



## Chairperson's Update—Sarah MacDermott

Welcome to our first edition of the WAADF quarterly newsletter! We hope you enjoy it and we encourage you to send in comments, suggestions and articles for the next edition. Any members who are interested in forming an editorial team please let us know.

As you know, WAADF has been offered a 30 minute presentation slot at the International Autism Congress in Cape Town. The presentation will be an overview of WAADF, its history, membership, vision, goals and achievements to date. The Board welcomes all members to send suggestions or comments—needed by the end of August. We are currently trying to find funds for this trip so if anyone hears of appropriate grants or leads - please let us know!

We have received orders for both versions of the WAADF

assessment and diagnostic booklets from schools, hospitals and libraries, both within WA and from interstate. We have also had some international interest. The Board has almost completed a smaller, cheaper, parent pamphlet. This is a very simplified summary of the booklets. We hope to find grant funding for its printing and to then distribute it widely within the community.

The Board has received quite a few requests for information about assessor training options and about who is now publishing the 'recognized assessors list' that DSC used to distribute. We are currently developing an explanatory flyer regarding these two issues. Once completed, the flyer will be distributed to all WAADF members as well as any other individuals or agencies who are interested. The Board has decided to offer all current financial WAADF members the opportunity to

voluntarily join a public listing of members. Members can choose to include their name, contact details and a brief listing of their professional services. Further details will be emailed to all members in the near future.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the Board for their hard work and commitment. Everyone's contribution of time and energy has ensured WAADF's continued development.....so "thank you" to Wendy, Ritu, Sue, Sabrina, Jane K, Alana, John, Jane L., Kate and Robyn.

Hope to see you at the June Forum.

Regards, Sarah

Sarah MacDermott  
Chair, WAADF

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## Let's Talk About... Research!

Article Review by: Elena Klaric, Psychologist, Country Services, Disability Services Commission

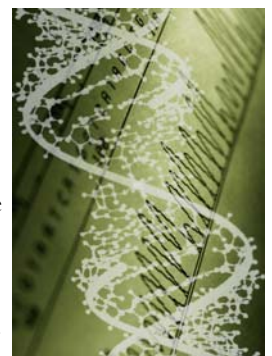
Coplan, J. (2003), Atypicality, intelligence, and age: a conceptual model of autistic spectrum disorder. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 45(10), 712-716.

Coplan states that using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of

Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-IV) as the standard reference for the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) does not provide information regarding the severity of symptoms, nor can it be used to map longitudinal changes in symptom expression. He presents a schema for thinking about

ASD along three dimensions.

- 1) *The severity of atypical symptoms* range from mild to severe features in the areas of social relatedness, language, repetitive behaviours and sensory issues.
- 2) *Intelligence*, and its association with symptom severity, is considered (continued page 2).



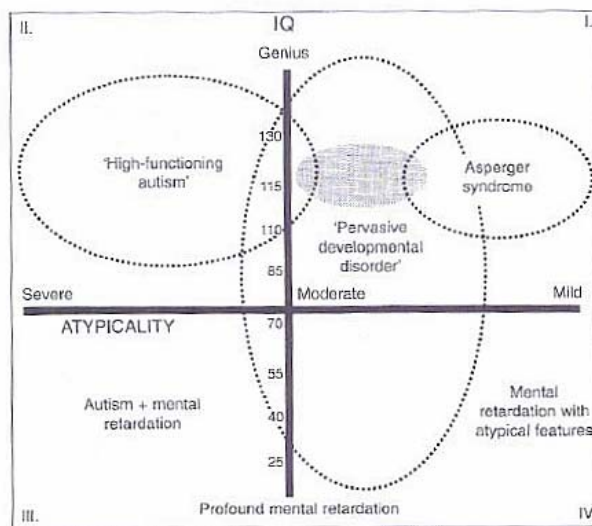
## Let's Talk About Research ...continued from page 1

alongside the evolution of terms such as 'High Functioning Autism'. 3) Age signifies Coplan's suggestion that symptoms may evolve in a predictable pattern over time depending on atypical symptoms and general intelligence. These dimensions, and their suggested relationships, are represented in Figure 1.

