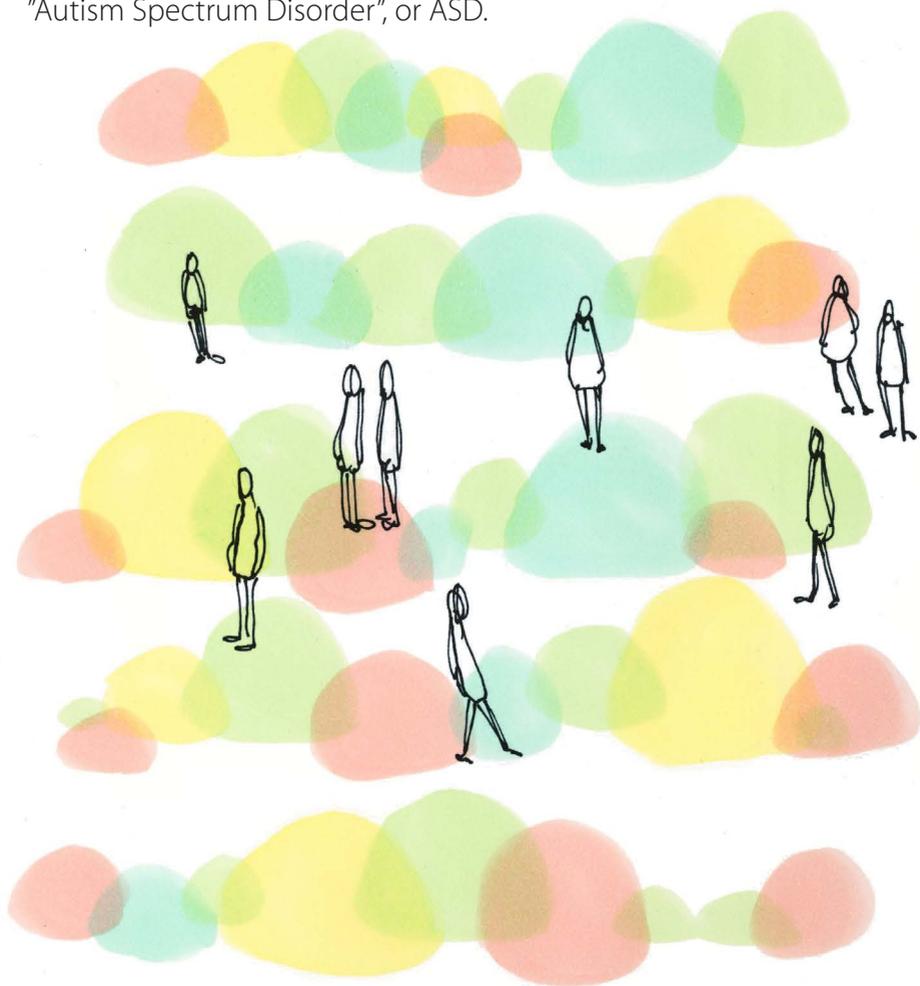
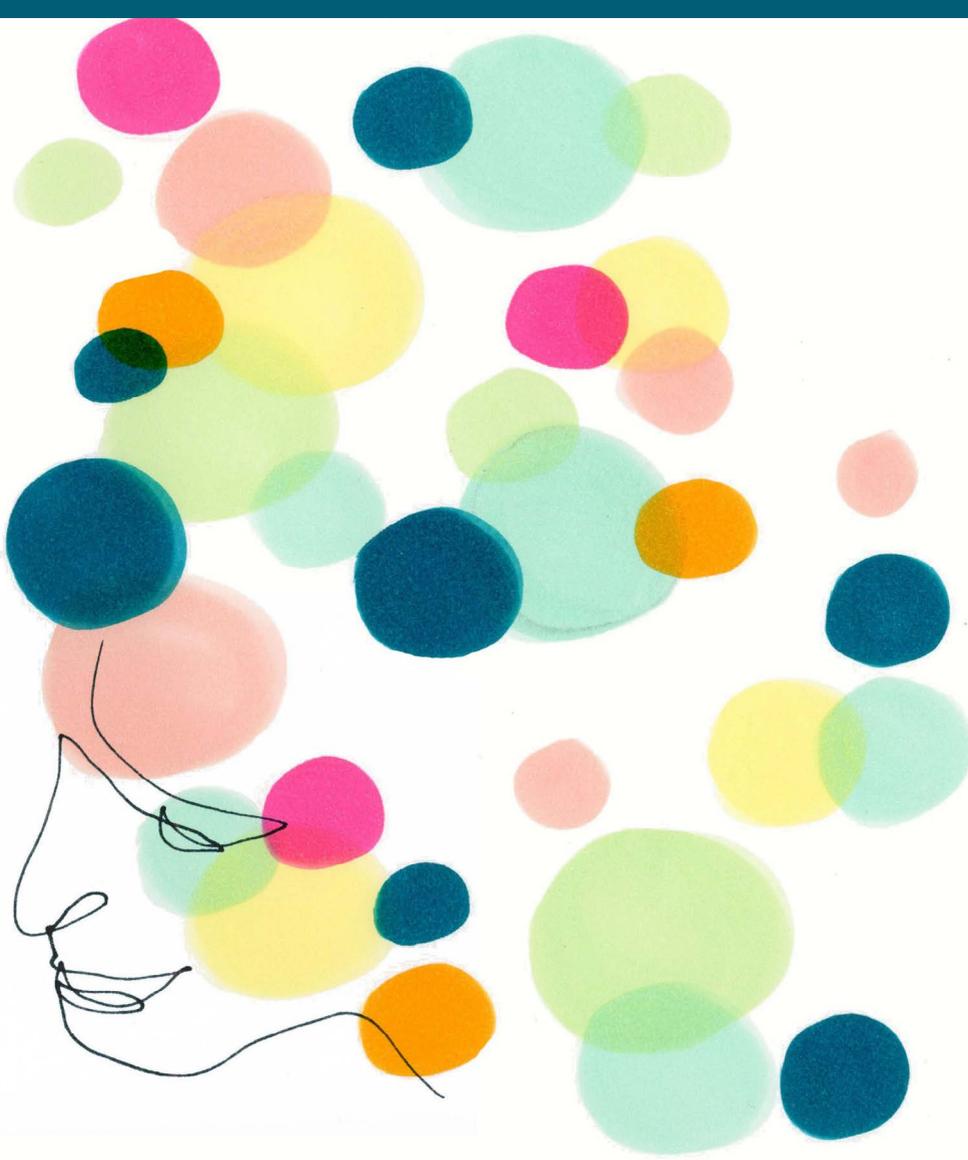


# WHAT IS THE AUTISM SPECTRUM?

You may have heard about autism and Asperger's syndrome. A change to how autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed is under way. the different diagnoses belonging to the autism spectrum will be combined under the new joint diagnostic title "Autism Spectrum Disorder", or ASD.





The autism spectrum disorder affects a person's social interaction with others, and also the way in which persons with ASD sense and experience the world around them.

According to studies, approximately 1-1,2 % of the population is on the autism spectrum.

# WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD?

## INTERACTION

Persons with ASD may find it difficult to express their emotions and to understand those of others. They may also have difficulty in understanding the facial expressions and gestures of other people.

How you can help: Explain and verbalise facial expressions, gestures and emotions. Show consideration for the person's special characteristics relating to social interaction, such as the difficulty of making eye contact.

## COMMUNICATION

Persons with ASD may experience varying difficulties in understanding and using spoken language. Some persons with ASD use alternative means of communication, such as pictures, simple sign language or written text.

How you can help: Speak calmly, accurately and clearly. Do not, however, underestimate the person you are communicating with. Avoid slang, sarcasm, figurative speech and irony.

## SENSES

Persons with ASD often have special characteristics relating to sensory integration, such as over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, lights, touch, smells, tastes or colours.

How you can help: Relieve sensory load by adjusting lights or sound. Avoid using strong scents. Recognize that person may use headphones or sunglasses to facilitate sensory processing.

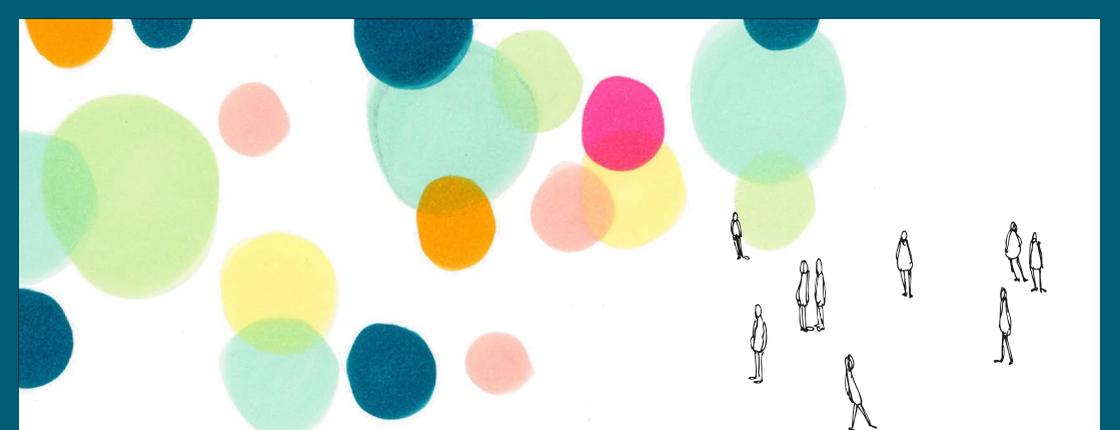
## SENSITIVITY TO STRESS

The nervous system of a person with ASD is easily overloaded. Overloading may be caused by a noisy environment, changing and confusing situations or social interaction.

How you can help: Provide a quiet room or place for the person with ASD to reduce the sensory overload.

## STRENGTHS

The autism spectrum also includes many strengths and qualities. A person on the autism spectrum may have, for example, good attention to detail, a strong sense of justice and sometimes a special skill.



Each individual with ASD is different – hence the term spectrum. It can be said that when you have met one person on the autism spectrum, you really only have met one person on the autism spectrum. Some persons on the autism spectrum are able to live very independently, while others may need strong support throughout their lives. Between these extremes is a large group of different kinds of people with ASD.

With the right kind of support, people on the autism spectrum can put their strengths to use. By increasing awareness of autism, we can change attitudes and promote the inclusion of people on the autism spectrum in society.

**for further information, please contact the Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome at:**

[www.autismiliitto.fi](http://www.autismiliitto.fi)

[www.facebook.com/Autismiliitto](https://www.facebook.com/Autismiliitto)

Twitter: @autismiliitto



**AUTISM FINLAND**

