

## **Module 3: autism spectrum disorders and society**

**09:00 – 12:00 (Estimated time: 3 hours)**

### **Rationality:**

In the article *Changing perceptions: The power of autism*, published in *Nature* in 2011 by Laurent Mottron of the Institut universitaire en santé mentale in Montréal and the Asperger researcher Michelle Dawson, the need for rethinking about our beliefs on the different neurological structure is stated of the autistic mind, moving from a vision of deficit and dysfunctionality to one that takes into consideration potential and quality. This cultural process takes the name of Neurodiversity.

The term neurodiversity was born on September 30, 1998 in an article published by Harvey Blume in the *New York Times* and sent by Judy Singer (Blume, 1998). Neurodiversity is an idea that atypical neurodevelopment (neurodivergent from the norm) is a normal and continuously situated difference in the spectrum of natural human variance, which must be recognized and respected like any other biological variation of color, stature, gender and inclination. Differences can appear in the way information is acquired, processed and language, sounds, images, light, texture, taste, movement and emotions (Harmon, 2004).

The concept of neurodiversity was therefore born to indicate the natural variation that leads to the Autistic Spectrum, subsequently this aspect took two paths: the first in which the concept was extended to all types of neurological variation, not only those of a dimensional nature.

While respecting the different ideas and extensions, the concept of neurodiversity carries with it ethical implications that should guide both the clinician and society as a whole, for example:

- understand that neurodiverse people may need support (different according to different needs) but not treatments aimed at "normalizing";
- change the language based on the "disease" nomenclature (disorder, disorder, etc.);

- broaden the concept of autonomy and psychophysical well-being in order to adapt it to those with different needs, reviewing what is considered a "success" at the level of social functioning;
- to give neurodiverse individuals greater control over the types, times, research and modalities of treatment as well as the freedom of choice;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate discrimination;
- eliminate bullying done to the detriment of neurodiverse or disabled people and perpetrated because of their diversity;
- encourage the participation of neurodiverse or disabled people in the public life
- raise awareness of differences in individual behaviors in order to generate a climate of acceptance of the different;
- promote appropriate social changes in order to make the environment family, school, work and social more suitable for presence of neurodiverse people;
- provide opportunities for exchange and discussion;
- provide neurodiverse people with positive models on which to build their own identity (Morrice, 2006, Palfreman, 2009).

Within this context this third module aims to deal with common challenges that a person with ASD may face in different given environments during typical routines and activities that promote academic skills, positive behaviors, problem solving and independence.

## SESSION PLAN

### MATERIAL

- Computer
- External sound speakers
- Projector
- PowerPoint slides M3
- Software araword o simcaa o pictoselector
- Jamboard (whiteboarding)
- One copy for each participant of the Worksheet *Brainstorming 3*
- One copy for each participant of the Worksheet *Think & Reflect 3.1*

- One copy for each participant of the Worksheet *Activity: teamwork autism friendly society*
- One copy for each participant of the Worksheet *Activity: Real-world application 3.1*
- Videos or internet connection.

## OVERVIEW

<b>Begin 09:00 – 9:30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim</li> <li>• Contents</li> <li>• Learning outcomes</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• <i>Activity: Brainstorming 3.1</i></li> </ul>	<b>Develop 09:30 – 10:15</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing common challenges for ASD</li> <li>• Making society ASD friendly at school</li> <li>• <i>Activity: Think &amp; Reflect 3.1 neurodiversity</i></li> </ul>
<b>10:15 – 10:45</b> <b>Break Time</b>	
<b>Develop 10:45 – 11:30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making society ASD friendly at family, public services and work</li> <li>• <i>Activity: teamwork autism friendly society</i></li> </ul>	<b>End 11:30 – 12:00</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap up</li> <li>• <i>Activity: Real-world application 3.1</i></li> <li>• References &amp; Resources</li> <li>• Goodbye 😊</li> </ul>

## BEGIN

**09:00 – 9:30**

Aim, Contents, Learning outcomes


Organization

*Activity: Brainstorming 3.1*

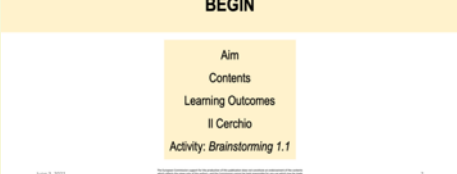
**#1. Welcome participants, introduce the aim, contents and the learning outcomes of this module**

