

stereotyped views. If any person experiences discrimination, stereotyping and a general lack of understanding of who they are by those close to them it is likely to make them feel lonely, unable to socialise, self conscious and resentful and will generally have a long lasting negative impact of their lives. The triad of impairments shows us that the three main features of an autistic spectrum condition are issues around social interaction, communication and activities and interests. If an individual with an autistic spectrum condition experiences discrimination, stereotyping or a general lack of understanding by those close to them it can greatly compound the difficulties they are already experiencing, the individual's mental capacity will also play a role in how they are affected. It is likely that they will find it even more difficult to understand other's reactions to them, be even less likely to want to socialise, resent having to go to special classes or schools, feel self conscious about their differences, feel resentful as to how others treat them, find it difficult to compete for awards or qualifications, find it difficult to get into colleges of their choice, find it difficult to find competitive employment, have fewer resources of support when they reach adulthood and are sometimes unable to participate in religious, cultural, leisure activities and recreational programs of their choosing. Stereotyped views, discrimination and a lack of understanding will also affect the individual's family who may become very defensive of any negative reaction to their family member, have a tendency to over protect the individual, resent any negative attitudes of friends or other family members, become suspicious of anyone asking questions about the individual, feel unsupported and as if they are carrying the burden alone, feel like they will always have to 'put red tape' in order to get the individual support, feel isolated, feel misunderstood and criticised by people in their lives for actions they have had to take in order to help the individual, feel paranoid whenever taking the individual out in public or feel resentful towards other people caring for an individual who does not have autism. Caring for an individual with an autistic spectrum condition can be stressful enough to deal with, with the added negative impact of discrimination, stereotypical views and a lack of understanding of autism by others around them it can become overwhelming for the family or carer, especially if the individual they are caring for is also suffering with the effects of discrimination, stereotyping and lack of understanding of autism.

2.4. Describe ways of helping an individual and/or their parent/carers/siblings/partner to understand their autistic spectrum condition

It is important that every individual diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition is given the support to understand and accept their condition. When information about their condition is provided to the individual it should be in very small amounts to begin with, more information can be offered over time. It should also be presented in an individualised way which they would find easiest to understand and accept; it is important to be very positive in the delivery of the information and remember to highlight everyone's differences not just theirs. If the individual has the mental capacity and has an interest in learning more about their condition, books, videos and speaking to others with the same condition can really help them to understand them self. Many books have been written by people with

- take the views of people with autistic spectrum conditions and their carers into account when developing services

- identify a lead professional to take responsibility for the development of services

No additional money for provided for the local councils and local NHS trusts to demonstrate that they are taking measures to implement the statutory guidance although they were still expected to do so.

In November 2011 a Strategy for Autism was launched in Scotland which sets out a 10 year plan with 26 recommendations. Unlike the English strategy it includes children with autistic spectrum conditions and provides extra funding.

In Wales an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Plan was produced in 2008. Similar to the Scottish Strategy it sets out a 10 year plan which includes people of all ages and provides some additional funding.

Northern Ireland produced The Autism Act 2011 which calls for an autism strategy setting out 'how the needs of people with an autistic spectrum condition are to be addressed throughout their lives'.

Understand how to achieve effective communication with individuals with an autistic spectrum condition

5.1. Give examples of how 'challenging behaviour' can be a way of expressing emotions where there are communication differences

Everyone is different, including those with an autistic spectrum condition so it is misleading to talk about 'typical' behaviours as really there is no such thing. However, each of the areas of difficulty described in the 'triad of impairments' may lead to certain types of behaviours, people experiencing particular sensory-perceptual issues may react in ways that are recognisable. Some behaviours listed as signs of autism are common among the general population e.g. 'temper tantrums', others tend to be more specific to those with an autistic spectrum condition e.g. hand flapping. To those who do not possess any knowledge of autistic spectrum disorders, behaviours shown by those on the spectrum may seem strange, disturbing, frightening, fascinating or impossible to understand. Everyone behaves in certain ways for a reason, as do those with an autistic spectrum condition, the only difference is that it may seem more difficult to understand why an individual with autism is behaving in a certain way. It is very important to try to understand why certain behaviours are being exhibited as some repetitive behaviours, routines and special interests can be a source of great enjoyment for the individual as well as a way to deal with anxiety, block out uncertainty and cope with everyday life. Those with sensory issues may go into 'meltdown' or complete withdrawal when their senses are overloaded. Despite this, some behaviours are obviously problematic and are often labelled as 'challenging behaviour', for example: