

## What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

The information included here is based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV) and Public Health Canada. To gain a fulsome and representative level of understanding about ASD, it is integral to also consider the lived experiences and perspectives of self-advocates who have ASD. Please refer to the self-advocate websites and resources at the bottom of this page.

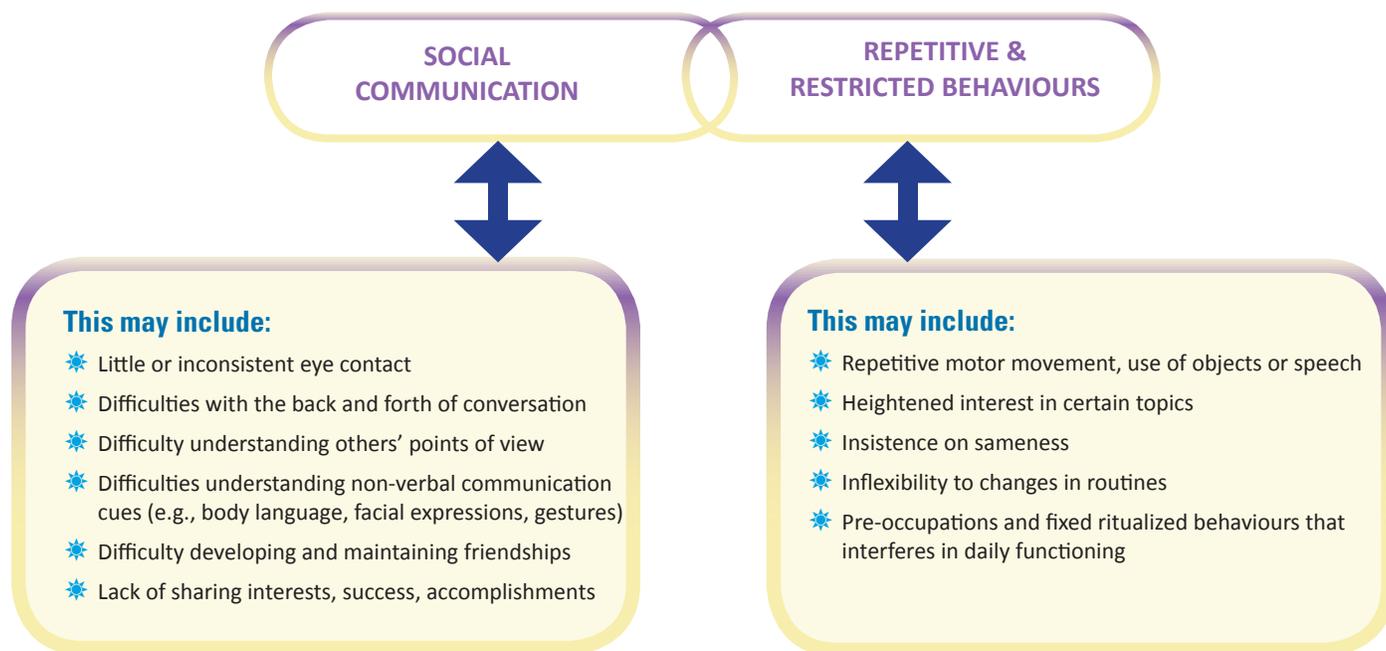
ASD is a lifelong neuro-developmental disorder. It is characterized by challenges in **communication and social interactions** and **restrictive and repetitive behaviour**. Autism is known as a spectrum disorder because symptoms can vary across persons in type and severity. Symptoms can also change over time. Diagnoses are separated by level of severity which refers to the amount of support a person may need.



### Prevalence of ASD

1 in 66 Canadians are diagnosed with ASD (National Autism Spectrum Disorder Surveillance System, 2018). Research shows that ASD is four times more likely in boys than in girls. However, prevalence for females diagnosed with ASD may be inaccurate due to symptoms presenting differently than in boys. ASD occurs across all racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups.

### Features of ASD



Public Health Agency of Canada. (2018, April 9). Government of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrumdisorder-children-youth-canada-2018.html#a2-3>

American Psychiatric Association (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed., Text Revision).

Autistic Self Advocacy Network: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/>

Autism See the Potential: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=15&v=VNPr7dIP3vc&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=VNPr7dIP3vc&feature=emb_logo)