



## Autism Awareness

### 'Celebrating Difference'

#### Social Interaction

People with autism often have difficulty recognising or understanding others people's emotions and feelings, and expressing their own. This can make it difficult for them to fit in socially, which may or may not be important to them. Many people want to be sociable but have difficulty with initiating relationships, which can make them anxious.

They may:

- Not understand the norms of different social contexts which most of us pick up without thinking; standing too close to another person or starting what may be considered to be an inappropriate topic of conversation.
- Appear to be insensitive because they have not recognised how someone else is feeling.
- Prefer to spend more time alone than with other people.
- Not seek comfort from other people in assumed or expected ways, or become withdrawn or disinterested.
- Appear to behave 'strangely' or not according to social norms.



## Social Interaction

### *Ways to help a person with autism:*

- Encourage turn taking games and activities that encourage helping others.
- Use a task which is an area of strength and interest for the person.
- Use social stories, these help to describe a particular situation, event or activity.
- Encourage recognition of their own feelings (verbally and with the support of photos/ symbols).
- Develop a question bank for the person to use in social situations.
- Conversation cue cards to encourage the person to initiate conversations.