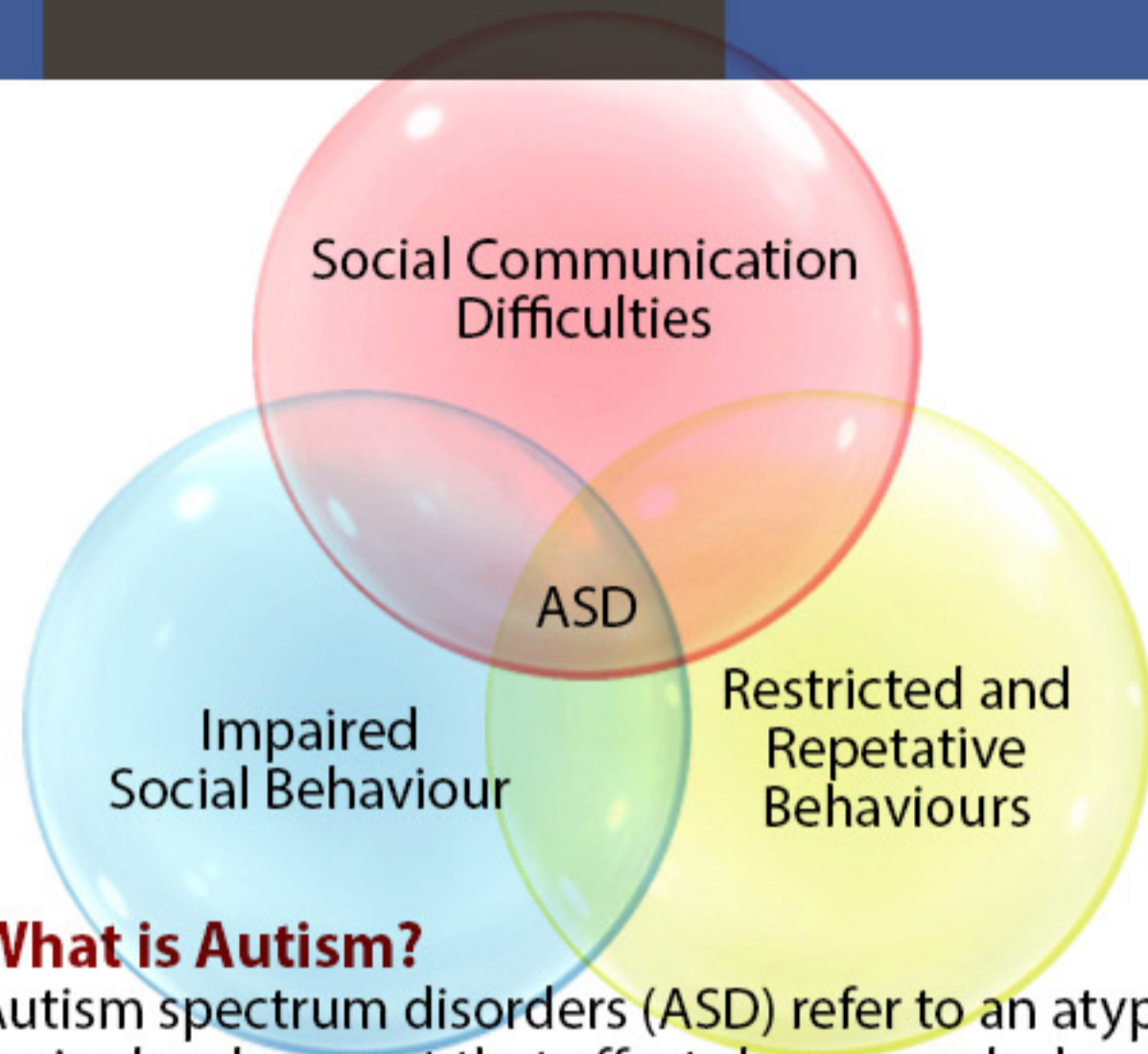


CRISIS NEGOTIATOR TIPS FOR MANAGING AUTISM



What is Autism?

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) refer to an atypical brain development that affects how people, learn, behave, communicate, and interact socially. Just as personalities vary in typical people, autism varies with each individual. They may have repetitive and rigid patterns of behaviour or narrow interests, have a limited vocabulary, and not be able to soothe their own emotions. They may be quite functional, have a job, and be quite talkative but simply have limited social skills and ritualistic behaviours. Symptoms present during early childhood, across all socioeconomic backgrounds. Both children and adults can be Autistic.

When May Police Encounter an Individual with Autism?

The four most likely reasons that a police officer may interact with an individual with autism are:

1. The child or adult is missing.
2. The child or adult is exhibiting dangerously aggressive behavior at home, in school, or in a community setting.
3. The child or adult is a victim of a crime or accident.
4. The individual has broken the law.

Quick facts on Autism

Around one in 57 (1.76%) children in the UK is on the autistic spectrum (2021).

Children and adults with autism are seven times more likely to come into contact with police than their typical peers.

Autism may also be called "ASD, autism spectrum disorder, or Asperger's Syndrome."

Males are four times more likely to receive an Autism diagnosis than females.

Up to 30% of autistic children are non-verbal, of which a significant proportion will become nonverbal teens and adults, or have few words.

Some individuals with autism are highly functional, speak very well, and live independent lives.

Most individuals with autism become easily upset in unfamiliar situations and unscheduled interruptions.

Individuals with autism have a higher rate of epilepsy than their typical peers, which may be triggered by stress.

Individuals with autism may have extreme reactions to seemingly benign objects or events (e.g. train whistle, police sirens).

This information was adapted from materials developed by; NINDS.nih.gov, Newcastle University, Autism Society of America, Kentucky Autism, Training Center, Alaska Autism, Resource Center, and the Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

Recognizing Autism

When in an unfamiliar or stressful situation, individuals with autism may:

- Run away when approached or given commands.
- Respond negatively to touch or requests for eye contact.
- Talk about seemingly unrelated topics such as favorite sports teams or computer games.
- Repeat exactly what the officer says.
- Have difficulty judging personal space (stand too close or far away).
- Respond negatively to loud sounds (sirens) and flashing lights due to hypersensitivity.
- Scream or vocalize loudly, especially if touched.
- Appear belligerent or rude.
- Fight a rescuer due to fear.
- Engage in repetitive movements (such as hand-flapping, or self-hitting)
- Reverse pronouns such as "Can I stop?" instead of "Can you stop?"
- Give misleading statements or false confessions.

