



## **An article about getting the best out of people who work with people**

We need 'teamwork' in all sorts of work situations so what's so special about autism? Whether we work in a school with children on the spectrum or in supported living with adults, we can see the impact of not providing consistent communication, familiar support, and structured activity. When these are missing, difficult and unwanted behaviour is not very far away!

## **Autism Services and Teamwork**

Is there something about the very nature of autism that makes these 'ingredients' more important than they might usually be? I think so. It's got a lot to do with:

Knowing what's next

Getting the meaning from language

Dealing with people

The future is uncertain. That's for sure! However if you are an individual with autism that's especially true. Most folk have a kind of inbuilt guidance system that helps us deal with the "what happens next?" question with a deal of confidence. We can't exactly see into the future but certain brain functions make us feel like we can.

**We'll never address these core difficulties and get the consistency right without teamwork.**

In people with ASC this guidance system is less effective. Hence the "what happens next?" question, i.e. (what the future might look like and how it will affect me) goes wholly or partially unanswered. And all human beings have a problem with unanswered questions.

Providing reliable information about now and next, and making sure what we say is going to happen happens is vital. This will be best supported by an agreed, recognisable, largely visual communication system. That's one place teamwork comes into it's own.

It's unhelpful when individual staff members do their own thing. The script is there for a reason.

People are a problem for people with autism. Knowing what they are for and not for is a constant challenge. And what do you do with them? Just what is it that they want!?!

It takes time to build working connections between folk on the spectrum and ourselves and those connections (built on understandable forms of communication, consistency of reaction and hard-earned trust) are easily broken.

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Additionally one of the consequences of inconsistency and 'getting it wrong' is difficult behaviour. Responding to this isn't easy and it will constantly challenge teams personally and professionally. If we are not mindful of this, difficult behaviour has the capacity to drive a wedge between team members and the net result is even more inconsistency!

So Positive About Autism™ have been working hard to identify the five key barriers to effective teamwork. We're talking with managers and team leaders across the spectrum of autism service providers to identify what those factors are. We've got some ideas and we'd like to share them with you and your team through our unique course [TEAM: Effective | Autism | Management More](#)

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