The model Coplan presents is intended to allow the clinician to locate a patient in 3-dimensional space, which would inform diagnosis, provide a method to model the degree of improvement in symptoms over time without therapeutic input, and a means of representing specific aetiologies. The limitations explored in the article include oversimplification due to model building i.e. condensing atypical features into a continuum oversimplifies their expression, just as we represent intelligence by one number (full scale IQ). Coplan also acknowledges that he does not explore co-morbid conditions. A second limita-

tion concerns the assumption that intelligence and atypicality vary independently of one another. The interactions between intelligence and symptom severity are unclear. Coplan tries to reconcile these confounds by stating that where the effects of ability and symptom severity are difficult to tease apart, the model's benefit to parents lies not so much in its ability to locate a child within the 3-dimensional space, but rather in communicating that the model exists for comparative purposes.

Figure 1. Relationship between degree of atypicality and intelligence.



## Dates of Meetings

Forum Meetings are held on the **first** Thursday of the last month of the quarter,

Venue:  
Conference Room of the State  
Child Development Centre.

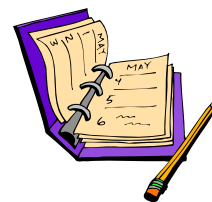
9-11am

Thursday **2nd March** 2006

Thursday **1st June** 2006

Thursday **7th September** 2006

Thursday **7th December** 2006



## Call for Case Presentations

We're always on the look-out for volunteers to share diagnostic case studies with members at the WAADF meetings. In the past we have had wonderful presentations from our members on topics such as elective mutism, visual impairment, Down Syndrome and semantic-pragmatic disorder. These presentations not only make

our meetings more interesting, but add to the professional development of our diagnostic community. If you have a case to present, don't be shy! We'd love to hear from you. Please contact the WAADF agenda coordinator, Ritu Campbell on [ritucampbell@bigpond.com](mailto:ritucampbell@bigpond.com). Cheers!



# Have You Heard About...?

## New Resources

In 2004 a two DVD package was released through Future Horizons Inc. the packages is titled: *“Dr Tony Attwood presents: ASPERGER’S Diagnostic Assessment”*

The DVD is a recording of Tony Attwood presenting a seminar describing the features of Asperger’s Syndrome and the assessment process.

The video includes Dr Attwood’s assessment of an 11 year old boy and also his interview with, and feedback to, the boy’s parents, giving a clear model for fitting behavioural features to the diagnostic criteria. The second DVD covers Asperger’s presentation in girls and the way it differs from

that of boys. There is also discussion of Asperger’s presentation and diagnostic assessment in adults.

The package would be highly suitable for any assessor wishing to review or develop their own assessment process. Excerpts of the package would also be useful in professional development or workshop presentations.

This review reads a little like an advertisement, but having viewed this package, I think it is worth watching and should provide some useful insights for most assessors.

For more information visit :

[www.FutureHorizons-autism.com](http://www.FutureHorizons-autism.com)

Contribution by:

**Sabrina DeBeer**

Speech Pathologist

Disability Services Commission  
Country Resource & Consultancy  
Team, Bunbury.

## Waitlist Times

**State Child Development Centre:**  
Preschool: 4–5 Months  
School Aged: 18+ Months

**Country:**  
Preschool: 3 Months  
School Aged: 12–18 Months

**Private Practice:**  
Within Weeks–Up to 1  
Month

**Disability Services Commission:**  
Metropolitan:  
Preschool:  
School Aged:

**Andrea Way CDC:**  
Preschool: Under 3 Months  
School Aged: 6–9 Months

**Joondalup CDC:**  
Not currently conducting.

**Armadale CDC:**  
Not currently conducting.

*A person's true  
wealth is the good  
he or she does in  
the world.*

*- Mohammed*

## Professional Development Corner

### ADOS Training Dates:

Tues & Thurs, 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> March  
Mon & Tues, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> May  
Mon & Tues, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> June  
Mon & Tues, 31<sup>st</sup> July & 1<sup>st</sup> August  
Mon & Tues, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September

### Training Requirements:

1. Trainee must attend both dates listed.
2. To book your site, contact Alana Maley.
3. Book early to secure a place.
4. Very limited numbers for people in Perth.
5. The training is free of charge.

### Contact:

Alana Maley on: 9426 9212  
Or: [alanam@dsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:alanam@dsc.wa.gov.au)

Venue: DSC, Colin Street,  
West Perth

Time: 9am–5pm

### ADIR Training Dates:

Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Feb, Tues & Wed 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Mar  
Mon, Tues, Wed 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> April  
Mon, Tues, Wed 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> July  
Mon, Tues, Wed 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> August

### Pre-requisites:

- Readings provided prior to training dates.
- Training suitable for Speech Pathologists and Psychologists.

