

“Asperger’s and Aphasia

Many adults with Asperger’s also have a secondary condition called aphasia. Aphasia usually leads them to have difficulty maintaining a reasonable pace for a conversation. They often have difficulty finding the right word, sometimes replacing the word with something else that doesn’t make sense and baffles their partner.

If you suspect that someone that you love has aphasia, an evaluation by a speech and language pathologist would be incredibly helpful. It often goes undiagnosed and unrecognized. This leads to confusion, sadness, anger, and arguments. Having an accurate diagnosis is incredibly important to truly understand someone.

Did you or your partner find that conversations have unnecessary breaks in them, that someone replaces a word with something else that’s confusing or it is much more difficult for them to organize specific thoughts into general themes, they may have a speech disorder.

Specifically, in Asperger’s, I’ve seen this get in the way due to a majority of adults diagnosed on the spectrum also having difficulty connecting themes and topics on the fly to their deeper breadth of knowledge. Neurotypicals can discuss general topics and stay on the main topic by using approximation, relevance checking, and respect of the topic. Many individuals on the spectrum value their area of interest and attempt to direct the conversation to that area, which disrespects the topic, theme, and point of the Neurotypical. This often leads to fights and disagreements.

My simplest solution to this is to get a lot of the most important issues as a couple down on paper. If a conversation is difficult to maintain, give the Neurodiverse individual time to organize their thoughts coherently. Individual time to organize their thoughts coherently in written form decreases misunderstandings.

I would also give them a bit more patience in conversation, with redo options being offered, especially after being confused by their word choice and saying did you rather mean this this or this.”

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