

Students with Asperger's Syndrome: Tips for UCSC Staff and Student Employees

The following characteristics may be present in an individual with Asperger's Syndrome:

Due to the diversity and complexity of this disability, some of the characteristics or problems discussed may not be evident in a particular individual. An understanding of these characteristics is important, because the behavior of these individuals is frequently misinterpreted. Many behaviors that seem odd or unusual are due to the disability and not the result of intentional rudeness.

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Possible Manifestations of Students with Asperger's Syndrome

- Intelligent; sometimes very focused on one area of interest.
- Varied eye contact (it can be difficult for some, so don't force eye contact).
- Difficulty understanding nonverbal cues.
- Difficulty interacting with others, but great desire to do so.
- Frustrated easily; possible outbursts or interruptions.
- Frequent questions; no filter to stop.
- Repetitive or tangential conversation and questions.
- Literal understanding of language (difficulty interpreting words with double meaning, confused by metaphors and sarcasm). (taken directly from <http://ds.umn.edu/faculty/aspergers.html>)

Helpful Tips

- Discuss and prioritize areas of assistance (might need another session).
- Needs explanation about basic processes (ex. where to catch the shuttle).
- Don't overload student with details. Explain the general idea.
- Be simple and direct. Don't expect students to "read between the lines".
- Don't use absolute words such as always or never unless that is exactly what you mean. (taken directly from <http://ds.umn.edu/faculty/aspergers.html>)
- Record details on paper for future reference.
- Identify safe places (DRC, RA, Housing Office, College Advisor, etc.) to go for information.
- Review process for making an appointment or otherwise requesting service.