

Some of the more common conditions associated with learning difficulties are:

ADHD

Stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; people with ADHD are inattentive, easily distracted, impulsive and hyper active. These characteristics are usually combined to varying degrees in severity.

ADD

Attention Defecit Disorder without hyperactive and impulsive symptoms.

Autism

Difficulties in relating to and communicating with others resulting in social isolation. People with autism often live in a world of their own.

Asperger syndrome

Often referred to as 'high functioning autism'. People with Asperger syndrome frequently have one special interest to the exclusion of anything else and often become obsessively involved in it. They can function adequately on their own but may have difficulties in relating to and communicating with others.

DAMP

Deficit in Attention Motor control and Perception is the medical term; it may mean having some or all of the ADHD characteristics as well as having motoric difficulties and problems interpreting what you see and what you hear.

Predominately diagnosed by the co-existence of Dyspraxia (DCD) and ADHD.

Dyslexia

Specific difficulties with reading and writing. Associated difficulties Dysgraphia (poor handwriting) and Dyscalculia (difficulties with math).

Tourette syndrome

Involuntary movements or sounds which may come and go and vary in severity.

It is very common for these difficulties to co-exist in various combinations.

We would like to thank all of those people with learning difficulties who have helped us write these leaflets.

Royal Mail
Education Distribution
Service
Education House
Castle Road
Sittingbourne
Kent ME10 3RL
T 01795 426465
E info@edist.co.uk

Mindroom
P O Box 13684
Musselburgh EH21 1YL
Scotland
T 0131 653 6235
E moreinfo@mindroom.org
www.mindroom.org



