

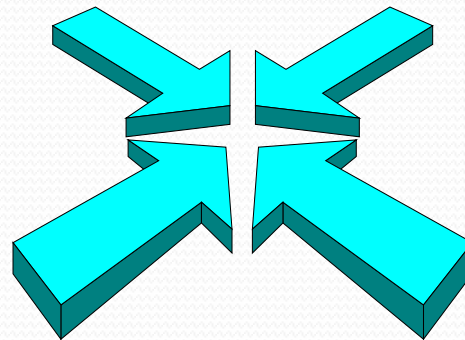
# Healthy Sexuality for Individuals with ASD & AS

Isabelle Hénault, Ph.D.  
sexologist & psychologist  
Montreal, Canada

**Clinique Autisme et Asperger de Montreal**

# Definition of sexuality

- Few research & clinical attention
- Normal part of development and life
- Complexity of sexuality: more than behaviours!



# Fears related to sexuality

- Not being able to provide correct answer to a question
- STIs & AIDS
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Unions, couples, marriage
- Sexual exploitation
- Judgment of others
- Higher level of sexual interest

# Issues of development

- Sexual behaviours: self-stimulation, exploring sexuality
- Frustrations and inappropriate behaviours
- Gender identity & role definition:
  - flexibility, conflict, confusion
  - Comorbidity to explore?
- Social imitation: context, consent

# Factors influencing social and sexual development

(Griffiths, 1999; Haracopos & Pedersen, 1999, Henault, Attwood & Haracopos, 2010)

- Information
  - Basic knowledge
  - Experiences
  - Social support
- Limitations of the environment
  - Gender segregation
  - Social network
  - Rules
  - Sex education

# Inappropriate sexual behaviors

- Selection of partner
  - Restricted choices
  - Natural choices
  - Expanding social circle
- Sexual history
  - Sexual abuse: repetition, trauma
  - Lack of knowledge and experiences

# Inappropriate behaviors

- Organic factors (25% serious health problems) no complains...
- Psychologic/psychiatric condition: dual diagnosis
  - Depression, anxiety
  - ADHD
  - Phobia, OCD, etc.

# Puberty

- Physiological changes
  - Hormones levels (testosterone, oestrogen)
  - Body changes: body hair, sexual function, reactions, periods, etc.
- Psychological changes
  - Emotions (mood changes, stronger, cycle)
  - Independence
  - Curiosity
  - Interests



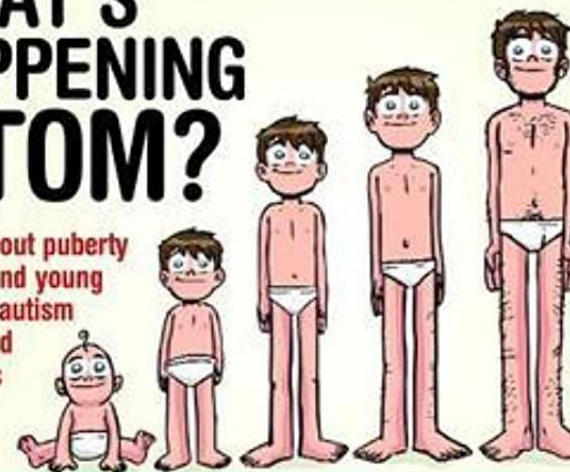
# WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ELLIE?

A book about puberty for girls and young women with autism and related conditions



# WHAT'S HAPPENING TO TOM?

A book about puberty for boys and young men with autism and related conditions



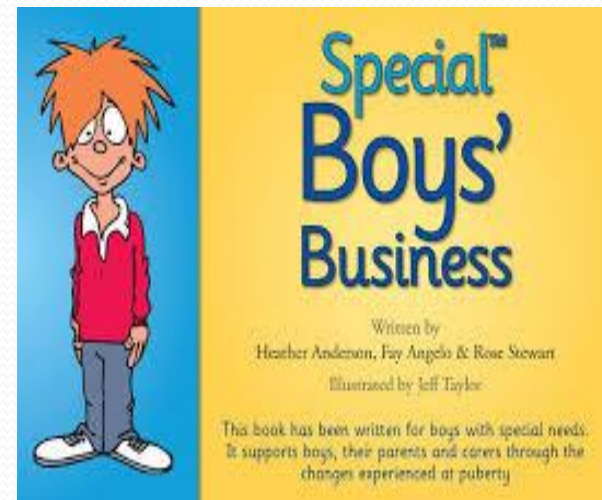
Kate E. Reynolds Illustrated by Jonathon Powell

# The Secret Business of *relationships, love and sex*™



Written by  
Heather Anderson  
Fay Angelo  
Rose Stewart  
Illustrated by  
Jeff Taylor

This is a young persons' guide to friendships,  
relationships, love and sex



# Puberty

- Friendship & social skills
- Communication: verbal & non verbal, social interactions, sharing
- Intensity of relationship
  - Appropriate: finding a balance
  - Inappropriate
  - Love & friendship, intimacy



# Puberty

- Recognition of abusive/unfriendly relationship
- Dangerous relationship
- Qualities of a healthy relationship
  - Sharing
  - Communication
  - Pleasure, interest
  - Respect, communication and much more...
- **Making Waves Program:**  
**<http://www.counselling.net/>**

# Puberty

- Self esteem: image
- Self confidence: positive experiences
- Social network
- Finding identity (group, norms, person, sexual)
- Isolation
- Depression, anxiety, (arrogance 15%)
- Aggressive behaviors, self-abusing behaviors

# Sex education

- Goals:
  - Better knowledge
  - Develop own limits and judgement
  - Decode situations: interpersonal & intimate contexts
  - Improve social and sexual skills: learn adaptive and positive behaviours



