

# Supporting our Special Educational Needs (SEN) Students

## Helpful Tips for Teachers & Parents



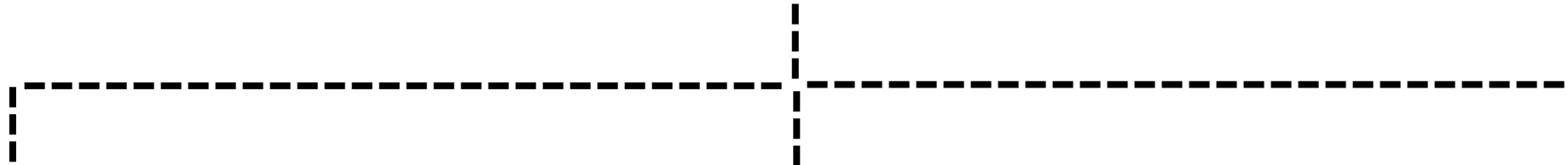
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**SEMH**  
(Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties)



### Definition:

A SEN in which young people with severe difficulties in managing their emotions and behaviors.

### Traits:

- Mood Swings
- Frustrations
- Verbal & Physical threats
- Avoidance of new tasks
- Need or desire to control situation
- Behaviours displayed often are cause by the need avoid potential failure

### Helpful Approaches:

- Reward Efforts
- Identify Triggers
- Reinforce Expectations & Boundaries
- Allow time to calm
- Short, Clear & Simple Instructions
- Pick-up low-level behaviour before escalation
- Provide verbal reminders/warnings
- Clear and concise expectations
- Behaviour contracts – set with SMART targets
- Focus on the cause of behaviour, rather than the emotional outburst – what is it they want/need or want to avoid?
- Use a humanistic approach

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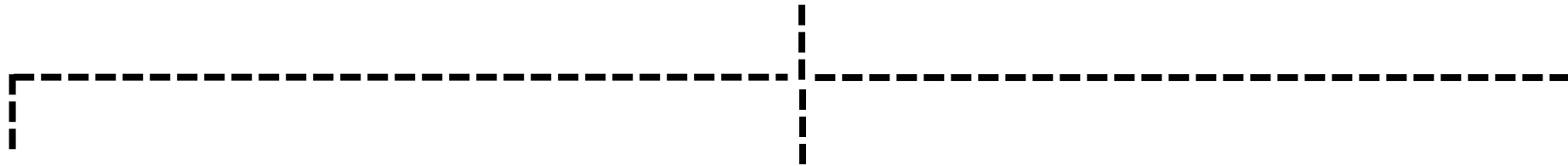
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**ASC**  
(Autistic Spectrum Condition)



### Definition:

A lifelong condition that affects how someone sees the world; processes information & relates to other people.

### Traits:

- Limited proactive social communication, Interaction & Imagination
- Sensory Issues
- Obsessive Interests
- Repetitive Behaviors
- Love of Routine
- Self stimulating
- Lack of understanding from the perspective of others

### Helpful Approaches:

- Allow extra processing time before requesting a response
- Low stimulating activities
- Prepare for change
- Visual cues, e.g. Timetable, Tactile Symbols/objects of reference to routine, structure of day etc.
- Short, Clear & Simple Instructions
- Use first name before instructions
- Say what you mean as an autistic learner may take what you say literally

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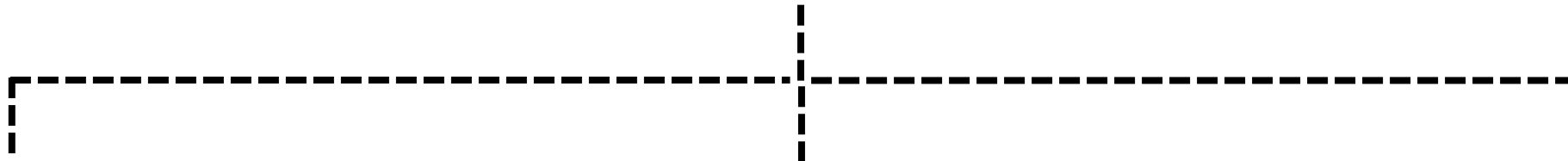
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### ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)



#### Definition:

A group of behaviors that affect a person's ability to concentrate & control impulsivity.