Meet Rhoda

She is endlessly interesting

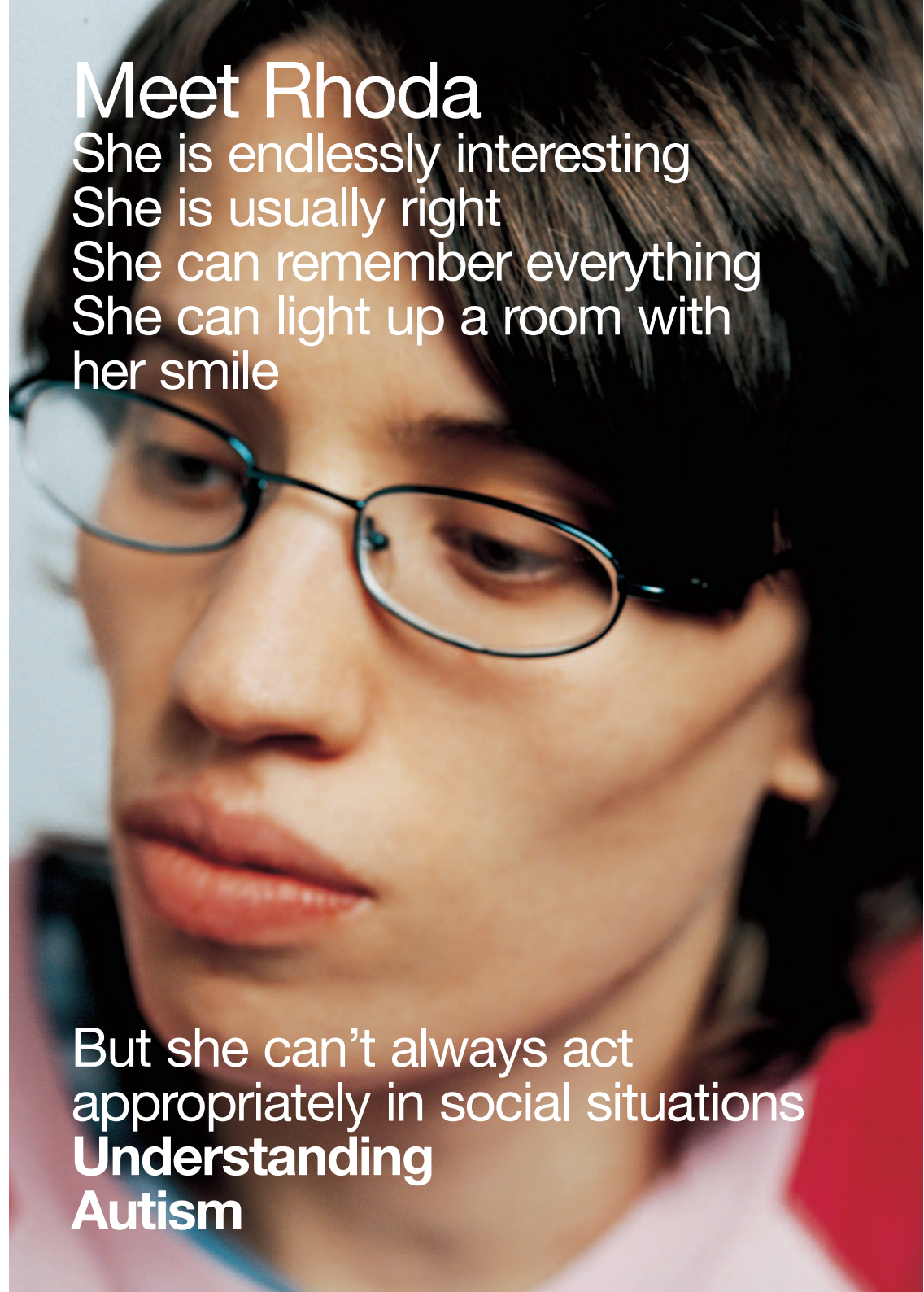
She is usually right

She can remember everything

She can light up a room with her smile

But she can't always act appropriately in social situations

Understanding Autism



Autism

Facts

Autism

Autism is a neuro developmental condition – which means that it is part of the make-up of the brain.

It is a lifelong developmental disability and people with Autism have a permanent difficulty in making sense of the world. Asperger syndrome is a related condition, often referred to as high functioning autism.

Autism was first identified in the 1940's but is still not very well known. It is generally a hereditary disability and often co-exists with other learning difficulties.

The three major issues experienced by people with autism are difficulties in relating to others, problems in understanding the meaning of things and struggling with limited imagination. This makes it hard to see situations from the perspective of someone else, problematic to deal with verbal and non-verbal communication and tough to plan and make sense of things.

People with an autistic spectrum disorder are usually diligent and reliable, yet research indicates that only 6% of them are in full time paid employment. Adults with autism say that finding a suitable job would improve their lives more than anything else.

Only by understanding both strengths and weaknesses can we bring the very best out of others and ourselves

What can you do to help students like Rhoda?

How to help

Students with autism need a reliable routine and a great deal of predictability. Rhoda will function best in an environment where communications are positive, specific and expressed in simple language. Set straightforward, repetitive tasks that capitalise on her attention to detail and accuracy,

- Be very clear about the rules of the classroom.
- Try to avoid complex language and abstract ideas
- Tell her what she should do and not what she shouldn't do
- Create a task based working routine
- Capitalise on her ability to focus for long periods on repetitive tasks
- Assist in the prioritisation of tasks
- Use visual cues such as objects or pictures to help communication.
- Write lists and make charts
- Allow extra thinking time to process information
- Give ample warning of change – a person with autism needs time to adapt
- A structured – even rigid – routine works best

So what can Rhoda do for you?

Creating a mutual benefit

'Rhoda' is best suited to detailed, repetitive tasks where her attention to detail is a real asset. She is able to work accurately and will deliver consistently good performance on tasks which match her skill levels. For her, quality rather than quantity is the driving force during her school day.

'Rhoda' will almost certainly have difficulties with social interaction and would not be suitable on tasks that relied heavily on social or communication skills.

'Rhoda's' autism mean that she will struggle to explain when a problem arises, so try to provide regular supervision and help in order to minimise her frustration. She will work best in a quiet work area with few distractions.

The so called 'norm' would not 'norm'-ally include 'Rhoda' yet she has plenty to offer and a contribution to make. By working together to understand the strengths and weaknesses of students like her, we create the opportunity to bring the best out of them – and out of everyone they encounter.

We are all unique in our personal make-up and in the way we function. So these general guidelines are just that. Please interpret them and adapt them to suit each individual and each situation.