

Communication Issues in Autism & Aspergers Syndrome

Do we speak the same language?

Presented by
Dr Olga Bogdashina

22nd June 2010
10am - 4pm

Difficulties with language and communication are one of the defining features of autism. However, the nature of the language and communication deficits and their role in manifestation of the syndrome remains controversial. Traditionally, language is looked upon as a key prognostic factor in autism and the level of language and communicative competence achieved is seen as a measure of outcome. In the last decades there has been a shift of attention from language to communication impairments as the fundamental problem. The argument is that both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are affected and even if structural language ability is good (in cases of HF autistic individuals and those with Asperger syndrome), communication and the social use of language remain impaired. This approach to communication problems rather than language per se *seems* quite justifiable. However, it is worth investigating language peculiarities and development in autism from the perspective of different sensory perceptual processes and cognitive styles; then we could see that people with autism do communicate (though sometimes their attempts to transmit information are unnoticed by their non-autistic communicative partners); they do not lack communicative intent but rather often use unconventional means of communication.

Language is defined as a system of signs that serves as a means of communication and a means of formulating and expressing thoughts. Traditionally, signs in this definition are identified with words. However, though conventional, words are not the only signs that satisfy the criteria of language. The error of mistaking the acoustic/written manifestation of language for language itself leads to misconception that the language is necessarily verbal.

The sensory perceptual experience of the world of autistic children differs from that of non-autistic individuals, and their original internal language (as a tool of formulating and expressing thoughts) is consisted of 'sensory perceptual words'. This 'language' becomes central to their intellectual, emotional and social development. It is important to identify each autistic individual's non-verbal language – which can be visual, tactile, kinaesthetic, etc. – in order to establish a shared means of verbal communication.

About the speaker

Dr. Olga Bogdashina has worked extensively in the field of autism as teacher, lecturer and researcher, with a particular interest in sensory-perceptual and communication problems in autism. She has written articles and books on autism, the most recent ones are: *Sensory Perceptual Issues in Autism and Asperger Syndrome*; *Communication Issues in Autism*; *Theory of Mind and the Triad of Perspectives on Autism and Asperger Syndrome*. Olga teaches and lectures around the world. She is currently a Visiting Lecturer at Birmingham University and Consultant Psychologist for Adults with Autism. She has a 21 year old son with autism and a teenage daughter with AS.

Of interest to: Parents, Teachers, SENCos, Support Assistants, Psychologists, Speech & Language Therapists, Support Workers, Social Workers, Therapists Health Professionals, Mentors, Learning Difficulties Teams etc.

Cost: Professionals: £70

Parent/Carers & Individuals with an ASD: £35.00

Venue: Burnley Football Club, Harry Potts Way, Burnley Lancashire.

Notes:- Cancellation fees apply, call for details. Programme may be subject to alteration.

For further information please contact the office or go to www.actionasd.org.uk to download a booking form.

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