

Working with clients who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

**Common Challenges for Individuals with an ASD**

- Social Impairment
  - Difficulty reading emotions/body language/subtle social cues of others
  - Difficulty understanding motives/perceptions of others
  - Vulnerable to bullying
  - Loneliness
- Communication Problems
  - Perseveration
  - Literal interpretation
  - Might have difficulty advocating for self/asking for help
- Managing/Understanding Emotions
  - Experience emotions intensely- catastrophize, difficulty managing and expressing anger
  - Comparing themselves to neurotypically developing peers can cause problems with self-esteem and depression
  - Limited ability to tolerate frustration
  - High anxiety
- Rigid Behavior/Thinking
  - Difficulty with transitions
  - Desire for routine, consistency, rules
  - Difficulty with abstract thinking
  - Need to control environment – leads to high anxiety

**Counseling Individuals with an ASD**

- Major themes:
  - Self acceptance
  - Emotion identification and expression
  - Anxiety management
  - Social rules, practicing social skills