Autism awareness
3rd December 2019 – International Disability Day

Deirdre, Elle, Daniel and Declan
International Day of Persons with Disabilities

3 DECEMBER
Percentage of persons with disabilities at risk of poverty and social exclusion by Member State

- Countries with <25% risk
- Countries with 25%-35%
- Countries with >35%

1. The Netherlands 22.7%
2. Belgium 30.5%
3. Luxembourg 28.8%
4. Czech 23.8%
5. Slovakia 18.4%
6. Austria 21.7%
7. Slovenia 24%
8. Croatia 37.1%
9. Portugal 28.7%
10. Spain 31.1%
11. Greece 32.3%
12. Italy 30%
13. Malta 30%
14. Cyprus 34.1%
15. United Kingdom 32.2%
16. Denmark 23.5%
17. Germany 31.2%
18. France 21%
19. Poland 29.5%
20. Hungary 27.4%
21. Estonia 41.7%
22. Latvia 43.6%
23. Lithuania 43%
24. Romania 37.6%
25. Bulgaria 49.4%
## Number and % of students (DS reg) withdrawing and graduating by disability type

(2,427 students entering between 2005 to 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Type</th>
<th>Withdrawn (WD)</th>
<th>Graduate (GRD)</th>
<th>Total WD &amp; GRD</th>
<th>% WD of WD &amp; GRD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind/VI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/HI</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyspraxia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLD</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2427</td>
<td>17.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elle Loughran 4th yr
Daniel Kelly Graduate Computer Engineering
Areas of concern

Communication with peers and lecturers
Team work
Procrastination
Sensory issues in Labs
Deirdre Lynch
Understanding the other
Students may struggle with organisation skills and managing everyday tasks which can cause them stress.

Conversely they may be very organised and get stressed when their systems and routines are interfered with.
Key Challenges
Communication Skills Vary

- Student may have good language skills, but may have a very literal understanding of language.
- may have difficulty understanding jokes, sarcasm or abstract concepts.
- may speak very formally or with an accent.
- conversations may be dominated by narrow topics of interest
- sharing of ideas and emotions may be difficult.
- may have difficulty reading tone and body language which may result in inappropriate behaviour
Students with AS may find it difficult to stay focused on a task, particularly if it does not interest them.

They may focus intensely on tasks that do interest them and get anxious or annoyed if interrupted.
Anxiety is a major factor that affects individuals.

Anxiety levels increase when coupled with other challenges such as sensory stimuli, communication difficulties and social situations.

Anxiety and frustration may result in a person reacting by engaging in repetitive actions, if unable to cope or communicate frustration.
Students may experience difficulty with flexible/abstract thinking.

This can result in difficulty interpreting the behaviour of others or predicting what may happen.

A lack of flexibility can result in repetitive behaviours or rigid dependence on routine.

Creating a highly structured environment may be beneficial.

Unpredictable situations or changes to routine may cause distress.
Individuals may experience hyper-sensitivity to sensory stimuli such as noise, touch, smell or light.

This can lead to a sense of being overloaded and result in anxiety or anger when exposed to such stimuli.
Leaving home can be a stressful experience for any student. Students may not have the usual coping strategies (peer support/interaction) to help deal with the stress. Students may have led a sheltered/reclusive life and when starting college are faced with new routines, new peers and possibly new accommodation.

Navigating college (friendships, dating, going out etc.) can be stressful and bewildering. Students’ eating and sleeping patterns be affected.
Creating inclusion

Listen – really hear what students have to say
Provide safe spaces and time to hear students
Success looks different for every person – avoid stereotyping
Social life is not always a joyful experience everyone
Making students aware of all the supports available to them – when they need them and not just at orientation
Encourage students to avail of disability supports and networks
While disability supports enhance accessibility – who supports social interaction, integration and communications?
Creating inclusion

Promote an awareness of diversity and inclusion for all students throughout the academic calendar.

Avoid rescheduling or double-booking student meetings as this can increase anxiety.

Be mindful of your language, as students tend to take things literally.

When unsure what to do, students may smile or frown if they think it is the expected reaction.

Create calm, quiet learning environments and one to one meetings to assist with concentration.
Creating inclusion

Be clear and concise when giving feedback using plain language

Give constructive feedback to avoid critical feedback being perceived as criticism

Check understanding before giving instructions – I might be able to repeat what you said but not what you mean

Allow extra time for students to process an instruction/question.

Show students how to communicate their ideas effectively (presentation skills)

Provide lecture notes for those having difficulty concentrating

Consider students sensory needs
Creating inclusion

Encourage students to list any questions they have and present to you before or after lecture to avoid a student interrupting or asking a lot of questions in lectures.

Use open questions to confirm students understanding of the topic or an interaction.

Inappropriate behaviour needs explanatory feedback rather than criticism.

Be sensitive to students that struggle with group work.

Be aware students may say they are fine but they may not be...
As a coping strategy, students may tell you what you want to hear.

A student with AS may avoid eye contact not to be rude just their style.

Keep interruptions and noise levels to a minimum. Let students know how process works in advance.

Avoid any changes at short notice, as this will increase stress levels.

Inform students of the structure of the process in advance.

Be aware that changes at short notice can cause difficulties for students.
Exam Supports

If student has difficulty, concentrating providing alternative venue for exams might be the answer.

Be mindful of stress triggers at exam time such as queueing, noise and distractions.

Encourage students to read exam questions carefully and to take care with understanding what is being asked.

Provide extra time for students that may need time.