# Asperger Syndrome and Sexuality

FROM ADOLESCENCE THROUGH ADULTHOOD

Isabelle Hénault

Foreword by Tony Attwood

# Norwegian translation

- Bernt Barstad



Asperger syndrom og seksualitet

Isabella Iskraut

Forlaget Høvetten

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# Sociosexual Skills Workshops

- [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)
- 15 weeks, 90 minutes
- 12 themes
- Small groups (4-12)
- Adolescents & adults
- Questionnaires, games, role-playing, software, videos, discussions, social stories, group project



# Workshop Themes & Activities

- 1. Assessment & introduction
- 2. Intro. to sexuality & communication
- 3. Love & friendship
- 4. . Physiological aspects
- 5. Sexual relationships & behaviours
- 6. Emotions
- 7. STDs, HIV and prevention

# Workshop Themes & Activities

- 8. Sexual orientation
- 9. Alcohol, drugs and sexuality
- 10. Sexual abuse & inappropriate behaviours
- 11. Sexism and violence
- 12. Managing emotions, Theory of Mind and intimacy



## 3. Love & Friendship

WANTED

Hi, my name is ...

I'm looking for a person who ...

# 4. Physiological changes

LIST OF UROGENITAL ORGANS OF THE MALE AND FEMALE:



Fallopian Tubes	Ovary	Scrotum
Testicles	Penis	Clitoris
Vas Deferens	Penis	Vaginal Opening
Labia Minora	Sperm	Labia Majora
Prostate	Urethra	Ovum
Uterus	Anus	Cervix
Glans	Anus	Urinary Meatus
Glans	Vagina	Vulva
	Scrotum	Urinary Meatus

**Vagina:**

Flexible passage that leads from the vulva to the uterus from which menstrual blood flows. The vagina is not very wide but its elasticity allows it to adapt to penile penetration and to the size of the baby during delivery.

**Uterus:**

Internal female organ in the form of a pocket. It is the organ within which the baby develops during the first nine months of its life.

**Anus:**

Orifice at the end of the intestine which allows for the liberation of fecal matter (feces).

**Urethra:**

Canal which originates in the bladder by which urine is expelled. In the male, it also allows for the expulsion of semen during ejaculation.

**Penis:**

Male sexual organ which becomes rigid when filled with blood (erection). Urine and semen flow through the penis.

# 5. Sexual relationships

- « My first relationship » video
- « Fears » checklist
- « Values » game
- Consent

# Consent

- [YAI.org](http://YAI.org): Sexual Consent questionnaire
- Theory of Mind
- Practical material
- Videos





# Verbal Informed Consent Tool Summary Sheet at **YAI.org**

- Assessment of the capacity to give & ask sexual consent
- Recommendations & education
- Video
- **Sexually Speaking: Consent:**  
<https://www.yai.org/sexually-speaking>

YES

# Consent

NO

Je m'informe de ce que  
l'autre s'attend de moi  
Suis-je d'accord avec  
cette idée?

Lorsque nous sommes  
tous les 2 d'accord,  
nous pouvons aller plus  
loin

De quelle façon je  
peux savoir si  
l'autre personne  
accepte d'avoir des  
rapports sexuels  
avec moi ?

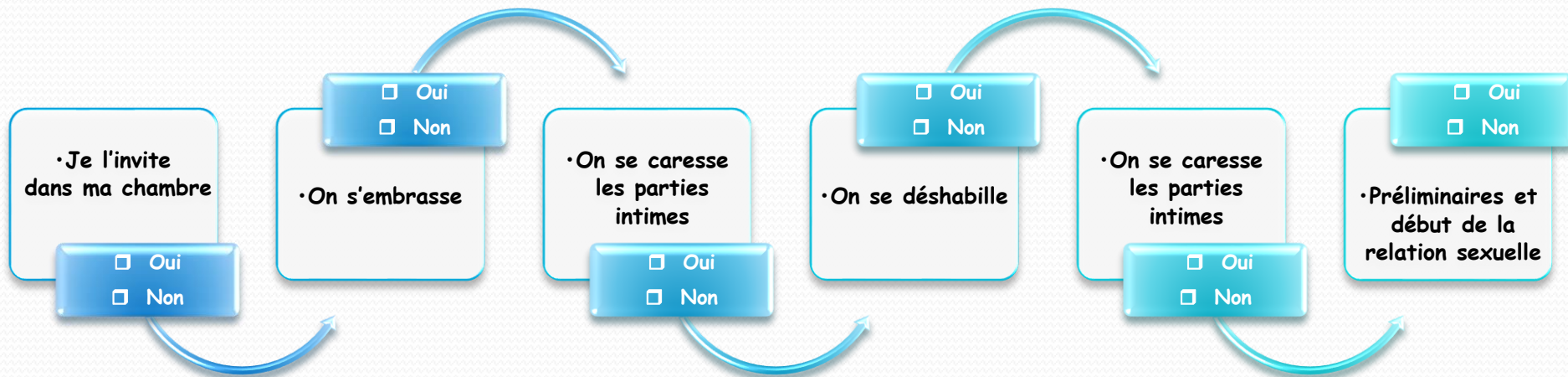
Je l'informe de mes  
intentions et de ce que  
j'aimerais faire avec (lui  
ou elle)

Je demande si la  
personne est d'accord  
(Avoir son  
consentement)

# An I change my mind?

YES

tout le monde peut changer d'idées, à n'importe quel moment. Voici un exemple:



# Signes of feeling GOOD

Signes

+

J'attire la personne  
vers moi

Je souris

Je serre la personne  
contre moi

Je participe aux  
caresses

Je dis des choses

agréables, des  
compliments

J'embrasse la  
personne

?

# Signes on NOT feeling good

Signes

-

La personne te repousse

La personne pleure

La personne est figée ou a les bras croisés

La personne ne participe plus aux

caresses

La personne utilise un mot d'alerte \*

La personne essaie de s'en aller

?

