

## **Advice for working with children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

- Young people with autism are individuals just like all of us- don't expect them to behave in a certain way (ie famous depictions of people on the spectrum such as Dustin Hoffman in Rain Man). Some of the young people may present as very socially able, chatty. Others may appear withdrawn or quiet, and may have difficulties communicating. Meet each individual as you find them.
- The term is the Autistic Spectrum- this reflects the huge range of behaviours, ways people might present, and ways they might experience the world.
- Be attentive to the needs of the individual. The young people in this class are taking a very wide range of exams - their skills and confidence will vary, just as with any group.
- Be careful with your use of idioms or sarcasm - someone with ASD may interpret what is said literally. Try and use clear, straightforward language.
- See if you can break down your instructions into 'smaller chunks'.
- If a young person seems to be struggling with a task or getting frustrated, see if you can rephrase an instruction.
- If one of the group communicates in a way that seems rude, they may not realise that their behaviour could be interpreted in this way. It's OK to say that a tone of voice, a personal question, a remark or pointing can seem rude, but try not to get frustrated.
- Most of all, don't worry! As with any young person we work with, be enthusiastic, patient and kind; enjoy yourselves!

Resources:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers.aspx>