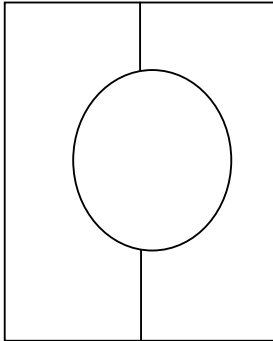


## Group One- Introduction to the Groups

- Give the group sticky labels, on which they can write their name and draw a picture of something that represents them.
- Go over group rules. Explain purpose of the groups and times/dates etc.
- Go round the group and get everyone to introduce themselves and say a bit about their interests/ hobbies/ work/ ambitions/ diagnosis.
- **Ice breaker-** Similarities and Differences.



Split the group into two teams.

Give them paper and coloured pens.

Get them to choose team names.

Ask them to draw this basic design on their page.

Inside the circle they should draw ways in which they are similar to their team mates; outside the circle they should draw ways in which they are different.

After they have drawn 4-5 things the papers are swapped between the teams and the opposing team has to interpret their drawings to learn new things about the opposing team.

- **Group Discussion-** Go over the timetable with the group discussing what will be covered in the next 16 weeks. Ask them to discuss what social difficulties they have and what are their expectations from the course/ what do they want to learn from the groups? Does the timetable cover everything?
- Go over the definition of 'social skills' and discuss why they maybe important.
- Explain three theories of ASD- Theory of Mind/ Weak Central Coherence/ Executive Functions. Using the power point presentation, explain each theory and how it relates to social impairments.
- **Group discussion-** how they relate their own problems to the different theories.

## Group 2- Emotion Recognition

- Introduce emotions.
- Explain how emotions are affected in Aspergers (inappropriate social display, recognising and responding to emotion, talking about emotions) Discuss with the group if these are things they have experienced.
- Explain theory behind emotions and how they are produced including appraisal and how changing our thinking can alter our emotions. Use the diagram to emphasize this-  
Event = Cognitions/ Appraisal = Emotions
- **Brainstorm-** some functions of why we have emotions and why they are important.
  - Negative emotions motivate us to change and reflect on circumstances.
  - Emotions communicate feelings to others so we can help.
  - Flight or fight response prepares us for action- evolutionary advantage.
  - Positive Emotions help us to make decisions to increase these positive feelings.
- **Group Activity-** Emotion in Faces. Concentrating on the eyes and mouth, emphasize on looking at all the facial features. Ask them to carry out the following instructions- draw your eyebrows together and downwards/ bulge your eyes open wide/ flare your nostrils and keep you lips rigid but flash your teeth. Then ask them to look around the group and identify the emotion they are seeing.
- **Group Activity-** Introduce the facial expression resource. Group members can name an emotion they want to learn more about, the emotion is then displayed on the screen in several different faces. The group must look though the faces and identify features that are the same which help us to recognise that emotion. Use activity sheets to encourage the group to look at emotions, identify and recognise them. Once they have recognised the emotion watch a short video clip of the emotion.
- **Homework-** Diary. Ask the group to fill in emotion diaries keeping track of how they are feeling throughout the week/ events and thoughts that triggered these emotions and how they reacted physically and then dealt with the situation. Explain this will encourage them to be more emotionally aware, regulate their own emotions, talk about and understand their emotions.

### Group 3- Emotion Recognition and Responding

- Introduce today's topic of looking at emotional body/language and tone of voice. Explain the importance of using all three clues together to correctly identify the emotion. With particular relevance to incongruent emotions where the subtle clues give away the true feelings.
- **Brainstorm-** Incongruent Emotions. Identify possible reasons and situations where people would cover up their own emotions
  - To impress people
  - Avoid arguments/ confrontation
  - To avoid upsetting others
  - Avoid embarrassment/ save face/ not be seen as weak or vulnerable
  - Politeness/ shyness- reluctant to draw attention to themselves

- **Group Activity-** Identifying Emotions. Watch video clips with the sound turned off.

