

How to Help – Autism

These notes are taken from the course notes for 'Understanding How to Help'. Click for further details of the [Understanding Yourself](#) courses.

I have included a description of autism in children, so we are familiar with some of the characteristics of what is generally known as 'autism.' This is taken from the NHS website:

Autism in young children

Signs of autism in young children include:

- not responding to their name
- avoiding eye contact
- not smiling when you smile at them
- getting very upset if they do not like a certain taste, smell or sound
- repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands, flicking their fingers or rocking their body
- not talking as much as other children
- repeating the same phrases

Autism in older children

Signs of autism in older children include:

- not seeming to understand what others are thinking or feeling
- finding it hard to say how they feel
- liking a strict daily routine and getting very upset if it changes
- having a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities
- getting very upset if you ask them to do something
- finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on their own
- taking things very literally – for example, they may not understand phrases like "break a leg"

Autism in girls and boys

Autism can sometimes be different in girls and boys. For example, autistic girls may be quieter, may hide their feelings and may appear to cope better with social situations. This means autism can be harder to spot in girls.

How to respond to autism

It is not my intention here to debate the role of any possible physical factors that produce the symptoms associated with the term 'autism.' My contribution to this subject is to point out that we should not rush to a diagnosis as many of the symptoms described can be explained by an



understanding of the ways in which the extrovert interacts with the introvert. This is especially true when the Choleric and Melancholic temperaments are present. It is also true of a number of other temperament combinations. For many children and adults, we would serve them well by walking with them, working hard to establish emotional connections, helping them to understand themselves better and to help them take responsibility for their responses.