# Rescue words

Arrête !

Je ne  
suis plus  
sure !

Non !

Ça ne me  
tente plus  
!



Je ne me  
sens pas  
bien !

Je pense  
que ça va  
trop vite !

Pas  
aujourd'h  
ui !

Attends !

Se tenir par la main



Se tenir par la main



Se faire caresser les cheveux



Se faire caresser les cheveux



Se faire masser le cou



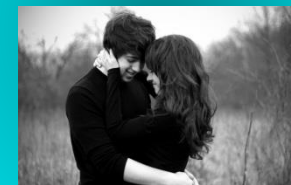
Se faire masser le cou



Se coller, prendre l'autre dans ses bras



Se coller, prendre l'autre dans ses bras



S'embrasser



S'embrasser



Se mettre nus



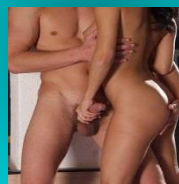
Se mettre nus



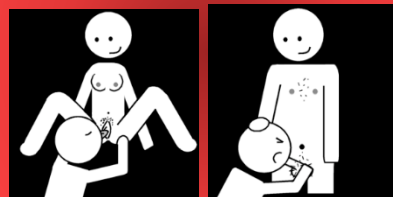
Caresser les parties intimes



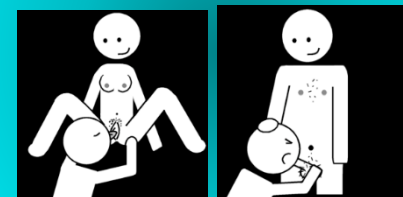
Caresser les parties intimes



Faire l'amour oral



Faire l'amour oral



# Contraception and prevention

- Quizz
- Importance of condom use
- Demonstration on « penile model »



# Condom use

- 10-steps on « penile model »
- In fact, what 's the first step?



# Alcohol, drugs and sexuality

- Group project: scenario
- Positive approach (reinforcement) instead of reprehensive
- Guide on the effects of alcohol and drugs on sexuality