Encourage students to practice with past exam papers and take part in mock-timed exams to be prepared.
Library Supports

• Main library may be too noisy so a study space could be the answer.

• A quiet room/space in library may also accommodate students’ needs.

• Queueing to use photocopier, or take out/return books can be stressful.

• Close proximity with others, noise and distractions.

• Provide one to one supports.
Social Isolation

A feeling of isolation and feeling excluded from college recreations.

Encourage students to join clubs of special interest can be beneficial.

College-run buddy-system can be a good support but depends on the availability of sensitive and willing volunteers.
The Ability Programme
Aim of the Not So Different Ability Programme

Aim support people aged 15-29 with AS through education to employment. We assist young people:

• to develop the confidence and independence required to participate in education, training, employment.
• at key transition points between education, training and employment.
• to access and participate in education, training, and employment.
• build the capacity of education providers to support the progression of young people with AS.
• One to One supports for students
• Mentoring (Industry)
• Coaching (NSD Team)
• Awareness Training for educators
• Awareness Training for parents / individuals
• Work Experience
• Showcasing Talent
• Employment

info@notsodifferent.ie
Declan Treanor
Prevalence of sensory processing difficulties

- **5-16%** - ‘Neuro-typical’ children

- **40–60%** - Adults and Children with ADHD

- **70–90%** - Adults and Children with Autism

Fox et al. 2014
Numbers registered with AS in Disability Service in Trinity

Autistic Spectrum 2008-2018

- 2008-09: 9
- 2009-10: 14
- 2010-11: 22
- 2011-12: 28
- 2012-13: 43
- 2013-14: 54
- 2014-15: 68
- 2015-16: 78
- 2016-17: 86
- 2017-18: 94
Numbers registered with ADHD/ADD in Disability Service in Trinity

ADHD or ADD 2008-2018

- 2008-09: 14
- 2009-10: 21
- 2010-11: 28
- 2011-12: 50
- 2012-13: 63
- 2013-14: 82
- 2014-15: 75
- 2015-16: 82
- 2016-17: 107
- 2017-18: 119
What do we mean by a sensory environment?
How do we modulate our environment?

‘…it requires grading one’s response to the degree, nature, or intensity of the sensory information.’ (Miller et al, 207 as cited by Schaaf et al, 2010)

Modulation difficulties can occur in ANY SYSTEM
What do we mean by Modulation Difficulties?

Modulation Difficulties

- Sensory Modulation Disorder
  - Under-Responsiveness
    - Passive Response: BYSTANDER
    - Active Response: SEEKER
  - Over-Responsiveness
    - Passive Response: SENSOR
    - Active Response: AVOIDER
Neurological Threshold

- High (Under-Responders)
- Average
- Low (Over-Responders)

Sensory Input
If we understand the sensory environment we can

• support a person’s occupational engagement,

• support adaptations of the environment,

• support the implementation of reasonable accommodations.
Higher Education Sensory Environments
What do you do to escape the environment??
Stephen Simpson  Audit Tool 2016

Visual

Smell

Auditory

Body Awareness/ Proprioception

Communication

Escape

Awareness of safety needs and Need for Training

Sensory Touch

Balance/Vestibular
Overall Findings of Audit

Audit showed that the difficulties tend to be in the areas of:

1. Auditory
2. Communication
3. Escape
What do we need to think about?
Lessons Learnt

- Communication is the dominant difficulty
- Recognise the person as an expert.
- Include individuals with different processing needs in your audit process.
- Expert group to advise on sensory audit and suggest changes.
- Change the focus from one of deficit to participation and inclusion
Recommendations

- Add sensory questioning to the disability needs assessment process
- Use empowerment and Inclusive models.
- Frame outcomes in terms of QOL and meaningful occupation.
- Think about sensory processing needs/preferences
- Be clear in your communication
- Ensure the use of visuals to support sign posting
- Minimise distraction including reflective surfaces
- Think about the multiple use of space
- Create Safe (low sensory) Spaces
Website Development

Trinity Disability Service

Supports & Resources

Academic Support
Autism Spectrum Support
  Transitioning to College
  Supports available
  Being a Student Progressing through College
  Transitioning out of College and into Employment
  Advice and Useful Information
Assistive Technology

SUPPORTS & RESOURCES

Autism Spectrum Support/Asperger's Syndrome Support

Trinity College Dublin, like many other third level institutions, has seen a rise in the number of students with disabilities accessing the university. In particular, one of the greatest demographic increases has been among students with Asperger's Syndrome (AS). Over the past five years the number of students with AS utilising supports from the Disability Service has increased six-fold, and Trinity College now has the highest number of students with AS in Ireland.

The Trinity College Disability Service has developed a suite of resources and supports for students with AS, which aim to support the student at all stages of their academic journey, from first day, to graduation, and into professional employment.

This website is divided into different sections, relating to each stage in the university journey: whether that is thinking about (and applying to) Trinity College, the process of transitioning into higher education, third level providers, or university life after college.
A to Z of ASD -
Websites with detailed lists of sensory processing strategies to support persons with ASD.

Sensory Processing Hints and Tips:

http://theinspiredtreehouse.com/sensory-processing-helpful-hints-information/

Sensory Integration Activities:

Other website resources

http://autismdigest.com/classroom-sensory-strategies/
www.autismspeaks.org
http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/
www.ace-centre.org.uk/html/resources/symbols/res02.htm
www.educateautism.com
www.autismteachingstrategies.com
http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/what-is-occupational-therapy.html
Thank you for listening.

Any questions?