

CALDERDALE ASPERGERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2016 EDITION (8TH)

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the September 2016 edition of the Calderdale Asperger's Group Newsletter. Apologies for there being such a long gap between this one and the last one in December 2015. I have been very busy finishing my degree and catching up on life afterwards.

In September 2015 we had our first themed group meeting, a special writing event. Feedback has been very positive and we would like to have more events like this in 2016. It doesn't matter what your interest is just get in touch with Dawn and we will do our best to find a slot for it in 2016. We want to involve you the group members as much as we can and this is a way of doing it.

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WHAT IS ASPERGERS SYNDROME?

Asperger syndrome is a form of [autism](#), which is a lifelong disability that affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people. Autism is often described as a 'spectrum disorder' because the condition affects people in many different ways and to varying degrees. (For more information about autism, please read our leaflet [What is autism?](#))

Asperger syndrome is mostly a 'hidden disability'. This means that you can't tell that someone has the condition from their outward appearance. People with the condition have difficulties in three main areas. They are:

- social communication
- social interaction
- social imagination.

They are often referred to as 'the triad of impairments'.

The characteristics of Asperger syndrome vary from one person to another but are generally divided into three main groups.

Difficulty with social communication

If you have Asperger syndrome, understanding conversation is like trying to understand a foreign language.

People with Asperger syndrome sometimes find it difficult to express themselves emotionally and [socially](#). For example, they may:

- have difficulty understanding gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice
- have difficulty knowing when to start or end a conversation and choosing topics to talk about
- use [complex words and phrases](#) but may not fully understand what they mean
- be very literal in what they say and can have difficulty understanding jokes, metaphor and sarcasm. For example, a person with Asperger syndrome may be confused by the phrase 'That's cool' when people use it to say something is good.

In order to help a person with Asperger syndrome understand you, keep your sentences short - [be clear and concise](#).

Difficulty with social interaction

I have difficulty picking up social cues, and difficulty in knowing what to do when I get things wrong.

Many people with Asperger syndrome want to be sociable but have difficulty with initiating and sustaining social relationships, which can make them very anxious. People with the condition may:

- struggle to make and maintain friendships
- not understand the unwritten 'social rules' that most of us pick up without thinking. For example, they may stand too close to another person, or start an inappropriate topic of conversation
- find other people unpredictable and confusing
- become withdrawn and seem uninterested in other people, appearing almost aloof
- behave in what may seem an inappropriate manner.

Difficulty with social imagination

We have trouble working out what other people know. We have more difficulty guessing what other people are thinking.

People with Asperger syndrome can be imaginative in the conventional use of the word. For example, many are accomplished writers, artists and musicians. But people with Asperger syndrome can have difficulty with social imagination. This can include:

- imagining alternative outcomes to situations and finding it hard to predict what will happen next
- understanding or interpreting other people's thoughts, feelings or actions. The subtle messages that are put across by facial expression and body language are often missed
- having a [limited range of imaginative activities](#), which can be pursued rigidly and repetitively, eg lining up toys or collecting and organising things related to his or her interest.

Some children with Asperger syndrome may find it difficult to play 'let's pretend' games or prefer subjects rooted in logic and systems, such as mathematics.

Who is affected by Asperger syndrome?

There are [over half a million people in the UK with an autism spectrum disorder](#) - that's around 1 in 100. People with Asperger syndrome come from all nationalities, cultures, social backgrounds and religions. However, the condition appears to be [more common in males than females](#); the reason for this is unknown.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN CALDERDALE?

Event:

Bailiff Bridge Library - Memories of T F Firths and Sons

Altered Landscapes - Memories of T F Firths and Sons. Photographic exhibition.