#### Traits:

- Inattentiveness
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsiveness
- Struggle to regulate emotion
- Do not tend to think before saying or doing something
- Low focus

#### Helpful Approaches:

- Clear, concise and consistent rules & expectations
- Reward positive behavior
- Frequent Feedback
- Short term rewards
- Small Breaks
- Use tools and flexible rules
- Established routines
- Checklists during plans

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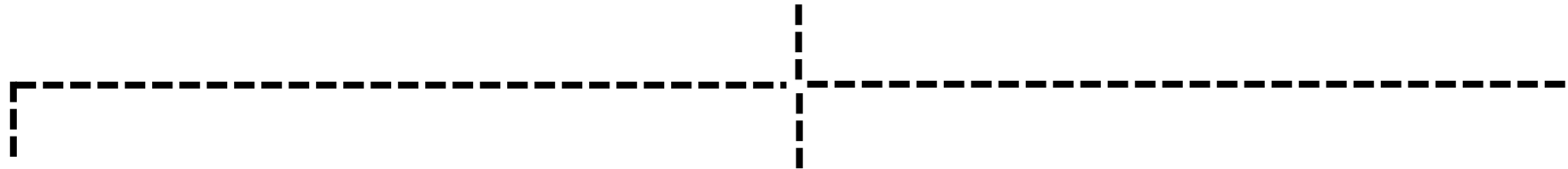
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### PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance)



#### Definition:

PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) is widely understood to be a profile on the autism spectrum, involving the avoidance of everyday demands and the use of 'social' strategies as part of this avoidance.

#### Traits:

- Shared Autistic characteristics
- A need for control which is often driven by anxiety or an automatic 'threat response' in the face of demands.
  - Resists & Avoids
- Uses social strategies as avoidance, e.g., distraction, excuses
  - Excessive mood swings
  - Impulsivity
- Obsessive Behaviours focused on other people, objects & activities.
  - Can often 'shut down' - equally fight/flight may kick in - many mask their feelings
  - Tendency not to respond to conventional approaches in support/teaching
  - Uncertainty around situations/transitions increases anxiety
  - Trust is often centre and key to successful relationships

#### Helpful Approaches:

- Use PDA PANDA Approaches
  - Avoid direct demands
  - Provide Limited Choices
    - Indirectly Praise
  - Limit number of Boundaries
    - Identify Triggers
    - Use humour
    - Be flexible & creative
    - Calm tone of voice
    - Reduce demands
- Indirect style of negotiation will mean they feel in control
- Explain your ideas and listen to the reasoning of theirs (let them feel heard)
- Make joint decisions (compromise to a certain and reasonable extent)
- Tailor projects and work to suit their interests (let them see a purpose in what they are doing)

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### Dyslexia

#### Definition:

A specific learning difficulty which can make it difficult to understand words and language. It has very strong links with Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia and ADHD.

#### Traits:

- Confusing letters like b and d, either in reading or writing
- Missing letters out when trying to spell a word
- Reading very slowly and hesitantly and lacking fluency.
  - Leaving out whole sections of text when reading or re-reading the same section.
  - Putting letters and figures the wrong way round;
- Poor organisation skills and time management skills;
  - Poor memory and concentration

#### Helpful Approaches:

- Ask students if they are willing to read aloud in groups.
  - Don't use the word 'lazy'
  - Expect less written work
- Prepare a printout of work and stick it in their book
- Provide numbered steps (Task Schedule), e.g., 1. Do this. 2. Do that etc.
- Print out work and suggest they highlight key areas.
  - Accept work created on a computer
- Give the opportunity to answer questions orally. Often people with dyslexia can demonstrate their understanding with a spoken answer but are unable to put those ideas in writing.

Ref: <https://www.nessy.com/en-gb/dyslexia-explained>

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### Dyscalculia

#### Definition:

A specific learning difficulty which causes a child or young person to have difficulties developing mathematical skills and understanding.

#### Traits:

- Delay in counting.
- Delay in using counting strategies for addition
- Difficulties in memorising arithmetic facts and rules.

