with Asperger's may want to spend extra time during class discussing a particular topic of interest. Encourage the student to continue the discussion with you outside of class, or perhaps help the student make connections in the area of his/her interest.
- **Be direct.** If a student is behaving in a way that is disrupting class or seems inappropriate, or if the student seems to misunderstand your class expectations, talk with him/her in private. It is important to be direct, explicit, and specific about what behavior you saw and what you want to see instead.
- **Help make connections.** Students with Asperger's may have difficulty with group activities. They may need assistance making connections in the group, and ambiguous deadlines or procedures may trigger anxiety. They may need your guidance to clarify their role within the group.

## Resources for further information

Visit these websites for more info:

<http://aspergersadults.brighterplanet.org/>

<http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger>

[http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student\\_support\\_services/](http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/)