What is autism?

Autism is a perplexing developmental disorder that typically appears during a child’s first three years of life. This developmental disorder is neurologically based and each child will be affected differently, demonstrating combinations of behaviours that range from mild to severe.

What are the indications of autism?

While every person with autism is a unique individual in his or her own way, there are some common traits of autism and these include:

- Poor social skills and difficulties interacting with others
- Difficulties with communication
- Restricted or repetitive activities or interests
- Abnormal response to sensory issues such as touch, sound, light, even smell
- Some show aggressive or self-injurious behaviour such as head banging or biting themselves

Is there a “cure” for autism?

Currently there is no cure, however many persons with autism improve greatly with therapy — and there are lots of therapies that can help. No one knows for sure what causes autism and no one today has a magic pill to cure it either.

What is known is that someone born with autism will have it their entire life. Persons with autism see the world differently than you or I do. With treatment, many of the behavioural and communication challenges can be improved upon. However, a person with autism will always think differently than a person without autism. One thing is known for sure, the earlier that a person can begin treatment the better. Early intervention is important to life-long success.

What is the intelligence level of someone with autism?

Many have moderate intellectual disability while roughly one-third have normal intelligence levels (IQs). Those with Asperger’s syndrome (which is often referred to as high-functioning autism) will typically have higher than average IQs and function similarly to those who do not have autism.

Are all persons with autism alike?

Children and adults with autism can vary quite a bit in their skills and the extent that they exhibit the symptoms of autism. Many are able to display affection and emotions and respond to their environment similarly to persons without autism. Some may be bright and have good communication skills while others may be non-verbal.

All persons with autism are likely to exhibit problems with social communications such as lack of eye contact, and difficulty carrying on a conversation. Some will talk your ear off, while others are nearly silent. Some cannot deal with loud music and noisy environments while chaotic environments do not affect another. Each person with autism is very different in their own unique way.