

DONIYA BETTER

Initiative



STRENGTHENING MIGRANT & REFUGEE
FAMILIES TO NAVIGATE THE DISABILITY
SYSTEM

Acknowledgement of Country



We pay respect to Elders past and present
and commit to respecting the lands we
walk on, and the communities we walk with.
We celebrate the deep and enduring
connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples to Country and
acknowledge their continuing
custodianship of the land, seas and sky.



What is Autism?

- ▶ **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how individuals communicate, interact socially, and process information.**
- ▶ **Prevalence:** Approximately 1 in 100 children globally are diagnosed with ASD.
- ▶ **Core Characteristics:**
 - ▶ Difficulties with social interaction and communication.
 - ▶ Restricted and repetitive behaviors or interests.
 - ▶ Sensory sensitivities (e.g., to sounds, lights, textures).
- ▶ **Onset:** Signs typically appear in early childhood, often before age 3.
- ▶ While the exact cause is unknown, a combination of genetic and environmental factors is believed to contribute to the development of ASD



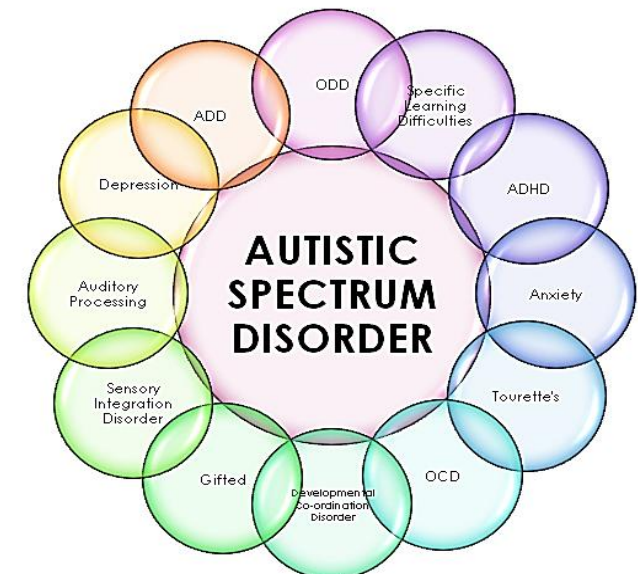
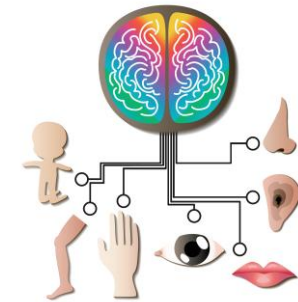
Challenges and Risks

Some common challenges:

- Speech and language delays; some individuals may be nonverbal.
- Sensory processing issues leading to overstimulation or discomfort.
- Difficulty with transitions and changes in routine.
- Co-occurring conditions such as anxiety, ADHD, or intellectual disabilities.

Risks:

- Without appropriate support, individuals may face social isolation, academic challenges, and mental health issues.



Levels of ASD

▶ Level 1:

▶ Social communication

- ▶ Difficulty to initiate and maintain social interaction
- ▶ Struggle to understand social cues

▶ Behavioural Patterns

- ▶ Inflexible behaviours and challenges in adapting to changes in routine

▶ Support needs

- ▶ They benefit from supports that focus on building their emotional wellbeing, social skills and their capacity to adapt to changes in routine

▶ Level 2:

▶ Social communication

- ▶ Deficits in verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- ▶ Limited initiation of social interactions
- ▶ Reduced responses to social stimulation

▶ Behavioural Patterns

- ▶ Repetitive behaviours, difficulty coping with changes

▶ Support needs

- ▶ Substantial support required to assist with social interactions and manage behavioural challenges

▶ Level 3:

▶ Social communication

- ▶ Severe deficits in verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Mostly nonverbal or have very limited speech)
- ▶ Rarely initiate social interaction

▶ Behavioural Patterns

- ▶ Extreme difficulty coping with changes
- ▶ Repetitive behaviour

▶ Support needs

- ▶ Very substantial support required across all settings

What children with Autism Need?

- ▶ **Consistency and Routine**

- ▶ Predictable environments, visual schedules and structured activities

- ▶ **Individualized support**

- ▶ Tailored interventions addressing the child's unique needs

- ▶ **Sensory-friendly environments**

- ▶ Adjustments to lighting, noise levels and textures as required

- ▶ **Family and community involvement**

- ▶ Engaging families in intervention process, enhancing community awareness and inclusion initiatives

- ▶ **Early intervention**

- ▶ Starting support services early can lead to better long-term outcomes

Common misconceptions about Autism

- **Any treatment they claim can cure autism:** There is currently no cure for autism. In fact, many people believe we shouldn't be looking for one and the concept is highly offensive to many. Be careful of traditional / religious treatments that claim to cure Autism. Those treatments can have the opposite effect.
- ▶ **Vaccines causes Austisms**
- ▶ **– People with autism don't want to make friends**
- ▶ **Children with autism can't learn**
- ▶ **- Autism is caused by bad parenting**
- ▶ **- All autistic people have special skills**
- ▶ <https://www.autismawareness.com.au/navigating-autism/myths-and-misconceptions-about-autism>

Can you access NDIS Support for Autism?

- ▶ Yes indeed!

Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ **Diagnosis:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosed by a qualified professional (e.g., paediatrician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist) using DSM-5 criteria.
- ▶ **What severity levels qualify for NDIS?**
 - ▶ Level 2 and Level 3 are typically eligible under List A conditions

The Application Process:

▶ **Gather evidence:**

- ▶ Evidence of diagnosis – a comprehensive diagnostic report detailing the ASD diagnosis and severity level.
- ▶ Functional Assessment Reports demonstrating the impact on daily life.

