

Rationale

The leaflet is designed for parents and/ or carers who have children diagnosed with autism or Asperger's syndrome. The purpose of the leaflet is to give a brief insight into the symptoms of both conditions. It also gives a brief description as to what both conditions are, with additional helplines to give parents/ carers additional information, so they can have guided help.

Due to the nature of the leaflet, the choice of information and how it has been designed is vital. The choice of greys and blues, gives the reader a more pleasurable experience when reading the information. It is suspected that the colours with shades of blue give the feeling of serenity and calmness. Therefore, these colours were the best choice to use for this leaflet. However, some people may believe that blues and greys represent sadness or dullness. However, the choices of blues and greys are light and not dark, therefore helping the reader to concentrate on the leaflet. The font is also an important factor. Having a font which is difficult to read is no use and will make the reader not want to view the leaflet. For example, the leaflet has two fonts, 'Century Gothic' and 'Calibri'. These fonts are easy to read, and are not overbearing to the reader, unlike the font 'Broadway'. Having fonts that are not easy to read, may cause some distress, and the reader may not feel as if they want to learn more about the topic. The font presents the leaflet as being professional and important. The page 'What is Autism/ Asperger's Syndrome?', has a brief paragraph description of what the conditions are, these are the only paragraphs throughout the entirety of the leaflet. The rest of the information, such as facts, are bullet pointed, purely to make the information easier for the reader to understand, and to allow the reader to not become overwhelmed. Each factor has a subheading which is underlined, this ensures that the reader understands what they are reading and if needed can research additional information themselves. The leaflet is tri folding, meaning more information could be put into it, ensuring the reader has brief, yet descriptive information. Due to the aimed readers being adults, there is very little use of pictures. This is because, if the leaflet was full of pictures, there would be little space to put information, which would be needed for the respective reader. It is understandable that if this leaflet was aimed at a child, it would not be suitable, as the muted colours and lack of pictures would not stimulate them to read it. It is important that a leaflet can feel inviting to the reader. Having images, or text that seems to be irrelevant to the leaflet, would simply make the reader not want to pick it up. Therefore, it was important that all the information that was collected, was relevant, reliable and trustworthy.

The information chosen for this leaflet, is mainly from charities and organisations who are registered and confirmed as being legitimate, for example Autism Speaks and the National Autistic Society. There are other sources from the internet that have been used, which have been written by medical experts e.g. Melissa Conrad Stoppler. Having information that is up to date and relevant is key, as misinformation is misleading. Due to the leaflet not having many paragraphs and only facts, sources such as the National Autistic Society and Autism Speaks, gives the leaflet a sense of legitimacy, and therefore readers will feel more informed about the information that has been enclosed in the leaflet.

It was important that the leaflet had a page with helplines and additional information for the readers. If they feel like they need more information they can easily go from the leaflet, to using online resources such as the NHS. It was important that this page was added, due to the

nature of the content of the leaflet. For examples the helplines can provide information to financial help and stability, which is an important factor with regards to topic.

The most concentrated part of the leaflet was the three inside pages. These pages are designed to help the reader distinguish the various symptoms associated with autism and Asperger's syndrome. With regards to autism, the leaflet specifies the 'core symptoms' of autism, which will hopefully help the reader recognise these key points. Social communication challenges are another recognised trait of the condition, this again will help the reader of the leaflet to identify these difficulties a person with autism faces. People with autism suffer many social challenges, which can be very difficult for someone without autism, or someone without an understanding of autism to comprehend. This can be very challenging for both parties, as the person with autism does not have the ability to express themselves, as someone without the condition would. Without the understanding or having a level of knowledge to identify a person with these challenges, can make it very difficult, for both individuals to communicate on a successful level. This leaflet will hopefully identify easily the challenges faced for the person with autism.

The leaflet has been designed to provide the reader with a comprehensive insight to both autism and Asperger's. The conditions are not the same, and there are certain characteristics that differ greatly. People with Asperger's may display a broad range of intellectual capability. This range of intellectual ability can range from individuals who are very intellectually challenged all the way through to some who may be of average or even individuals who are above average with regards to their intellect. It is common for many of us to obey unwritten social rules. For example, we know when it is appropriate to touch someone, what is an okay thing to talk about in public and how we express our emotions in front of others. However, a person with Asperger's Syndrome may not understand these 'rules' fully, and therefore does not come naturally to them and may have to learn. This can lead to problems with social interaction, and therefore can present problems. It is common that these social deficits can be masked at home, where everything is familiar, and therefore adults understand their child's unique style. However, when a child is placed into informal play groups, or group context with peers, this where many parents become concerned about their child. Therefore, it was important that the leaflet to present these issues, for others to understand the difficulties an individual with Asperger's may have.

The final part of the leaflet is simply stated as 'helping your autistic child thrive'. It is important to remember that there is help for parents or carers with a child who suffers from autism or Asperger's. The simple four bullet points are there to help encourage the reader to partake in what has been suggested. The reference is underneath the bullet points, so if the reader would like more information, they can easily research and discover what they need to do to help their child throughout their lives. Hopefully this page of the leaflet can give a small insight into how to encourage and support their child.

The leaflet has discussed and given relevant information regarding autism and Asperger's Syndrome, and although there isn't that much information, there is plenty to give the reader a head start into understanding more about the condition(s). The leaflet is a simple, yet informative guide as to what to look out for if you believe your child may be suffering with autism or Asperger's.

Autism Speaks UK, (no date) Available at- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Child Autism UK, (no date) Available at- <https://www.childautism.org.uk/>

Autistic Cook, (2013) Available at- <https://autisticcook.wordpress.com/>

Stöppler, M.C (no date) Available at– *Asperger's Syndrome (Asperger Syndrome, Asperger Disorder)* - www.medicinenet.com

Marks, J. (no date) Available at- *Asperger's Syndrome: What Are the Signs and Symptoms of the Disorder?* - <https://www.everydayhealth.com/aspergers/what-are-signs-symptoms-disorder/>

National Autistic Society, no date - <https://www.autism.org.uk/>