TONY ATTWOOD, ISABELLE RENAUULT AND NICK BUBIN

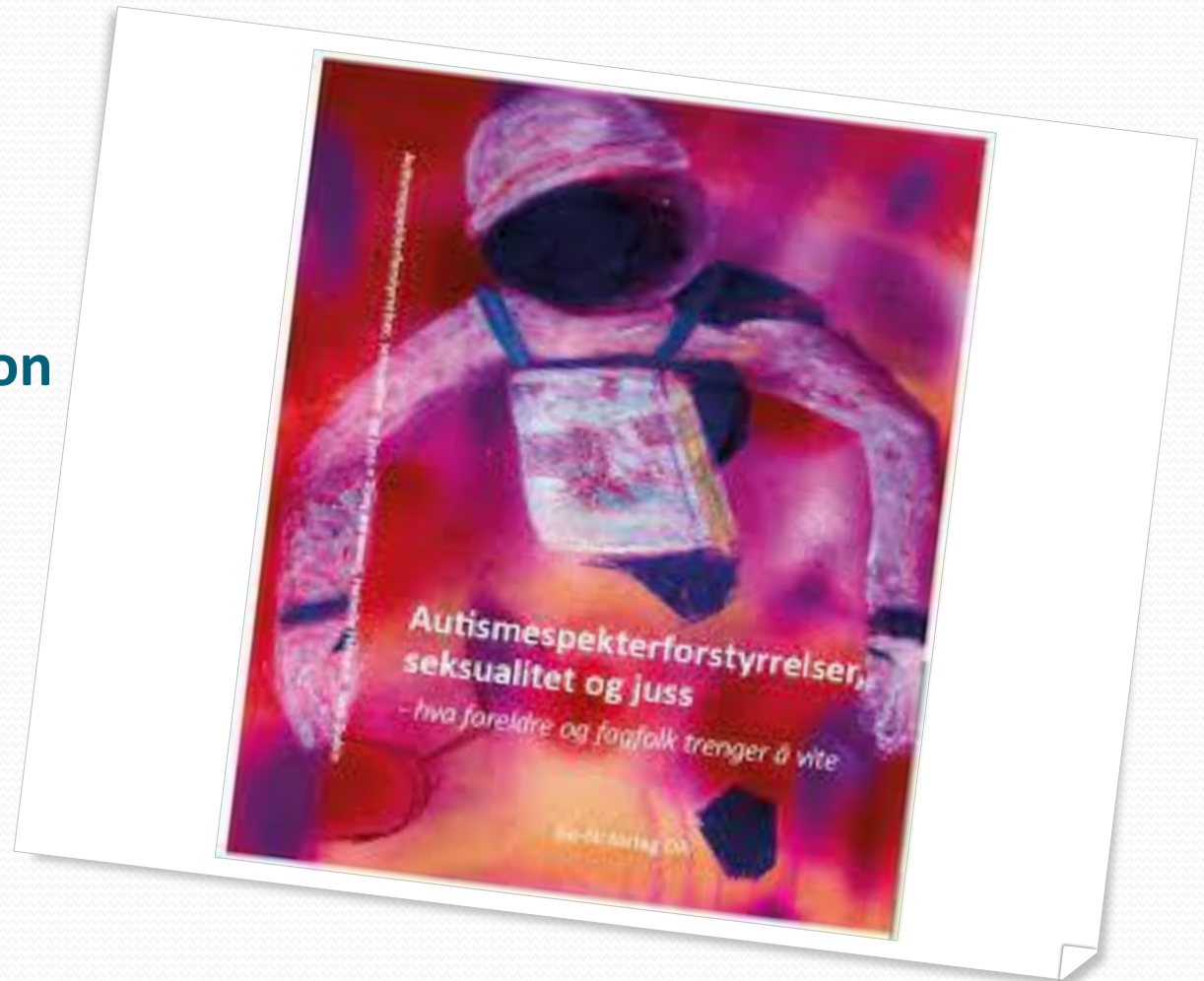
THE  
**AUTISM  
SPECTRUM,  
SEXUALITY  
AND THE  
LAW**

What every parent  
and professional  
needs to know



**Norwegian translation**

Bernt Barstad



# Safety on Internet

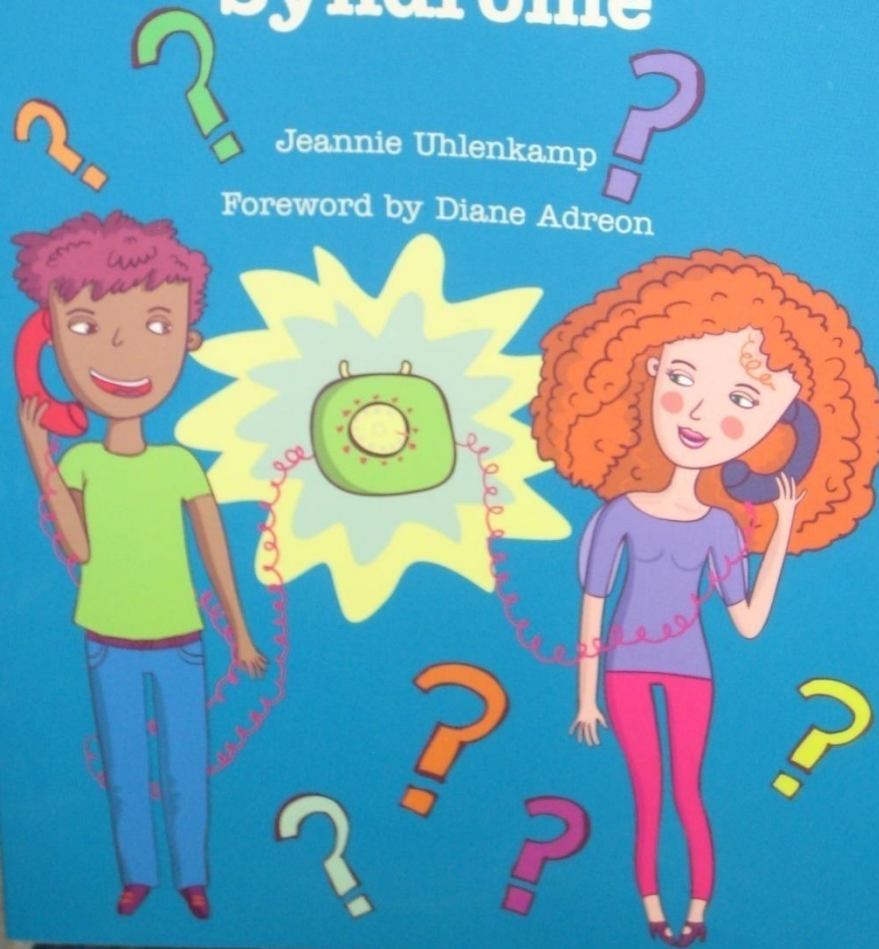
## Attwood, Hénault & Dubin, 2014

- Sharing personal information
- Pictures and files
- Social Medias(Facebook, etc.)
- Predators on the NET
- Pornography
- Safety steps when meeting someone

# The Guide to Dating for Teenagers with Asperger Syndrome

Jeannie Uhlenkamp

Foreword by Diane Adreon



# <https://sexedmart.com/>

- Special Needs Tool Box – Sequence Cards Set
- **Stephanie Mitelman, M.A., CSE, AASECT Certified Sexuality Educator**



# Working with Autistic Transgender and Non-Binary People

Research, Practice  
and Experience



Edited by  
Marianthi Kourti

New book!

[www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)



# Videos

- [www.yai.org](http://www.yai.org) Relationship series-3 videos
- 1. Friendship
- 2. Boyfriend-girlfriend
- 3. Sexuality

# Videos

- Flirting or Stalking?
- Making New Friends
- Love or Abuse?
  
- [www. socialsignalled.com](http://www.socialsignalled.com)

# Results



- **Improvement of social and sexual skills**
  - Presentation
  - Conversation/reciprocity
  - Helping/empathy
  - Non verbal skills
  - General knowledge/judgement

# Results

- 2. Reduction of problem behaviours
  - Isolation (contact, activities, conversation)
  - Impulsivity
  - Inapp. sexual behaviours (masturbation, touching)
- 3. Generalization (3 months measure)
  - Better knowledge
  - Interpersonal relationships, friendship
  - Positive attitude about sexuality

# Discussion

- Interest and needs from individuals
- Demand from parents and professionals
- Interesting results
- Service curriculum

# Affection, Love & Friendship

Isabelle Hénault, Ph.D.

sexologist & psychologist

Montreal, Canada

**Clinique Autisme et Asperger de Montreal**

# Profile of individuals with ASD & AS

- Social skills: free of social rules
- Communication abilities: verbal and non verbal
- Theory of Mind: different ways of thinking?
- Emotions: detecting, reading, expressing
- Sensory issues
- Impulsive behaviours
- Co-morbidity (other diagnosis)

# 1. Social Impairment

- Less maturity in friendship skills.
- Limited vocabulary for characterization.
- Limited response to peer pressure.
- Conspicuous preference for solitude.
- Unaware of the codes of social conduct.
- Limited ability with team skills.