*Note:* Present slides number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5


1



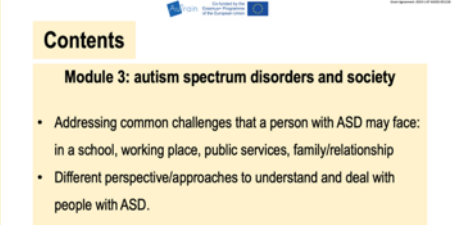
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3



4



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## Aim

In this Unit we will explore useful strategies to engage with people with autism spectrum disorders in different given environments during typical routine and activities that promote academic skill, positive behaviors, problem solving and independence. Remember that each person is different, and specific tips may not apply to all.

## Contents

- Addressing common challenges that a person with ASD may face: in a school, working place, public services, family/relationship
- Different perspective/approaches to understand and deal with people with ASD

## Learning outcomes

- To identify challenges and opportunities in the work place when dealing with people with ASD;
- To use the knowledge gained throughout the course to answer the identified challenges and opportunities in the work place when dealing with people with ASD;
- To know how to act in favor of people with ASD using a philosophy coined by humanity, responsibility taking and problem solving, experientially and critically.

## #2. Plan with participants break times comfortably throughout the module and about instruction adaptations, if needed

*Note:* Present slides number 6 and 7.

### Organization:

Present the overview schedule of the session and suggest a 30 minutes break or two breaks of 10 minutes each. Let the group decide.

6

7

## #3. Introduce and develop the Activity *Brainstorming 3.1*



*Note:* Present slide number 8

8

**Introduce the Aim of the activity:** This activity aims to support participants to generate ideas, events they've experienced, perspectives, facts they know about the topic of the module- Creating an inclusive society. Additionally, reflect about the sources of the topic that were generated.

**Introduce the material:** Pass out the **Worksheet *Brainstorming 3.1***

**Procedures:** Tell participants to individually simply throw out thoughts (in the form of phrases, words, questions, perspectives, facts, events they've experienced etc.) that come to their mind. It is a word association activity. For example: what does the word “autism friendly society” make you think of? Thoughts can range from general topic ideas to subtopic ideas. Once ideas are listed /connected, individual ideas can continue to be broken down until you feel you have enough contents to start to develop the topic. Keep an open mind for all ideas – no idea is silly in brainstorming. Debate, summarize, map the ideas/perspectives in an all group discussion.

**Adaptation for online session:** no need.

## DEVELOP

09:30 – 10:15

Addressing common challenges for ASD  
Making society ASD friendly at school  
Activity: Think & Reflect 3.1 – neurodiversity

**#4. Introduce the content –autism spectrum and disorder - by reading the following text out loud. In the end, ask for comments, doubts, or questions**

*Note: Present slides number 9 to 15*

**DEVELOP**

Addressing common challenges for ASD  
Making society ASD friendly at school  
Activity:  
Think & Reflect 3.1 neurodiversity making society asd  
friendly family, public services and work  
Activity:  
Think & Reflect 3.2

**DEVELOP**

Addressing common challenges for ASD  
Making society ASD friendly at school  
Activity: Think & Reflect 3.1

**The most common challenges that autistic people must face in society are related to:**

1. Sensory processing ( living in an intense world)



An autistic person processes sensory information from the surrounding world in an atypical way. This can sometimes causes over stimulation and make the world a chaotic place.



2. A different way of living relationship

Autistic people have a unique way of experiencing relationship but often do not understand the intricate world of neurotypical relationship. All this, combined with a difficulty in the theory of mind and a different cognitive empathy, can create misunderstanding and can be a barrier to relationship in all life contexts (school, work, family, friendship).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0uYogdvUXw>



3. Attention to detail and atypicality in the central coherence

A great strength of autistic people is attention to detail, which, however, can mean missing the big picture. This can also mean a difficulty in understanding and making complex tasks without any prompt, and a difficulty in living in a multitasking world.




4. Just as biodiversity makes an environment richer, neurodiversity create a richer society

All this characteristics are extraordinary strength when viewed from the right perspective. It is not easy for an autistic person to live in a world designed for neurotypical people, but the world without neurodiversity would be less rich.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5PPYn11x0>

Our task is to create a world that is inclusive of all diversity and to create a society ASD friendly.



5. We will meet in the middle of a bridge

Just as autistic people learn to live in a strange world full of incomprehensible social rules, society must also build communication bridges to meet in the middle So that no one is forced to change their uniqueness and personalities.




