**HANDOUT 1: Test of Social Know-how**

In the following stories, some parts are in *italics.* Immediately following the italic text there is a pair of brackets ( ). Rate the behaviour which is illustrated by the portion in italics according to how you think most people would judge that behaviour if they witnessed it. Use this scale:

* Fairly normal behaviour in that situation (A)
* Rather strange behaviour in that situation (B)
* Very eccentric behaviour in that situation (C)
* Shocking behaviour in that situation (D)

**Story no. 5: In the airplane**

Emily, age nineteen, overslept on the morning of her airplane trip. When she woke up, there was just enough time to dress and get to the airport, so *she skipped her breakfast*. ( ) At noon, the stewardess came around with lunch, but Emily was so hungry by then that one portion did not satisfy her. She watched a little girl across the aisle toy with her food, complaining, ‘I can’t eat it.’ Apparently the father didn’t want any more, because he told the child to just leave it. *Emily leant across the aisle and said, ‘If your little girl doesn’t want her tray, can you pass it over for me?’* ( )

**Story no. 6: The dinner invitation**

Roger, twenty-two, lived in a rented room alone. He was quite a nervous person, but it seemed to him he felt better if he ate every two hours and limited his diet to certain foods. One day a lady called and invited him to dinner explaining that she was a friend of his parents. Roger gladly accepted. *However, he warned his hostess that he ate no meat and would like his vegetables served unsalted.* ( ) When Roger arrived at the appointed time he recalled that he had not eaten for two hours. *Without wasting any time, even before the introductions, he asked the hostess when dinner would be served.* ( ) She replied that it would be about an hour before the meal would be ready. *Hearing this, Roger opened his briefcase, removed an apple and some nuts and promptly ate them.* ( ) After that, he was introduced to the family and they sat around talking for an hour. Just before dinner, the hostess showed him an attractive platter of fruits and vegetables, asking whether it looked like enough. *‘It looked fine, thank you,’ Roger said, ‘but if you don’t mind I will wait another hour to eat. I just had some food an hour ago.’* ( )

Test of social know-how from Chapter 6 of book titled *Autism and Asperger Syndrome*

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**HANDOUT 2: Autism and Communication**

**Features to keep in mind as we discuss this topic today**

* Difficulty in learning and using social skills such as eye contact, greetings, appropriate touch
* Difficulty in using communication rules — turn taking, volume of speech
* Unusual interactions with people or activities
* Focus on preferred topics, people, activities
* May appear unaware of, or disinterested in other people

Examples

* A student who does not understand the "turn-taking" nature of conversation may dominate interactions to the point of alienating fellow students or staff.
* A student may not appreciate that in a 50 minute lecture it is the lecturer who has the overall "turn" so students don't get an equal share of the talking time!
* A student who may persist with one topic or perspective rather than being able to move on in the discussion or lecture.
* A student who appears to interrupt or even physically move between people to have their needs met or attended to.

**The reactions are not likely to be personal; they are coming from a different perspective and understanding of the world than yours or mine.**

**HANDOUT 3: Useful Strategies for Staff**

**Observe how the person communicates — try to match it and work with them e.g. how does this person indicate they are listening to you?**

In general terms in our society we look for eye contact, facial expression, body orientation and stillness as an indicator that the person is attending to us, they are listening and paying attention to the content and meaning.

Autistic individuals have told us that eye contact can be difficult for them; so difficult as to interrupt their capacity to listen and concentrate.

If we insist on eye contact as an indicator we might get it but unbeknownst to us lose the person's true attention.

I have worked with people who look across my shoulder, look down or move — it turns out that this is the sign that they are concentrating

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| Think about an autistic student with whom you work. How does this person indicate they are listening to you? |

**Identify things or events or people that appear to distress them or cause a problem in your contact with the student — avoid those stressors if & when you can**

We know that autistic individuals may be sensitive to noise, lights, tastes, smells, textures.

Consider this in 1-1 or group meetings, lectures, classes, lab sessions, clinics or studios.

Can your student assist you to understand what may cause a problem for them (and by extension you)?

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| What appears to stress the student with whom you have a role?  Can you avoid those stressors? How? |

**HANDOUT 4: Activity: PCD (Personal Communication Dictionary)**

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| **What the person does What it may mean How to respond** |

**HANDOUT5 - Final Activity: Group Discussion**

**Please complete a) if you are a non-teaching staff e.g. counsellor, residential or site supervisor, librarian, disability support staff etc.**

**b) if you are an academic staff, teacher or tutorial staff**

**a) Consider your role with students including those with a disability.**

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| What is your role and relationship with ASD students including Asperger's Syndrome?  To what extent can you and should you adapt or extend that role and relationship?  What time constraints exist in your role?  How can you organise the contact to be effective? |

**b) Consider the purpose of group work/projects in classes, tutorials or for assessment tasks**

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| Are you assessing the capacity of the students to work as a cohesive group, or are you assessing their knowledge, skills and mastery of the curriculum material?  Is group work integral to you being able to assess the student's knowledge, skills and standard of work?  Could they work independently and still achieve the required learning outcomes?  Can you structure group work more tightly to allot roles and responsibilities, actions and time lines? |