About DSM-5

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is diagnosed according to criteria contained within the current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM-5*; APA, 2013). This manual is updated periodically and provides criteria and guidelines for use by physicians and licensed psychologists who make medical diagnoses of ASD. In addition, multidisciplinary teams within schools use the current version of the DSM as well as the special education eligibility criteria outlined within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) and the Indiana Department of Education Article 7 (IDOE-Title 511-Article 7, 2010) when making decisions related to the need for special education services under ASD eligibility. Eligibility for special education requires that the symptoms related to ASD result in a consistent and significant negative impact on academic achievement and/or functional performance as identified by the multidisciplinary team.

Updates & Revisions

Recent revisions were made to ASD criteria in the movement to a new version of the DSM. Within the *DSM-5* (APA, 2013), notable changes were made to improve the accuracy of diagnosis with changes based upon input from scientists, providers, community agencies, and families. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is now a single diagnostic category replacing the 4 disorders of autism or Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

Additional changes made within the *DSM-5* (APA, 2013) include the following:

- Placement of ASD under the category of neurodevelopmental disorders
- Consideration of the range of ages for which the effect of ASD symptoms may manifest whereby symptoms of ASD must appear within the early developmental period but may not become entirely apparent until situations and demands exceed the individual’s social skills and capacities
- Movement from 3 to 2 domains of functioning being affected for individuals with ASD including (1) challenges related to social communication and social interaction, and (2) restricted repetitive behaviors, interests, or activities
- Addition of a dimensional measure to rate the severity of symptoms or level of care and support needed for an individual with ASD
- Broadening of the domain related to restricted and repetitive behaviors to include sensory sensitivities or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment
- Introduction of a new diagnosis of Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder for individuals affected by social communication impairments without challenges related to restricted repetitive behaviors, interests, and activities
- Increased alignment with the *World Health Organization’s International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-10; WHO, 2004) used to diagnose other medical disorders within clinical settings

Potential Impact

While the impact of such changes cannot be entirely predicted, studies suggest that the impact of these changes should be minimal. There is evidence that the change in criteria will increase the accuracy of ASD diagnosis. Individuals who have met the criteria for autism, Asperger’s Disorder, PDD-NOS, or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder in the past should continue to meet criteria for ASD or another, more accurate diagnosis within the *DSM-5*. Despite these changes, decisions related to needed services and supports will continue to be based on the level to which symptoms limit the individual’s ability to function effectively in his or her environment. Treatments or interventions will continue to focus on the individual’s specific symptoms and the severity of those symptoms.

References


HANDS in Autism®
Resources & Services

About Us
It is our mission to provide unique learning opportunities that are designed to bring together both an understanding of the process and an ability to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and a range of other social, developmental and behavioral challenges through hands-on and coaching experiences. We aim to build collaborative relationships across family, educational, medical, and community systems in an effort to best support individuals with ASD.

Our Services
HANDS in Autism® Interdisciplinary Training and Resource Center is here to support you. Students with ASD often have various communication, behavioral, and social challenges as well as unique areas of strength. With one in 50 children affected, ASD is the fastest growing developmental disability in the U.S. (CDC, 2013). It is very likely that you will interact with an individual with ASD and we want that experience to be as successful as possible for both the individual and for you!

Below is a sampling of the information, materials, and trainings we can provide for you and those in your field:

Informational Resources & Practical Strategies:
- Next Steps Manual
- Tools & strategies to support individuals across settings; and
- Other resources offered by HANDS in Autism®

E-Modules
Self-paced tutorials & videos to support individuals with ASD across settings

Boosters & Tips
Emails with practical tips & suggestions for implementation

Handouts

Informative Resources
Helpful Strategies Volume 1: Language
First-Then Board
How-To Templates
Small Board Template
Crop Circle Autism Treatment Center

How-To Video: First-Then Board
How-To Template: Choice Board
How-To Template: Visual Schedules
Kid's Corner Series
Life with ASD Series
Academia Series

Materials provided are samples only!
They may need to be individualized to meet the particular needs of a person with an ASD!

View/download these and other templates at www.HANDSinAutism.org/tools/HowToTemplates.

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If you or your community organization is not currently interested in pursuing the services we offer, please consider supporting us. We greatly appreciate any and all donations that allow us to provide information, training, and resources to individuals, families, and caregivers in your community. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law and you will be provided with the necessary documentation of 501(c) tax exemption status (HANDSinAutism.iupui.edu/donatehands.html) For further information, contact us at hands@iupui.edu.