Emotional scenes are-

- 1) Fight with a Neighbour (pride/ humiliation/ anger/ sarcastic)
- 2) Giving a Compliment on a Date (embarrassment/ touched/ happy)
- 3) Seeing a Psychiatrist (anxiety/ anger/ frustration/ disappointment)

Ask the group to individually write a list of all the emotions they spot throughout the scenes, telling them to pay particular attention to body language and facial expression. Discuss afterwards what they recognised and what cues gave away the emotions. Then watch the scenes with the volume turned up to see if they correctly identified the emotions.

- Discuss incongruent emotions and the importance of body language. Use "dinner with the boss" video clip to demonstrate an individual with AS failing to pick up on the *true* emotions of his girlfriend when what she says is different to how she really feels. Ask the group to identify signs which indicate how the female character *really* feels.
- **Role Play-** Reacting to Emotions. Go over the 'Responding to Emotions' skills box from the handout. Ask them to divide into pairs and using their emotion diary from the previous week, re-enact an emotion they have recorded in their diary and get the other person to respond appropriately to their emotion.  
Discuss possible outcomes which occur when you try and show someone understanding for their emotions.
- **Homework-** Diary. Ask the group to keep an emotion diary of others emotions that they have recognised and responded too. Be prepared to feedback their successes and failures to the group the following week.

## Group 4 Language and Communication

- **Group Discussion-** Emotion Diaries. Discuss what they did well and what they could improve upon. Talk about the kinds of emotions that they recognised and how they responded including what they would do differently next time.
- Introduce topic of language and communication. Discuss how language is affected in people with Aspergers (read out language list). Ask the group to reflect upon times where these things have been a problem for them.

- **Group Activity-** Who Do You Want to Go To Lunch with?

Watch through video clips and identify what the actors are doing wrong with their use of language and conversation. After each clip, ask the group to discuss who from that scene would they want to go to lunch with? Why? Identify positive and negative aspects of all the communication and language skills.

Video Clips and accompanying discussion points-

- 1) lack of initial greeting, literal use of speech/ pedantic attention to detail/ correcting others mistakes.
  - 2) invasion of personal space, the lack of inhibition in disclosing personal information/ the lacking awareness of other feelings and offending others without being aware.
  - 3) monotone voice, lack of reciprocal conversation with one word responses, lack of reflective listening.
  - 4) joining a conversation inappropriately, being too concrete and direct, lacking subtlety.
  - 5) interrupting others who are talking, inability to inhibit responses, making inappropriate comments.
- Empathise the purpose of the group is too think about what NOT to do when using language and when communicating with someone.
  - **Homework-** Jokes. Using humour to understand the literal use of language. For next weeks group think up some jokes to share with everyone, explaining that understanding humour and responding appropriately is a large part of our communication with others.

## Week 5- Non-Verbal Communication

- **Group Discussion-** Humour. Ask the group to go round each person and share their jokes. Hold a discussion about-
  - When it is appropriate to laugh and when not too.
  - What topics you just don't joke about (e.g. people worse off than yourself)
  - What features give you clues that someone is joking with you.
  - When do you have to laugh to be polite even if something is not funny (e.g. when it's someone important, when you need to make a good impression).
  - What do you do if you laugh inappropriately
- **Brainstorm-** Introduce today's topic- Non-verbal communication. Think up all the different types of non-verbal communication. Then give out the handout and go over any that were missed. Discuss how many types there are and how important non-verbal information is!
- **Group Activity-** Non-verbal comedy video clip. Emphasise the point that 65% of communication is non-verbal. Explain there is no verbal information in this clip. Afterwards discuss how much information did you get from other clues- appearance/ facial expression/ body language/ gestures.
- **Group Activity-** Guess the Newspaper Headline.

Divide the group into two halves and give each side a pile of newspapers/ magazines. Ask the groups to go through the newspapers and cut out pictures of people that are communicating something non-verbally. Take a note of the accompanying newspaper story.