**Ask for comments or doubts, or questions**

*Note: Present slides number 11 to 15 -The most common challenges that autistic people must face in society are related to:*

**a. Present slide number 11 with the *first challenge*:**

### **(1) sensory processing (living in an intense world).**

An autistic person processes sensory information from the surrounding world in an atypical way. This can sometimes cause over stimulation and make the world a chaotic place.

**b.** Show the video:

<https://youtu.be/K2P4Ed6G3gw>

**c.** Present slide number 12 with the *second challenge*:

### **(2) A different way of living relationship**

Autistic people have a unique way of experiencing relationship but often do not understand the intricate world of neurotypical relationship.

All this, combined with a difficulty in the theory of mind and a different cognitive empathy, can create misunderstanding and can be a barrier to relationship in all life contexts (school, work, family, friendship).

**d.** Show the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0uYcgdvUXw>

**e.** Present slide number 13 with the *third challenge*:

### **(3) Attention to detail and atypicality in the central coherence**

A great strength of autistic people is attention to detail, which, however, can mean missing the big picture.

This can also mean a difficulty in understanding and making complex tasks without any prompt, and a difficulty in living in a multitasking world.

**f.** Show the video:

<https://youtu.be/v0eHktyoNeU>

**g.** Present slide number 14 with the *fourth challenge*:

### **(4) Just as biodiversity makes an environment richer, neurodiversity creates a richer society**

All these characteristics are extraordinary strength when viewed from the right perspective. It is not easy for an autistic person to live in a world designed for neurotypical people, but the world without neurodiversity would be less rich.

Our task is to create a world that is inclusive of all diversity and to create a society ASD friendly.

**h.** Show the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5PPYnJ1xc0>

Present slide number 15 with the *fifth challenge*:

### **(5) We will meet in the middle of a bridge**

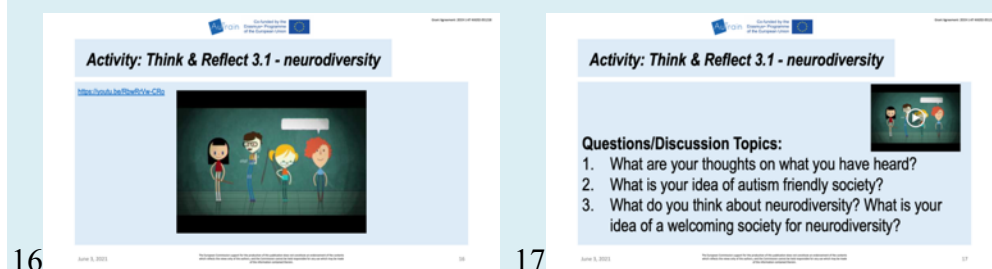
Just as autistic people learn to live in a strange world full of incomprehensible social rules, society must also build communication bridges to meet in the middle. So that no one is forced to change their uniqueness and personalities.

**In the end ask for comments, doubts, or questions**

## #5. Introduce and develop the *Activity: Think & Reflect 3.1 neurodiversity*



*Note:* Present slide number 16 (the image has an automatic link to the video) while you are introducing the activity and showing the video; While participants are developing the activity project slide number 17.



**Introduce the aim of the activity:** We will watch a video and after that we will reflect about the topic- amazing things happen and relate it to the contexts of this module. We will be organized first in small groups of 3 /4 participants and after the discussion we will open to all group.

**Introduce the material:** Pass out the **Worksheet Think & Reflect** and be ready to show the video (use the link in the slide or the following link <https://youtu.be/RbwRrVw-CRo>).

**Procedures: a.** Form small groups of 3 /4 participants. Let participants form the groups, which can also help participants get to know each other better, but feel free to find other way; keep your options fluid and flexible.

**b.** Ask participants to be prepared to discuss the questions presented on the worksheet after the video be watched. Read the questions and ask for doubts or comments.

**c.** Inform participants that they will discuss it within their small group and after that they will report their ideas to the class. They should decide who will present the group ideas and discussion.

**d.** Show the video. To add subtitles with translation:

1. In the player, select Settings.
2. Select Subtitles/CC - Add subtitles.
3. Select Automatic translation - choose your language.



e. While participants are in small groups, you should act as a facilitator, moving from group to group. Doing so allows you to ensure that all of its members are actively participating and learning.

f. Participants share their best ideas with the class. Connect these ideas to the ones presented at the brainstorming activity.