## 2. Eye Contact

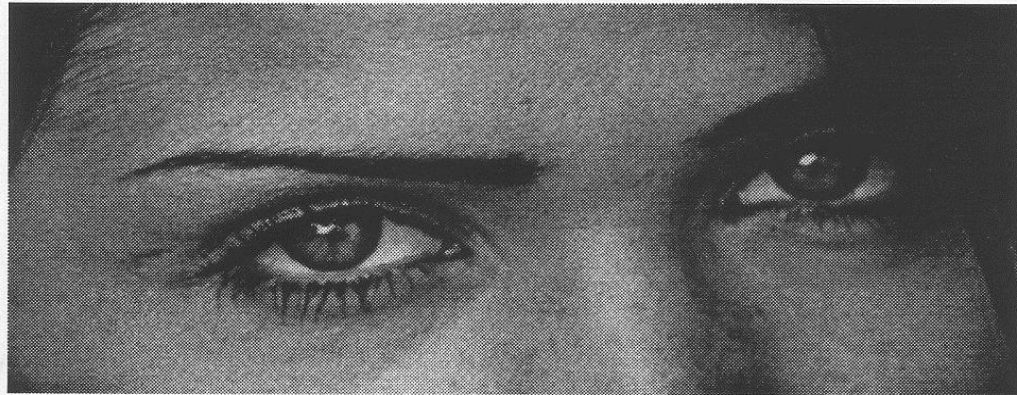
- Social punctuation.
- Read a face.
- Construct a reply without interruption.
- Stimulus overload.

# Reading the mind in the eyes test.

[www.autismresearchcenter.com](http://www.autismresearchcenter.com)

joking

flustered



desire

convinced

irritated

sarcastic



worried

friendly

# Ability to Attribute Social Meaning

- Noticing objects and facts rather than thoughts, feelings and intentions.



LDA  
Language  
Cards:  
Emotions

# LDA Language Cards: Emotions



Descriptions of pictures and events may not include thoughts and feelings.



- “ The nature of these children is revealed most clearly in their behavior towards other people. Indeed, their behavior in the social group is the clearest sign of their disorder and the source of conflicts from earliest childhood.”

Hans Asperger

# 3. Friendship and Social Play

## Skills With Peers

- Other children consider the child is not fun to play with.
- Can be intrusive and irritating to peers (socially clumsy).
- May be on the periphery of play in the playground.
- Does not play in conventional ways.
- Play less likely to be of interest to peers.

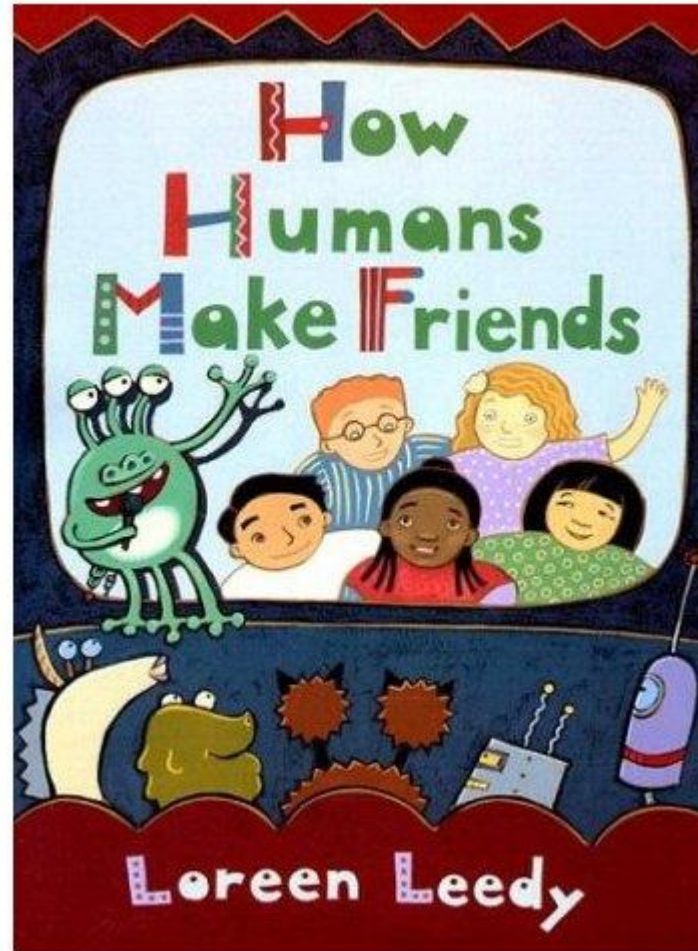
# Friendship and Social Play Skills With Peers

- The duration of solitary play.
- Passivity in social play.
- Enforcement of social rules.
- Competence and anxiety in new social situations.





# Books on Friendship



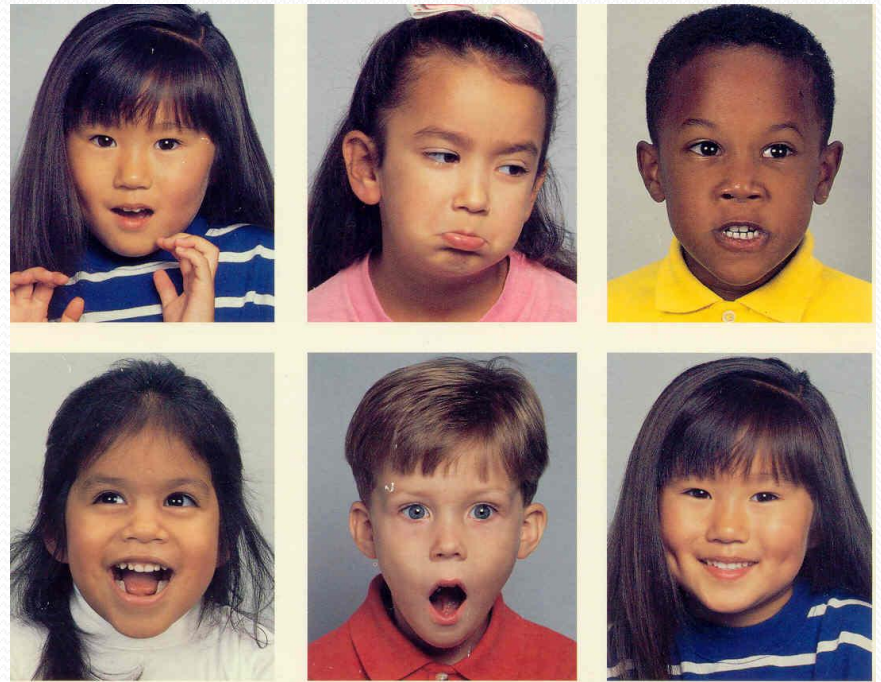
# Social Reasoning

- Lack awareness of social codes and conventions.
- Poor understanding of personal space.
- Allegiance to truth rather than peers.
- Honesty and lateness in learning to lie (white lie).
- Imaginary friends.
- Sense of social justice.

