

PCC Office of Disability Services – Effective Communication Tips when working with a student that is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

A student in your class has provided written permission to share his/her diagnosis with you, their instructor, to establish better understanding of their symptoms and provide you with tips for effective communication with someone that has this diagnosis. This student is diagnosed with **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**. Autism can affect a person's ability to develop social and communication skills at the same level as their peers. Enclosed are a few informative tips for you, to help assist this student in being successful within your classroom setting.

- A person with Autism may have difficulty with abstract reasoning and conceptual thinking. If possible, use concrete examples and wordage, visual examples and written information.
- Avoid double meanings, sarcasm and nicknames. These may not be understood. If they are a part of the class learning, then remember that the student may be confused regarding the point to the lesson.
- The person may not pick up on facial or body expressions (such as standing to signal the end of class or a meeting). Use of concrete wordage like "class is over" or "the meeting is finished," is easier for the person to interpret.
- Use of short, concrete, direct sentences and clearly stating the point, reduces misunderstandings.
- Clear and consistent expectations of every student in the class, is important.
- Normal auditory and visual input can be perceived as over- stimulation to a person with Autism, and they may need to take unscheduled breaks to become refocused.
- If possible, let the student know there is going to be a change in the class schedule before it actually happens (such as change of date for field trip or change in lecture for the day).
- If a student persists on a certain question, have them write down the question and then ask them to formulate an answer to the question, also in writing, telling them that you will look at their answer after class.