When the groups have collected five or six examples ask them to swap their pictures with the other side. Get the opposing team to guess the newspaper headline or the accompanying story just from the information communicated in the picture. Talk about what the picture tells them. Then get the other side to reveal the true story and feedback how successful they have been.
- **Homework-** Photograph. Bring in a photograph of yourself or a family member/ friend. Choose a picture which displays some non-verbal communication. Pictures will be shown to the rest of the group and everyone will guess the event/ meaning/ message conveyed in the picture.

## Group 6 Non-Verbal Communication Continued

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Go round the group and ask them to show their photographs one by one. As a team try to infer the situation/ the message and meaning from the picture without the owner of the photograph giving away any verbal information. Look for clues in each picture discuss the features of the body language and what they tell you. How did they feel? What might have happened after the picture was taken?
- **Group Discussion-** Cross-cultural non-verbal communication and how different signs across the world mean different things. To get the group talking, give them some different examples and ask them to guess where they are from. Ask if they know any others that they can share with the group. Emphasise how important non-verbal communication is by demonstrating what can happen if it goes wrong!
- **Group Activity-** Negatives and Positives. Divide the group into teams, giving them both a piece of paper. Ask them to divide their sheet in half. On one half put positive examples of non-verbal communication and on the other half put negative examples of non-verbal communication. Once the groups have generated several ideas ask them to act out the positive examples to the other team. Get the other team to retaliate by acting out their negative examples. Discuss how the two teams felt at receiving negative and positive non-verbal communication.
- **Role Play-** Acting Scenes  
Mix up the groups and introduce new group activity. Give the teams scripts and ask them to choose a character and read through their part. Once they have had a practise go through the script slowly and add in non-verbal communication (e.g. appropriate hand gestures/ facial expressions/ space and touch/ actions etc.). Get them to act out their characters with the added non-verbal communications. Explain that using non-verbal communication in everyday situations will increase understanding and meaning.
- **Role Play-** Ask the groups to split into pairs and act out the same verbal script but under different situations (i.e. in a rush, bored, feeling guilty, suspicious of the other person) Ask them to guess what situation the other person is acting out. Discuss how the script remains constant, but the message changes. How much of the message do they get across?
- **Homework-** read through the list of negative non-verbal communication. Ask the group to be self-aware of their own behaviours throughout the week. Get them to check off the types of communication as they perform them. Ask them to be aware of how many times they do things from the list, and challenge them to reduce their negative communications.

## Group 7 Language and Communication

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Go round the group and discuss how many items they checked off from the list of negative non-verbal communications. Recap how language is affected in Asperger's Syndrome. Go over the 'reflective listening' skills box, emphasising how failing to listen is a big cause of conflict.
- **Group Exercise-** Vocal Tone.  
Ask the group to each read out the statement 'why don't I take you to dinner tonight' each member emphasises a different word in the sentence. As they are read out discuss what affect emphasising the different word has on the meaning. Match up the meanings from the handout with the statements.
- **Role Play-** Go over the 'Conversation' skills box. Ask the group to practise these skills by having a conversation discussing one good thing and one bad thing about their week. Encourage them to ask questions and reciprocate the conversation.
- **Group Activity-** Small Talk. As a group use the small talk topic list to tick off what is appropriate/ inappropriate to make conversation about with friends, neighbours and employers. Ask why some topics might be uncomfortable for some people to discuss. Talk about appropriate times to use small talk and its function of relaxing people/ being friendly.
- **Role Play-** Small Talk. Show pictures of various scenarios and ask the group to role play small talk they could make in that situation - 'At the Supermarket' 'In the Staffroom' and 'At the Bus Stop'. Ask the pairs to hold a conversation for one minute then move onto a new partner and hold a different conversation for one minute. Try and get them to work their way round every group member, so that they can make conversation with different types of people. Suggest things they could say, questions they could ask etc.
- **Group Activity-** Go over the final conversation box 'Joining a Conversation'. Get the group to listen to a radio conversation. Pause it at random points and ask the group to think up appropriate comments they could make to join the conversation.
- **Homework-** Compliments. Explain that as a conversation starter a good idea is to give someone a compliment. For next week, give someone a compliment- note how they react, and what the outcome was so that they can share their experience with the group next week.