▶ **Submit access request:**

- ▶ Complete the NDIS Access Request Form.
- ▶ Attach all supporting documentation.
- ▶ Submit via email, mail, or through a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or Early Childhood Partner.

Ensuring the right support through NDIS

▶ 0-5 yrs

- ▶ No funds usually given for core support
- ▶ Funds available in capacity building category
- ▶ How to utilize these funds?
 - ▶ Assessment (OT, BSP, Speech etc.), get the reports and initiate a plan review.

▶ 5-10 yrs

- ▶ Very less core support funds
- ▶ Funds available in capacity building category
- ▶ How to utilize these funds?
 - ▶ School Holiday/ Vacation Programmes
 - ▶ Individualized resource development and training to build your child's skills
 - ▶ 28-days respite care for children exhibiting intense behavioural issues
 - ▶ before school and after school support
 - ▶ Assessment (OT, BSP, Speech etc.), get the reports and initiate a plan review.

▶ 10-15 yrs and above

- ▶ Core Support – To build their capacity in performing basic living tasks
- ▶ Funds available in capacity building category
- ▶ How to utilize these funds?
 - ▶ Individualized resource development and training to build your child's skills
 - ▶ 15 yrs – build career/ seek employment through NDIS
 - ▶ Obtain driving license
 - ▶ Assessment (OT, BSP, Speech etc.), get the reports and initiate a plan review.
 - ▶ Apply and transition children to respite care if required

Doniya Better Project Overview

- ▶ An ASD Support Project tailored to meet unique needs of children with Autism
- ▶ Focus on migrant and refugee community
- ▶ Fully funded by NDIA – delivered **free of cost** to participants
- ▶ No NDIS plan required
- ▶ Involvement of a well experienced ASD Consultant for resource and routine development
- ▶ Individualized and culturally inclusive support
- ▶ Project expansion to Sydney and Regional Victoria over the next two years.
- ▶ Delivered by:

Individualized Routine Sessions

- **Problem:** While children, especially those from newly arrived communities, tend to follow and enjoy a well-structured routine at their special school, they often struggle to maintain consistency at home. This lack of routine can sometimes lead to stress and frustration among children and their parents/ family unit.



- **Solution:**

Individualized routine development and behaviour management

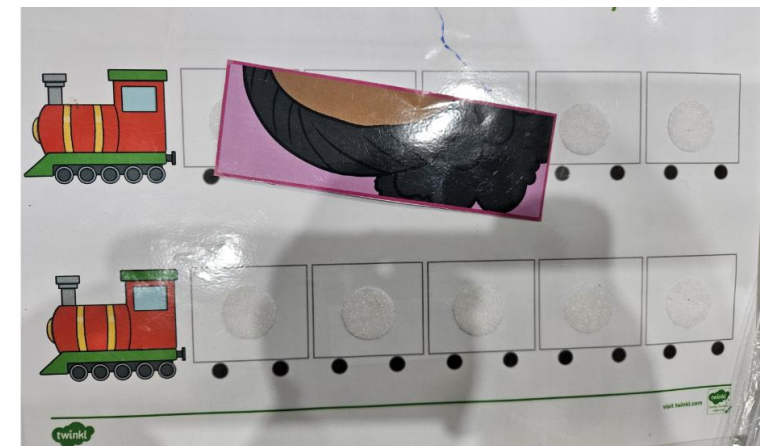
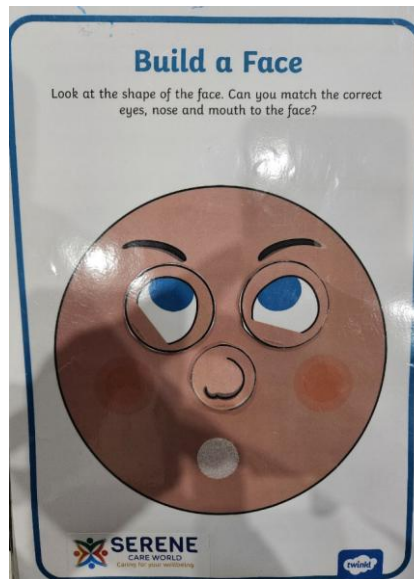
Our support in developing a home routine that mirrors their school structure has led to noticeable progress and positive changes for the children.



8 carefully structured sessions that provide unique, individualized support to your child



Sample Resources



What “DONIYA BETTER” Can Offer

- ▶ **Free, individualized, culturally inclusive support:** Absolutely free 8 routine sessions covering assessment, resource/ routine development, training and post evaluation
- ▶ **Flexibility:** No direct links to NDIS plan – change of providers or services not required
- ▶ **Expert Guidance:** Learn how to better use your therapy funds.
- ▶ **Learn to advocate for your child:**
 - ▶ Equip your family with lasting support tools.
 - ▶ Feel confident to support your child
 - ▶ Enhance your knowledge about available services and resources through workshops and other activities
 - ▶ Build your advocacy skills





How to get started?



Thank you

Feedback Form

Workshop Evaluation

1. Overall, how would you rate this workshop?
2. Did this workshop help improve your knowledge of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and disability support in Australia?
3. After this workshop, do you feel confident talking to people in your community about the NDIS and disability support in Australia?
4. Did this workshop help improve your knowledge of the individualised routine program for children with autism?
5. After this workshop, do you feel confident explaining the individualised routine program for children with autism?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about this workshop?