# 4. Empathy and the Communication of Emotions

- Difficulty reading the facial expressions, body language and tone of voice of others.

Immaturity or difficulty with the facial expression of emotions (make a face).



# Empathy and the Communication of Emotions

- Facial expression may not reflect the inner mood.

*“People tell me to smile even though I feel great inside”*

*“How am I suppose to know how I feel ?”*

- Range of responses to the distress of another person may be limited or unusual.

## Frustration



### Colère ←

#### Solutions

- Écouter les directives de l'intervenant(e).
- Me retirer pour 10 minutes.
- Me calmer, bien respirer.
- Me remettre à la tâche.

### Fâché ←

#### Solutions

- Demander de se retire pour 5 minutes.
- Se calmer.
- Exprimer verbalement la raison de ma frustration.
- Me remettre à la tâche.

### Un peu frustré ←

#### Solutions

- Prendre une grande respiration
- Parler calmement de mon problème à l'enseignant(e) ou l'éducatrice.
- Me remettre à la tâche.

### Mauvaise humeur ←

#### Solutions

- Dire à l'intervenant(e) pourquoi je suis de mauvaise humeur.
- Adopter une attitude positive.
- Reprendre ma tâche

### Content ← 😊

Bravo

# Day and night

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5

Morning Noon Afternoon Evening Night

The CAT-kit™

Marisa Collins  
Annette Miller Nelson  
Tony Kowalski  
Dorothy Le Magnien

# the CAT-kit®

Cognitive Affective Training

# The thermometer

[www.thetransporters.com](http://www.thetransporters.com)



# MIND READING

the interactive guide to emotions

*a unique reference work covering over 400 emotions*



*based on research by Cambridge University*

**over 5000 video and audio expressions of emotion**

- a chance to study emotions expressed in the face and the voice
- see and hear each emotion performed by six different people
- stories put every emotion in context
- lessons and quizzes teach emotion recognition
- collectible rewards help with motivation
- a variety of games add to the fun

WINDOWS & MAC DVD-ROM / CD-ROM SET

[www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)



# 5. Communication of Emotions

- Not an absence of empathy, but an immaturity and confusion regarding empathy.
- Can 'soak up' emotions as a 'sponge'.
- Immaturity of emotional expressions (anger and affection).
- Limited range of vocabulary.
- Intensity of emotional response (black & white – 0 to 10).

# Communication of Emotions

- Difficulty showing compassion and remorse.
- Unusual response to affection.
- Intellectualizing of emotions.
- Impaired ability to manage emotions.

# Exploring Affection




# The Understanding and Expression of Affection

- Ability to read the signals when someone expects affection.
- Ability to express the appropriate level of affection.



# The Understanding and Expression of Affection

- Affection to repair someone's feelings.
- An immature expression of affection.
- A limited vocabulary of expression that may not include subtle or age appropriate expressions.
- Sometimes needing frequent expressions of affection for reassurance.

- 
- *“We feel and show affection but not often enough, and at the wrong intensity”*

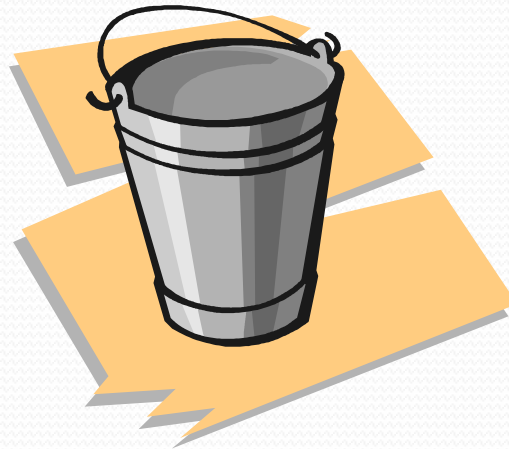
# Affection?

- Why are typical people so obsessed with expressing reciprocal love and affection?
- A hug can be an uncomfortable, constricting squeeze.
- Don't cry because someone will squeeze you.
- Not comforted by affection to the degree that neurotypicals expect.



# Different Perspective

- Intense dislike of public praise that includes words and gestures of affection.
- The capacity for affection, a cup versus a bucket.





# 6. Empathy

- Different type of empathy
- Practical-functional
- Not in words or gestures
- Compassion for animas
- Actions

# Empathy

- Affection to repair feelings
- Frequency of affection
- Sensory sensitivity and affection

A MANUAL FOR PROFESSIONALS



CBT to Help  
**Young People**  
*with Asperger's Syndrome (Autism  
Spectrum Disorder) to Understand  
and Express Affection*

Tony Attwood, PhD and Michelle Garnett, PhD



# FROM LIKE TO LOVE

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH  
ASPERGER'S SYNDROME OR MILD AUTISM

LEARNING HOW TO EXPRESS AND ENJOY AFFECTION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS


TONY ATTWOOD, PhD  
AND MICHELLE GARNETT, PhD

# Aims of the Program

- Affection education to ‘de-mystify’ affection.
- To understand why people need and enjoy affection.
- Explain and encourage appropriate expressions of affection.
- Explain to parents the perspective of the person with Asperger’s syndrome.