## Group 8 Family Situations

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Go round each person and ask what compliment they gave and how they got on. Discuss some of the positives of giving compliments/ what things are not appropriate to compliment and how to accept compliments when others give them to you.
- Introduce topic of families by discussing the pictures of celebrity families and how varied/ dynamic they are.
- **Group Discussion-** Encourage the group to discuss who is in their own family and how their family dynamic works i.e. do they live at home/ how do they get on/ do they have brothers, sisters and extended family/ what happens at special occasions/ traditions. Ask what problems/ difficulties they have or have had with their family, allow the group to share their own experiences and generate some problem solving solutions. Read through the 'Coping with Family Occasions' skills box
- **Group Activity** 'What Makes a Good Family Unit'  
Ask the group to make their own family, agree on a family name, take on characters of mother/ father/ sister/ brother. In their characters they must take on their family roles (i.e. mum and dad are the team leaders). Their challenge is to work together to complete a construction task:-

Questions to ask: Which attempt to complete the pyramid was the easiest? Why was it easier with everyone helping? How does this apply to our families?

- **Homework-** Contributions. Fill in their family trees providing examples of what each family member contributes. Finally write a list of their own contributions within the family and how they could contribute more.



## Group 9 Family Situations Continued

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Go round the group so each can discuss what things they contribute to their family and how they got on with trying to contribute more. Discuss what it is like when certain family members don't contribute enough.

- **Problem Solving and Role Play-** Family Situations.

Watch through family scenes and use them to problem solve common family problems and to discuss times when they have been in that situation themselves. First identify the problems, then ask them to suggest what they would do if they were in that situation. Ask if they have ever been in a similar dilemma and how they coped. Get them to role play how they would react if they were in that situation.

Scenes and discussion points-

- 1) family arguments/ fights and feuds, getting some time on your own.
  - 2) families fussing and nagging/ how to deal with this
  - 3) being supportive of family members/ what happens when your family are not supportive
  - 4) embarrassing family members/ times when things we do might embarrass others
  - 5) contributing to the family, trying to live together, putting up with others habits.
- **Group Discussion-** Go over the 'Improving Family Relations' skills box. Dr Who doesn't have family events to attend, what would the advantages and disadvantages of this?
  - **Homework** - think of a good deed you can do for a family member and do it, if you can't think of anything ask other family members what might be useful or what a particular family member might like. Think about how they react, why was it a good thing to do?

## Group 10 Friendships- Making New Friends

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Discuss the good deed they carried out.
- **Group Activity-** Friendship video clip. Use this clip to introduce topic of making friends and how it can be hard work. Discuss the main features of making friends (similar interests/ personal attributes).
- **Group Discussion-** Go over the skills box 'Win Friends and Influence People'. Discuss places to meet potential friends (activity groups/ internet sites e.g. Facebook/ through other friends/ get to know acquaintances better). Share their experiences of making friends.
- **Group Activity-** 'Approachable or Unapproachable' in the style of 'Deal or no Deal'.

Show images on the power point of individuals faces and ask the group to decide if they would approach that individual or not? Slides feature faces. Identify what features make an individual look friendly/ unfriendly.

- **Group Activity-** Asking Open Ended Questions.  
Get the group to turn closed statements into open ended questions to find out more information about people. Discuss the benefits of this style of questioning, including how it can maintain a conversation and encourages others to talk about themselves.
- **Group Discussion-** Rejection. Share experiences. Read out some famous examples where something was rejected and later became popular (i.e. 'It won't catch on...' – TV in America). Read over the 'Rejection' box and emphasise that this happens to everyone and that making friends might not work first time.
- **Homework-** Ask the group to get in touch with a friend they have not seen in a while (i.e. go for a coffee/ give them a phone or an email). Think about how the experience worked out for them and be prepared to feedback to the group the following week.