### Questions/Discussion Topics:

a. what are your thoughts on what you have heard?



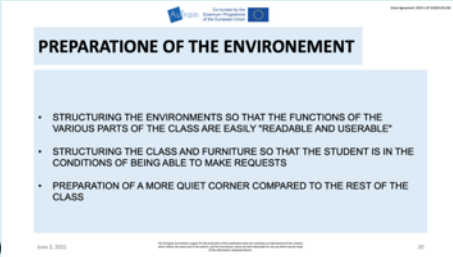


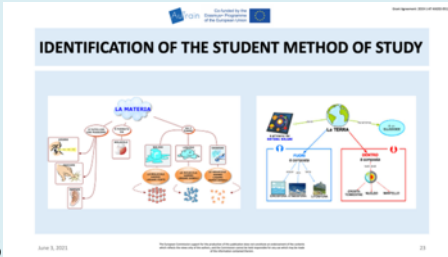
b. what is your idea of autism friendly society?

c. what do you think about neurodiversity? what is your idea of a welcoming society for neurodiversity?

**Adaptation for online session:** After watching the video in the main meeting room, send groups to breakout rooms, and you move from room to room. Share the worksheet using the chat function.

## #6. Describe to make a autism friendly society. Start talk about school

*Note:* Present slide number 18-25

18		19	
20		21	
22		23	



25



Present slide number 18 and then show the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4r5j44JR2M>

Present slide number 19 to 24, reading out loud the content.

Show the video at slide number 25 and then show arasaac software o simcaa

## BREAK TIME

10:15 – 10:45

## DEVELOP

10:45 – 11:30

Makin society ASD friendly at family, public services and work

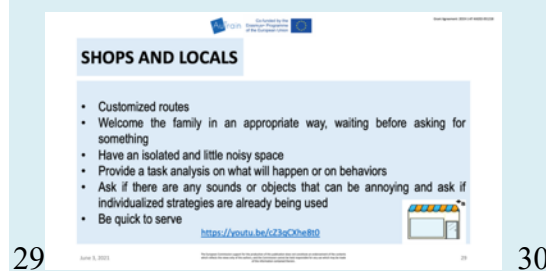
Activity: Teamwork

**#7. Introduce the content – making autism friendly society in a public service, family and work - by reading the following text out loud. In the end ask for comments, doubts, or questions**

*Note:* Present slides number 27 to 43



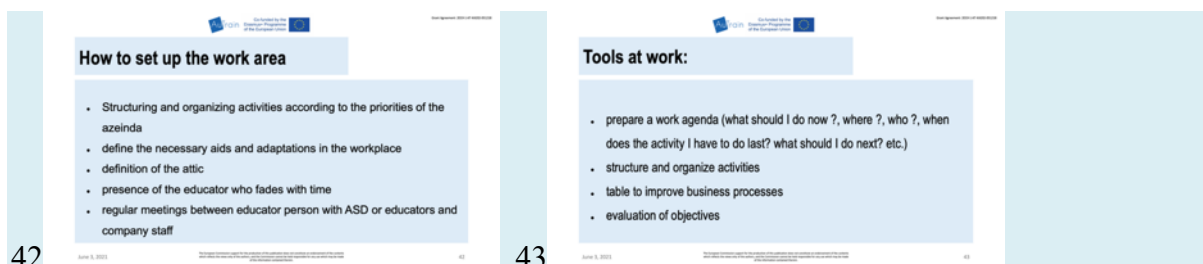
28



30



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Present slide 27, 28, 29, 30 and then show the video about Bologna's Airport.

If interesting present slide 40 and show the videos and hospital's poster.

Present slide 31, 32, 33 and then show the video in the slide 32.

Present slide 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and then the video about ICF.

Present slide 41, 42 and 43.

## #8. Introduce and develop the Activity: teamwork autism friendly society

*Note:* Present slide number 44 while you are introducing the activity. While participants are developing the activity present slide number 44



**Introduce the aim of the activity:** This activity to introduce to discuss related to make an autism friendly society and how to help person with ASD in a school, family, public service and work.

**Procedures:** divide the group into small groups. Each group will have to recreate a real situation in a school, in public service or at work with a person with autism. After answering the questions.

### Questions/Discussion Topics:

- 1) What are the ways to allow people with ASD to be autonomous in carrying out activities in public services?
- 2) What are the proper ways to create a relationship with a person with autism?
- 3) what are the possible practices in the school?

