

# Autism Spectrum Disorder

## Reducing Anxiety and Unwanted Behaviours

**Workshop** - written & developed by Tanya Curtis

### Overview

People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety on a regular basis as they are perceiving this same world differently, often responding negatively to situations that others would respond positively to.

Understanding the way that a person with an ASD perceives the world is a very important first step to understanding their anxiety, behaviour, and supporting them with true and lasting behaviour change.

At Fabic, we understand that all unwanted behaviours come as a result of anxiety. Every person in this world is living with a ranging level of anxiety, every moment of the day. When we are presented with situations in life that we do not feel fully equipped to manage, it is likely that our anxiety will increase and we will start to use behaviours that impact negatively on ourselves or those around us – behaviours that we would prefer not to be using.

For a person with an ASD the situations that they find challenging may be different to what we would expect. For example, many experience hypersensitivity of the senses, which amplifies their sense of smell, touch, sight, taste or sound to a level that transforms a typical setting for most people into a complete overload of the senses. Understanding and identifying the triggers for anxiety in a person with an ASD is crucial to supporting them to develop the skills to respond to these challenges differently.

In this workshop you will be taught hands on techniques that are required to support a reduction in anxiety and thus a reduction in the use of unwanted behaviours and meltdowns for a person with an ASD. You will gain a greater understanding and insight into the way that a person with an ASD perceives the world, and be equipped with practical tools to support them to be engaged and respond to the challenges that they face in their day-to-day life with behaviours that have a positive impact on themselves and those around them.



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### Who should attend?

- All those spending time with a child, teenager and/or adult exhibiting characteristics of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (including those previously diagnosed with any Pervasive Developmental Disorder including Aspergers Syndrome, Autistic Disorder & PDD-NOS)
- Appropriate for some teenagers or adults exhibiting characteristics associated with an ASD to learn to better understand themselves
- Employees from: Education Services, Disability Services, Mental Health Departments, Medical Services, Justice Departments, Welfare Agencies, Residential Support Networks, Legal Services & other Health & Human Services Supporters of a person showing characteristics of an ASD including parents, partners, siblings, grandparents, relatives and friends



### Course Outline

#### Module 1

1. Defining ASD
2. Fabic 3-step Process to Anxiety and Behaviour Change
  - a. Behaviour Scale
  - b. I Choose Chart
3. Sequence and Functions of Behaviour

#### Module 2

Common challenging situations a person with an ASD does not feel completely equipped to manage. These challenges are triggers to anxiety and can be related to:

1. Setting – their physical environment
2. Interactions – all time with other people
  - a. Social Skills
  - b. Expressive Communication
  - c. Receptive Communication

#### Module 3

Common challenging situations continued:

1. Tasks and activities
2. Automatic or Internal Factors (Challenges from within the body)
3. Group Case Study