## Group 11 Friendships- Maintaining Friendships

- **Group Discussion-** Homework. Go round the group and talk about who contacted a friend they hadn't seen in a while. How did they get on? What was the outcome? Are they glad they tried? How would they feel if it was them who got contacted by a long lost friend?
- Introduce topic- maintaining friendships. The differences between a stranger/ acquaintance/ friend/ best friend. How do these relationships differ? What is considered acceptable with each one?
- **Group Activity-** Identifying Awkward Situations. Vital part of friendships is being able to identify awkward moments and react to them. Knowing when they have upset or offended someone and what to say. Ask each member of the group to read out a scenario from the 'Faux Pas' test. As a group decide what was awkward/ offensive, what should not have been said and what they would do if they were in that situation. Include the 'Social Stories Questionnaire' which features conversations where something insulting or offensive is said and they have to figure out what it was. Group members can act out the conversations and take on the different characters.
- **Group Discussion-** Self Disclosure. Topics- Share their own experiences/ ask others how obvious their AS is, what behaviours do they need to explain/ what to do when people question your diagnosis/ when is the best time/ how best to explain it simply (i.e. a good example was- brain wired differently/ like being dyslexic but for social skills).
- **Role Play-** Giving Criticism/ Accepting Criticism. Read through the skills box. Identify times when it's acceptable to give criticism. Use practical examples of criticism from Simon Cowell. Ask the group to turn the criticism into a more critical piece of friendly advice, add subtlety to each statement, word things in a way that is not offensive. Decide if it's appropriate criticism.
- Go over the 'Assertiveness' Skills box, explaining that people with AS can be taken advantage of. Assertiveness is completed in week 13, use this box as a brief introduction.
- **Problem Solving-** If there is time read out the agony aunt friendship problems and problem solve solutions to some common friendship arguments.
- **Homework-** Think about what makes a good friend. Read over the 'True/ Hoax and Enemy Friendships' be able to identify features of true friends and those that are taking advantage.

## Group 12 Work and Employment- Gaining Employment

- **Group Discussion-** Employment. Introduce the topic of employment, go round each group member and recalling their best/worst job.
- Read through the list of good and bad jobs for people with Aspergers explaining why each may or may not be suitable. Use this to highlight what difficulties people with AS may have in employment. Ask the group if any of them have ever worked in any of these occupations and how they found it. Focus on the areas which are more AS friendly and suggest general ideas for suitable areas of work for those in the group.
- Discuss how to find employment, give information about 'intowork'.
- **Group Discussion-** Disclosing AS. Read through the box 'Turning AS Negatives into Positives'. Demonstrate how these can be used as examples of your strengths on application forms. Discuss when it's best to disclose AS to employers- if at all (dependent of how severe AS traits are/ how obvious they are/ how comfortable you are disclosing personal info/ how best to coherently explain AS/ when to disclose).
- **Group Activity-** Job Interviews. Use the power point slides to demonstrate good and bad body language. Ask the group to choose positive and negative examples from the images. Use the examples of hand positions to identify good and bad things to do with your hands. Also discuss dress sense and appearance, using the different images.
- **Role Play-** Job Interviews. Go over the job interview questions page and explain how literal thinking can be restrictive in answering interview questions. Go over some common mistakes and emphasize need for practical examples to back up claims. Ask all group members to think of their dream job and in pair's interview for that job. Interviewees should leave the room and re-enter to practise the introductions and hand shakes followed by a few questions. Have five minutes at the end where they can feedback their experiences of interview. What was it like being the interviewer- what kind of things were you looking for? Ask them to give each other constructive feedback on their performance as the interviewee. In particular try and highlight some areas that each other could work on.
- Give the group a handout to take away and read about their employee rights and the Disability Discrimination Act. Explain what are considered 'appropriate adjustments' for their interview.
- **Homework-** CV. Fill in the personal profile of their own strengths/ weaknesses/ experiences and achievements, to be reviewed the following week.

