

SUBMISSION FROM C GIBSON

1. "Gran, what's wrong with me?" This question was asked by my 12 year old grandson on the journey home from our appointment with the psychologist who had given us the diagnosis of autism. It had taken 12 years with input from speech therapists, occupational therapists, school psychologist and mental health professionals to arrive at this point. We were grateful for their efforts, especially for the mental health worker who suggested he be assessed for autism but the lack of a definite diagnosis was awful. Giving a name to the problem was a step forward. Now we needed help to understand what was needed to help him cope.
2. Autism is for life! It doesn't go away. At present, he is struggling to cope in mainstream education and this is an area where more help is urgently needed. Perhaps a campaign to inform the public in general and teachers in particular would be of great assistance.
3. These young people are capable of much more if given the appropriate help. An understanding of the condition is required. It can manifest itself in many ways ie no concept of others' personal space, sensitivity to touch or the feel of materials, loud noises whether shouting or other, inability to be still, lack of attention, poor memory, the list goes on and on..
4. Help is needed! Not only for the sufferer but also for the family. Loving is not enough. The answer I gave to my grandson's question was to compare his brain to an electrical circuit where some of the wires are connected differently from the usual, which produces a very special person. Him.

C Gibson
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