**END**

**11:30– 12:00**

Wrap up

*Activity: Real-world application 3.1*

References & Resources


Questions? Goodbye & thanks 😊

## #9. Wrap up the session by summarizing the main points of it and monitoring participants learning

*Note:* Present slides number 45 and 46



45



46

## #10. Activity: Real-world application 3.1

*Note:* Present slide number 46

**Introduce the aim of the activity:** At home participants will write a reflective essay, to show what they are learning about the topic of the module as well as showing how you they develop critical and reflective skills. These reflections should be turned in and will be discussed later on.

**Introduce the material:** Pass out the **Worksheet Real-world application 3.1**.

**Read out loud the questions for reflection:**

- a. Can you remember the most common problems a person with ASD?
- b. What may be other problems or difficulties of people with ASD in the contexts treated?
- c. Now think about one of the places covered, such as school, public services or relationships. According to what we have learned, what can be other obstacles to an ASD? what can be other ideas to help them in their autonomy in these contexts? what would exist obstacles for a new employee with ASD?

**Ask for questions about the reflection.**

## #11. Introduce References & Resources, and indicate where participants can find it in the AuTrain platform

*Note:* Present slides number 47



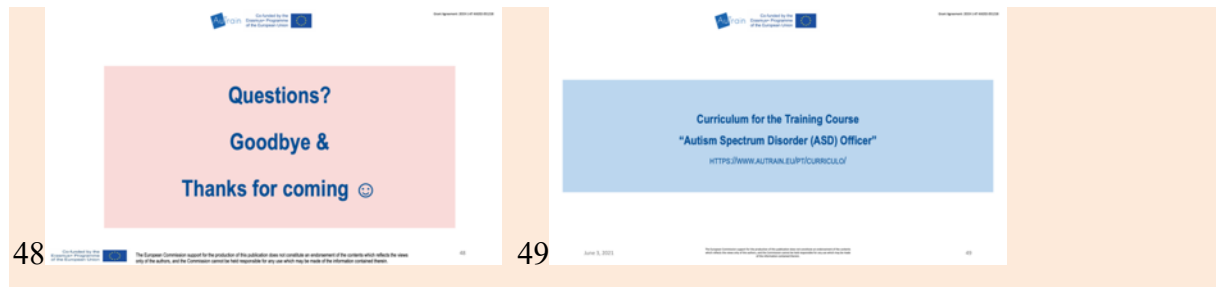
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- <https://cat-kit.com/it/>
- <http://www.spazioasperger.it/>
- <https://www.fondazioneares.com/>

## #12. Questions? Goodbye & Thanks for coming 😊

Ask for any question participants may have. As you intentionally say goodbye, give participants a sense of purpose through making meaning of their hardships and accomplishments within the module. Empower them by reminding them of the skills and strengths they possess now about inclusion and friendly language.

*Note:* Present slides number 48 and 49



## End of the module

### Reflection

In the end of the module write a reflection on what occurred during the process. Concerning the participants' learning, the activities, the organization, etc.

## Worksheet



### *Activity: Brainstorming 3.1*

**List my ideas/events/questions, etc.:**



## Worksheet



### *Activity: Think & Reflect 3.1 neurodiversity*

#### Questions/Discussion Topics:

**a) what are your thoughts on what you have heard?**

**b) what is your idea of autism friendly society?**

**c) what do you think about neurodiversity? what is your idea of a welcoming society for neurodiversity?**

## Worksheet



### *Activity: teamwork autism friendly society*

**IN A SMALL GROUP TO CREATE A SOLUTION OF A SITUATION IN A SCHOOL, IN PUBLIC SERVICE ECC**

**After having seen the above information, discuss in groups:**

- 1) What are the ways to allow people with ASD to be autonomous in carrying out activities in public services?**
- 2) What are the proper ways to create a relationship with a person with autism?**
- 3) what are the possible practices in the school?**

**Answer the questions in the group and write down the most relevant things that can be reported in the large group**

## Worksheet



### *Activity: Real-world application 3.1*

#### **Questions for reflection at home**

- 1) Can you remember the most common problems a person with ASD?
- 2) What may be other problems or difficulties of people with ASD in the contexts treated?
- 3) Now think about one of the places covered, such as school, public services or relationships. According to what we have learned, what can be other obstacles to an ASD? what can be other ideas to help them in their autonomy in these contexts? what would exist obstacles for a new employee with ASD?