Opening Hours at Bailiff Bridge Library:

Monday 2pm - 6pm

Tuesday 2pm - 6pm

Thursday 2pm - 6pm

Saturday 10am - 1pm

This Exhibition runs from 19th July 2016 - 31st October 2016

bailiff_bridge.library@calderdale.gov.uk

[Bailiff Bridge library](#)

Venue:

Bailiff Bridge Library, Devon Way, Bailiff Bridge, HD6 4DT, Tel 01484 719164

Date:

3 September 2016 - 4 September 2016

Event:

Rushbearing Festival Sowerby Bridge 2016

This festival is the only one of its kind in Yorkshire. See the decorated and thatched Rushcart, enjoy live music performances, morris dancing, charity and crafts market. Come along for two days of Rush-related tradition and tomfoolery.

info@rushbearing.com

[Sowerby Bridge Rushbearing Festival](#)➔

Venue:

Sowerby Bridge

4 September 2016

Event:

Heritage walk: A Round Triangle

Exploring this Ryburn village and some of the nearby 'rural fringe' mid-way between Sowerby Bridge and Ripponden. Fine buildings and a Palladian mansion ... and that's not all!

Meet Anne Kirker at 2.15 pm by the Triangle Inn on A58, 1½ miles south-west of Sowerby Bridge.

[Calderdale Heritage Walks](#)➔

Event times:

2.15pm

Admission:

£3.00

Venue:

Triangle Inn on A58

Club / Society:

[Calderdale Heritage Walks](#)

Date:

2 September 2016 - 5 September 2016

Event:

Norland Scarecrow Festival 2016

The Norland Scarecrow festival has been held every year since 2000 and raises money for the village and local charities. Local home and business owners create scarecrows to match a different theme each year, creating a trail of around 80 scarecrows! This year's theme is books.

keith.woodhouse@btinternet.com

[Norland Scarecrow Festival 2016](#)➔

Admission:

Free

Venue:

Norland

Date:

8 September 2016 - 11 September 2016

Event:

Halifax Heritage Festival 2016

A series of exciting events running alongside the UK English Heritage Open Days.

info@marketinghalifax.co.uk

[Halifax Heritage Festival 2016](#)➔

Admission:

Mix of free and paid

Venue:

Various locations in Halifax

NAS CALDERDALE BRANCH

The NAS Calderdale Branch provides support, information, training and social activities for families and adults affected by an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These include informal coffee mornings once a month, speakers and training sessions, family days out and social events for children. The Branch also works with local service providers to advise them on the needs of ASD people

Phone: 07798 617448

Email: calderdale@nas.org.uk

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

If you have any stories and / or photos about what you have been doing over the past few months and would to have it included in the newsletter please get in contact. This could be anything from a trip out somewhere in the community, a work experience or if you have been volunteering somewhere new.

Please contact Dawn Collins at Dawn.Collins@calderdale.gov.uk with your contribution to have it included in future editions of the newsletter.

NEWSLETTER LINKS THIS MONTH

Autism and Mental Health: <http://cms.lawgazette.co.uk/Uploads/p//a/Autism-and-Mental-Health-Toolkit.pdf>

Gender Dysphoria and Autism: http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/gender-dysphoria-and-autism?utm_source=The%20National%20Autistic%20Society&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=7443044_Network%20Autism%20Update&utm_content=Wenn%20Lawson%20gendery%20dysphoria%20article&dm_i=YA3,4FJ38,6VPJX2,GBI6Z,1

How Pokemon Go is helping kids on the autism spectrum:
http://www.refinery29.com/2016/08/119220/pokemon-helping-kids-autism-aspergers?utm_source=themighty&utm_medium=syndication

Autism Awareness at the Edinburgh Fringe:
<http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/jenny-paterson-autism-is-no-joke-and-it-s-time-for-change-1-4192496>

How wearable devices are helping people with autism manage anxiety:
<http://www.zdnet.com/article/how-wearable-devices-are-helping-people-with-autism-manage-anxiety/>

SNOW LEOPARD TRAINING



Autistic Perspectives on Neurodiversity

Snow Leopard Training is led and delivered by autistic adults. We are based in Calderdale and we offer **training about autism and neurodiversity to support organisations and individuals** who work with autistic people to develop their awareness to the benefit of all parties.

We offer **advice and support for autistic adults** and other neurodiverse people in the West Yorkshire Area and hope in the future to offer employment for autistic adults and voluntary opportunities.

We are inviting organisations, professionals, carers and volunteers working with autistic/neurodiverse people to contact us and let us know if:

- They are interested in training, workshops or one to one mentoring.
- Have specific content they would like training about or identify areas they feel would be of particular benefit from training and support with Snow Leopard.
- Would like to fund or support our project.