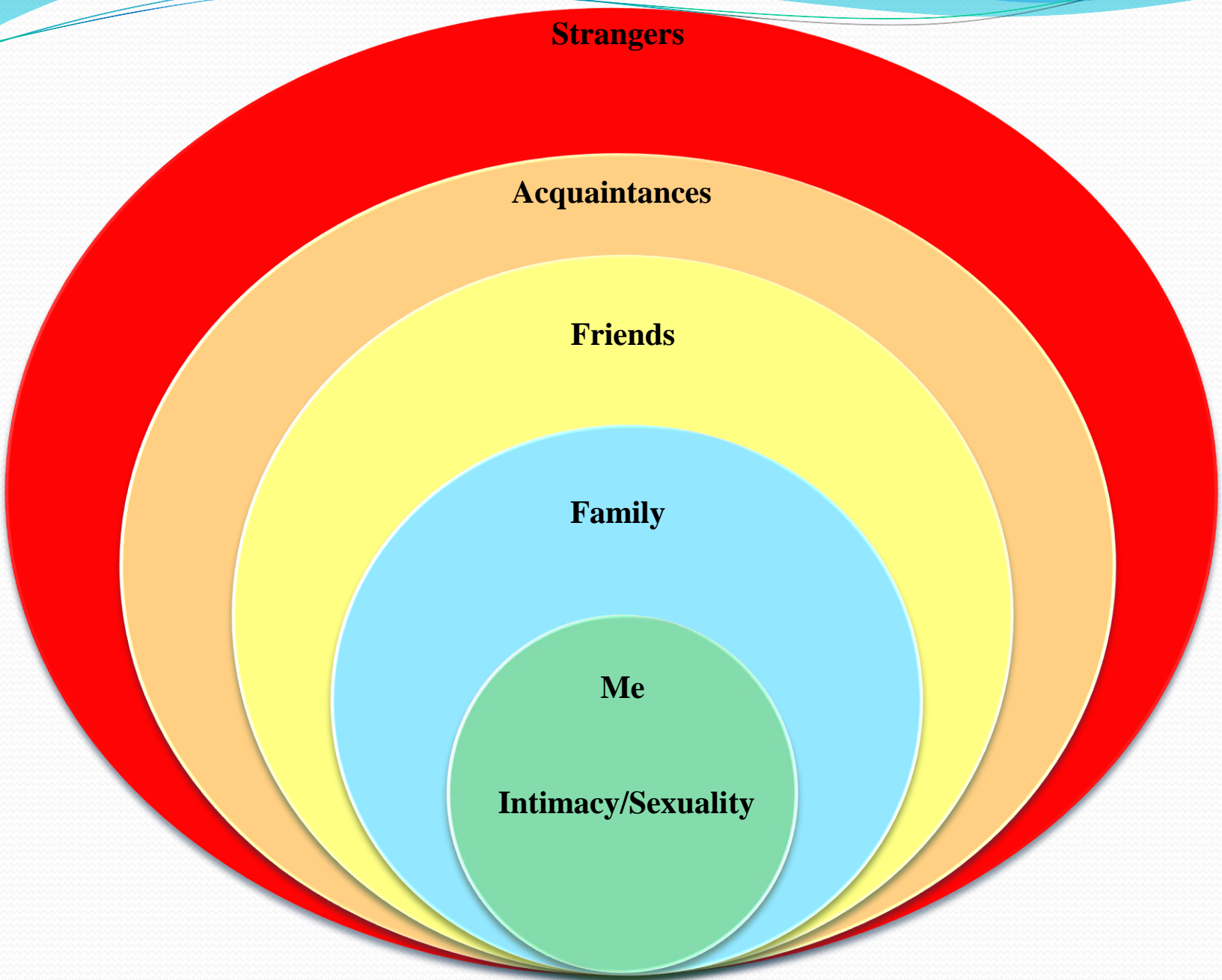
# Objectives

1. Help each child-adolescent discover how expressing and experiencing affection can improve friendships and relationships.
2. Help each child-adolescent to identify not only his or her own comfort and enjoyment range for gestures, actions and words of affection, but also those of friends and family members.



3. Improve for each child-adolescent the range of expressions for liking and loving someone, appropriate to each relationship and situation.

4. Explain to parents, friends and professionals the challenges faced by a person with an ASD in reading the signals that indicate when expressions of affection are needed and appreciated.



**Strangers**

**Acquaintances**

**Friends**

**Family**

**Me**

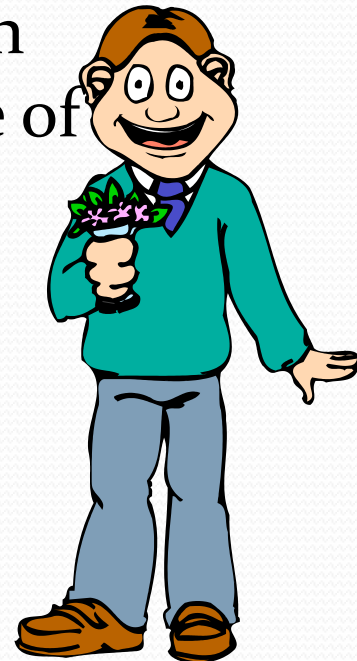
**Intimacy/Sexuality**



# Typical History of Relationships

(Tony Attwood)

- Late developer in social/emotional maturity.
- Not sexist, ageist or culturally biased in choice of friends and partner.
- Wanting to be a friend and lover but with little intuitive knowledge and experience of how to do either.