## Group 13 Work and Employment- Maintaining Employment

- **Group Discussion-** share some of the challenges that each member has had within employment. The group will have similar experiences and can discuss these. Common work problems tend to be due to communication and assertiveness problems which can lead onto the later topics. They can also discuss their strengths and weaknesses from homework.
- **Role Play-** Work Situations. Read through the 'Communication at Work' section. Introduce the three images on PowerPoint of work images. The first is to represent 'At the Coffee Machine', 'On a Work Conference/ Training Course' and 'On a Work Night Out'. Ask the group to role play possible conversations they could have in each situation. Get them to act out body language and use eye contact.
- **Group Activity-** Assertiveness. (10 assertiveness scenarios- Videos) Watch some of the videos to show aggressive/ assertive/ and passive behaviour. Ask the group to identify which is which, and what features of body language and tone indicated this. Discuss how each of the behaviours is different. Give a definition of 'Assertiveness'.
- **Role Play-** Assertiveness. Split the group into different teams and ask them to role play the situation given on the handout. If there is time also practise examples 1 and 2 from the work sheet. Whilst they are practising have the body language slide up on the PowerPoint to give constant reminders of how they should be acting.
- Go over the 'General Work Strategies' box and discuss ways of working with AS.
- **Group Discussion-** Have you ever been sacked?/ Coping with unemployment- the group can share similar experiences.

## Group 14 Dating

- Begin with an explanation of the 'Empathising-Systematising Theory, include how this can help us to understand AS and how it can make dating difficult for individuals with AS.
- **Group Discussion-** Dating. Read over the skills box 'Asking for the First Date.' In particular it's useful here to go over text message etiquette (how often to text/ phone, when to reply). Once the first date is secure, discuss the first date. Advise a quiet location/ cinema doesn't involve talking/ a coffee doesn't need as much time as dinner. Share other strategies they have found useful and difficulties they have had with dating.
- **Group Activity-** Challenge the group to think up date conversation topics, they have two minutes to write down as many prospective date questions as possible. Then read them with the group to decide if acceptable topics.
- Explain some social psychology theory about dating and attractiveness. In particular the 'matching hypothesis'. People with AS are more likely to ask out celebrities/ unrealistic partners.
- It's important to choose someone who shows signs of interest. Cover the 'Laws of Attraction' page explaining each subtle sign they can look out for.
- **Group Discussion-** Highlight the importance of compliments. Use the 'What to Compliment' box to discuss what is appropriate or not. Share any times they have had problems.
- **Problem Solving-** Discuss communication in relationships. In particular focus on the differences between the sexes. Read out the four example conversations- go through each one and decipher the true meaning of each conversation, identifying the communication mistakes made by both sexes-

Conversation 1- Demonstrates literal understanding.

Conversation 2- Demonstrates the need to use reflective listening.

Conversation 3- Demonstrates the effects of vocal tone on meaning.

Conversation 4- Demonstrates the direct/ indirect use of language.

### Group 15- Revision Group

- **Group Activity-** Pub Quiz of Social Skills. Split the group into teams Encourage the group to make their own team names. Go through the 20 revision questions on the power point slides. For each question, get the teams to write down their answers. At the end get the groups to swap answer papers and mark each others results.
- Discuss the correct answers and the reasoning behind each one. For any wrong answers explain why that behaviour might not be the best possible option. The group with the highest points win a prize (i.e. chocolate bar) and the runner up group win a second prize (i.e. lollypop).
- **Homework-** Hand out the revision booklets. Ask the group to read through the booklet prior to next weeks group, if there are any question/ comments they can feedback next week. Also ask them for next week - to think of any areas they still have difficulties with and they can be discussed in the final session.

### Group 16 Revision and Close of Groups

- **Problem Solving-** go over last week's homework and discuss any outstanding issues or difficulties which haven't been covered. Ask the group to problem solve these issues and generate group solutions for dealing with these problems.
- **Questionnaire-** Ask participants to complete a questionnaire considering their final record of their strengths and weaknesses socially. Explain it's useful to be self aware of their own behaviour and to reflect on social situations in the future to learn from their own mistakes and successes. In the future if they are aware of their own shortcomings they can work on these situations and play up their strong points.
- Finish with the groups filling in evaluation forms. Discuss how the course could evolve in the future. Handout their 'Certificates of Course Completion'.