We are also inviting autistic people to contact us with:

- Any content they feel would be important to include in our training packages or experiences they think we should know about because it will inform our training programmes.
- We also welcome hearing from you if you are autistic and interested in being part of Snow Leopard Training.

calderdaleautismtraining@riseup.net
<https://www.facebook.com/snowleopardtrainingautisticperspective>
<http://snowleopardautism.tumblr.com>

UPDATE ON THE CALDERDALE ASPERGER'S GROUPS

There are three peer support groups for adults with Aspergers. You don't need a diagnosis to attend, and we can advise on getting a diagnosis. The groups are informal and free drinks and snacks are provided. We discuss living with Aspergers, coping strategies and related topics.

The main group is held on the second Friday of the month from 12.00 to 1.30 at Halifax Library. About 10-15 people attend this group each month. We have occasional guest speakers and occasional trips out. Stephen Simpson and Zafraan Hussain from South West Yorkshire Trust Autism Service came to talk to us recently.

- Next Group - Friday 9th September 12.00-1.30 at Halifax Library

There is an evening group at Hebden Bridge Town Hall which meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.30-8.30pm, and around 6 people attend this group. Having an evening group is useful for people who are working or can't attend during the daytime. Katherine and James came to talk to us last month about Snow Leopard Training which offers training about autism and neurodiversity to support organisations and individuals.

- Next Group - Monday 19th September 7.30-8.30 at Hebden Bridge Town Hall

The third group is on the fourth Tuesday of each month 2.30-3.30pm, also at Halifax Library. This is a smaller group of around 6 people.

- Next Group - Tuesday 27th September 2.30-3.30 at Halifax Library

We also have a Partners Group for partners of adults with Aspergers which meets one evening a month 8.00-9.00pm in Sowerby Bridge.

For more details on any groups, please contact Dawn Collins on 01422 393966 or Dawn.Collins@Calderdale.gov.uk or <http://welcome.calderdaleaspergers.com>

*** LAUNCH OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POSTER ***

Friday 30th September 10.00-11.00am at Halifax Town Hall

Teresa, Simon, Andy, Dawn and Stephen Simpson were involved in designing a poster about Reasonable Adjustments organisations should make for people with Autism spectrum conditions.

Everyone is invited to the launch at Halifax Town Hall, refreshments provided

ASPERGERS GROUP TRIP TO BURY



One Friday in June, a small group had a day trip to Bury. It was James T's suggestion and he and his wife Anne were joined by James G, Simon and Teresa to visit the Transport Museum, the Fusiliers Museum and the Art Gallery. A good time was had by all, as you can see in this photo of Teresa driving a bus. Thanks to James G for the photos. If you have any suggestions for trips just let Dawn know. James T is thinking of arranging a trip to the Lawnmower Museum in Southport next.



BLOG/WEBSITE ADDRESSES OF MEMBERS OF CAG

Do you have a blog that you would like other members of the group to read? If so contact Dawn. Two of our members already have blogs. They are Alison Schofield and Andy Smith.

Alison's blog is at: <http://www.blog.co.uk/user/alison-the-bendy-zebra/>

And Andy's blog is at: andyqby19.wordpress.com

James Giblin, who attends the Friday Halifax Group has a website for his photography business: www.northernphotoart.com

If you or anyone you know is looking for a photographer, please have a look or tell them about it.

THE CALDERDALE ASPERGERS GROUP WEBSITE

In case you haven't seen it, here is our website, designed by our very own Alison Schofield! <http://www.thecalderdaleautismnetwork.co.uk>

Please let Alison have any useful links, research or events for the website at calderdalean@yahoo.co.uk

Your input is valuable to the running of the website.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FEEDBACK ON THE NEWSLETTER?

We would like to know what our readers think about the newsletter, what have you enjoyed reading and why? Are there things that you would like to see included that we may not have already covered in previous editions? Or even something that could be improved or changed in future editions of the newsletter?

If you have any feedback, please share this with Dawn Collins at Dawn.Collins@Calderdale.gov.uk

AUTISM WEBSITES

A list of websites dedicated to autism and people on the spectrum.

The Aspergers Association of Aragon has created an interactive game in Spanish with English subtitles to teach social skills. Very cool indeed!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F4aoW0ahdc&feature=youtu.be>