#### Helpful Approaches:

- Review what the student already learned before teaching new skills.
- Teach students to “self-talk” through solving problems.
- Let the student write out charts or draw sketches to solve problems.
- Use graph paper to help line up numbers and problems.
- Give the student a list of the math formulas taught in the class.
- Use like coins, blocks, and puzzles to teach math ideas.
- Use attention-getting phrases like, “This is important to know because...”
- Use concrete examples that connect math to real life.
- Check in frequently to make sure the student understands the work.
- Use **graphic organizers** to organize information or help break down math problems into steps.

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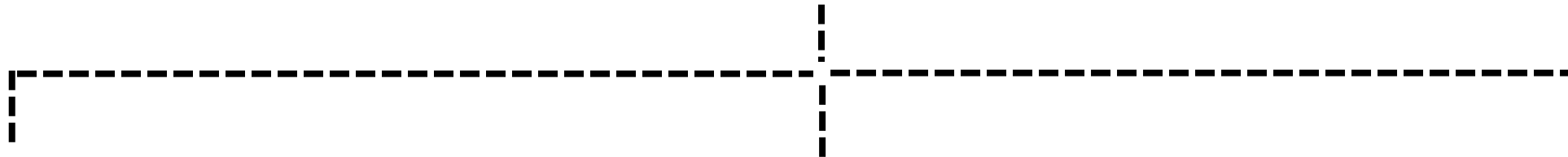
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### Dyspraxia



#### **Definition:**

A developmental disorder which causes difficulties with the learning and acquisition of physical skills. It affects the organisation of fine and gross movements.

#### **Traits:**

May have difficulties with:

- co-ordination, balance and movement
  - learning new skills, thinking, and remembering information at work and in leisure activities
  - daily living skills, such as dressing or preparing meals to time
  - writing, typing, drawing and grasping small objects
    - social situations
    - dealing with emotions
  - time management, planning and personal organisation
    - Speech and language
- Learning to read and write  
Following instructions  
Organisational skills

#### **Helpful Approaches:**

- One instruction at a time.
  - Repeat
  - Tick-off
- Avoid comparisons with other pupils
  - Strategic placement
    - Materials
    - Praise
- Processing Time & Chunking Information
  - One to one, support
  - Prepare them

Ref: <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2017/07/13/dyspraxiclearners/>

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### Sensory Processing Differences

#### Definition:

Sensory overload is described as 'too much information.'

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a term that describes the challenges children (and adults) have when their brains are **not interpreting the sensory messages, they receive from their body effectively**. It can affect or interrupt the messages received from any of their senses. Another term you may hear is sensory integration dysfunction.

#### Over-Responsive Traits:

- Extreme response to or fear of sudden, high-pitched, loud, or metallic noises (flushing toilets, clanking silverware, etc.)
- May notice or be distracted by background noises that others don't seem to hear
- Fearful of surprise touches
- Avoids hugs and cuddling even with familiar adults
- Seems fearful of crowds
- Avoids standing near others
- Doesn't enjoy a game of tag
- Overly fearful of swings and playground equipment
- Extremely fearful of climbing or falling, even when there is no real danger
- Has poor balance and may fall often

Ref: <https://www.brainbalancecenters.com/blog/signs-and-symptoms-of-sensory-processing-disorder#:~:text=Signs%20of%20sensory%20processing%20hypersensitivities,Fearful%20of%20surprise%20touches>

#### Under-Responsive Traits:

- A constant need to touch people or textures, even when it's inappropriate to do so
- Doesn't understand personal space when peers understand it
- Clumsy and uncoordinated movements
- Extremely high pain tolerance
- Often harms other children and/or pets when playing (i.e. doesn't understand his or her own strength)
- May be very fidgety and unable to sit still
- Enjoys movement-based play like spinning, jumping, etc.
- Seems to be a "thrill seeker" and can be dangerous at times

#### Helpful Approaches:

- Small chunks of information given to not overload.
- **be aware.** Look at the environment to see if it is creating difficulties. Can you change anything?
- **be creative.** Think of some positive sensory experiences
- **be prepared.** Tell the person about possible sensory stimuli they may experience in different environments.
- Use Visual Supports
- Prepare young person if attending over-sensitive areas
- Use sensory tools if required
- Manage introduction to sensory differences, e.g. warnings, slow introductions etc.
- Breaking down activities into small manageable steps

Ref: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences/sensory-differences/all-audiences>