# Choice of Partner

(Goldsworthy & Stokes, 2011)

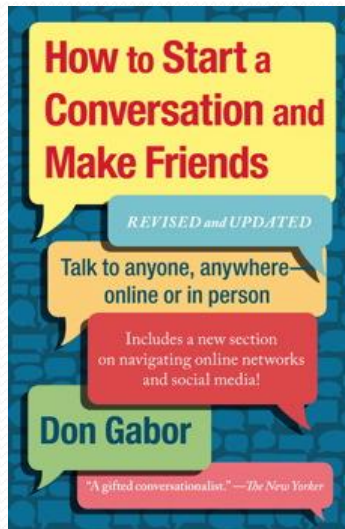
- Women with AS may prefer a relationship with a man with As.
- Extreme neurotypicals more likely to fall in love with an Aspie.
- Adults with High Functioning Autism less likely to seek a partner.

# Building a relationship.....

- Steps:?
- The *AS Love Guide* will help you!
- Example:
  1. Ideas/  
Knowledge
  2. Fantasy/  
Images
  3. Actions/  
Initiatives

# Tools

Don Gabor: How to start a conversation and make friends PDF



Story Cubes/Apps  
<https://www.storycubes.com/>



# Reading body language cards

- <https://sexedmart.com/product/reading-body-language-flirting-flash-cards-download/>



# Relationships

## (What to expect in the couple?)

- Respect
  - Accepting the partner's imperfections
  - Constructive criticism
  - Developing the potential of the couple
  - Recognition of ASD
  - Balance in the couple
- Making time
  - Priority
  - Schedule management
  - Spending time together



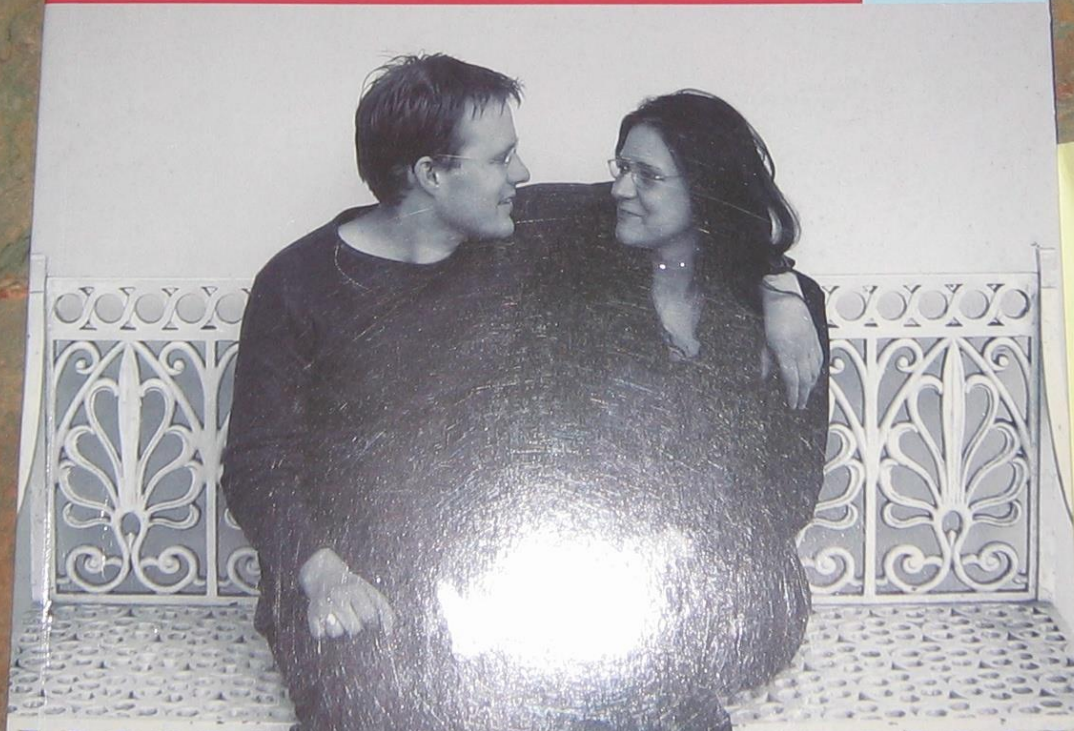
# Relationships

- Expressing emotions
  - Gestures, non verbal communication
  - Decoding the feelings of the partner
  - Intensity of emotions
- Communication: feedback
  - Non verbal (? %)
  - Avoiding misinterpretations
  - Coherence
  - Priority

# The Asperger Love Guide

A practical guide for adults with Asperger's  
syndrome to seeking, establishing and  
maintaining successful relationships

**Genevieve Edmonds  
and Dean Worton**



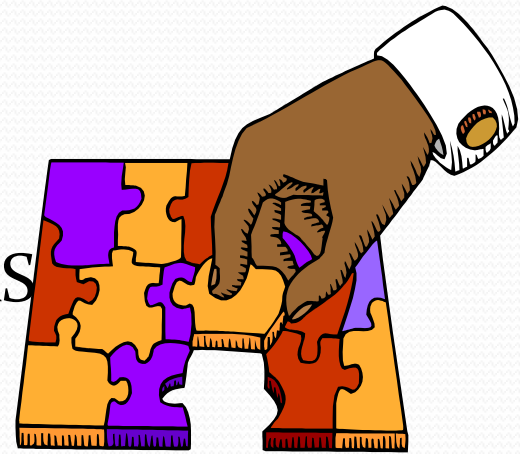




Love, Sex &  
Long-Term  
Relationships

# Outcomes....

- Better communication
- Quality time
- Intimacy (rich, diverse, needs)
- Improving sexuality
- Positive emotions
- Self esteem
- Understanding & acceptance of AS



A hand with black nail polish holds a white rectangular card against a light-colored wall. The card features the words "Thank you" written in a black, elegant cursive script. The word "Thank" is on the top line and "you" is on the bottom line, both centered horizontally. The background of the image is a light blue and white wavy graphic at the top.

Thank  
you