Video modules with trainee rating the modules for inter-rater reliability will be required.

## New Member Section

We often have new friendly faces at our WAADF meetings, and would like to introduce you all to these new members:



Erika Blake

Hello, my name is Erika Blake and am currently in the position of Regional Manager for the Individual and Family Support Services for the DSC. My background is in Physiotherapy but I have spent the last 8 years

working in management, with approximately the last 18 months in the Regional Manager position. As part of my current role I am managing the Mildred Creak Autism Team in the North Metro Area. I am also involved in a joint initiative with DET in setting up a collaborative interagency

service framework for children with ASD. As I am relatively new to the area of ASD I am very much looking forward to meeting and working with members of the WAADF. My contact details are 9301 3800, and [eblake@dsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:eblake@dsc.wa.gov.au)

Mandy Corkill

Hello everyone, my name is Mandy Corkill. I am an Inclusive Education Consultant at the Association for Independent Schools W. A. I have been involved in education (as a teacher) in both Primary and Secondary schools for 19 years. I have been lucky enough to work in Queensland, the A.C.T., the Northern Territory over these years and most recently (6 years) in Western Australia. I have also spent 5 years in the nursing sector. The last 9 years of my teaching have been spent educating students with Special Needs. In particular I have been able to work with students who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder but I also have experience with educating students with Intellectual Impairment and others with a range of physical or neurological impairments. I have a teenage son who has an Autism Spectrum disorder. I look forward to meeting and sharing with you all at the WAADF meetings in 2006. Contact:

[mcorkill@ais.wa.edu.au](mailto:mcorkill@ais.wa.edu.au)

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. - Albert Einstein

Articles may be viewed only—any reproduction is prohibited by copyright. Contact [waadfsecretary@westnet.com.au](mailto:waadfsecretary@westnet.com.au) if you wish to view the articles (Canning Vale location) or view at the next WAADF meeting.

## Library Updates

**Autism Asperger's Digest Magazine:**

What I Know About George, by Tori Gallagher *I know when he was five he preferred to be upside down...*

Singing John's Song, by Nicole Cooley *Music therapy can be a valuable addition to a child's intervention program.*

Dare to See Normal, by Michele Ial-lonardi *Maybe, just maybe not everything is because of autism?*

Autism Around the World—Canada: Techniques for Remediation of Execu-

tive Dysfunction in Children with Development Disabilities, by Valorie N. Salimpoor *Strategies to help kids with processing, planning, organizing, flexibility and self-regulation skills.*

Letting Go, Moving On: A Tale of Adventure & Intrigue, by Elaine Berkeley *Parents... Are you ready?*

Featured Books:

Gut and Psychology Syndrome, by Natasha Campbell-McBride, MD *Understanding the nutritional biochemical*

*connections to neurological disorders.*

The Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships: Decoding Social Mysteries Through the Unique Perspectives of Autism, by Dr Temple Grandin & Sean Barron. *"Social Detectives" Temple & Sean put relationships under the microscope.*



**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
AUTISM DIAGNOSTICIANS'  
FORUM INC**

c/- 15 Banda Boulevard  
Canning Vale WA 6155

*Email:*  
waadfsecretary@westnet.com.au

The Western Australian Autism Diagnosticians' Forum meets quarterly to discuss standards, process, and clinical issues in the assessment and diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Western Australia.

Members include diagnosing clinicians across the disciplines of speech pathology, paediatrics, psychiatry, social work, clinical psychology and research working in the Health Department, Disability Services Commission and in private practice.

The forum aims to inform practitioners of new developments in the assessment and diagnostic process, establish standards for consistent practice across WA, facilitate interpretation of diagnostic criteria, inform practitioners of service delivery and research developments, and provide opportunity for case discussion.

**We're on the web! Visit  
[www.autismwa.org.au/waadf.html](http://www.autismwa.org.au/waadf.html)**

## Board Member Details

**Chairperson:**

Sarah MacDermott vegemite@westnet.com.au	Kate Smith Kate.smith@justice.wa.gov.au
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**Vice Chairperson:**

Ritu Campbell ritucampbell@bigpond.com.	Alana Maley: alanam@dsc.wa.gov.au
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**Treasurer:**

Sue Midford suzannemidford@hotmail.com	Robyn Weinstein robynweinstein@optusnet.com.au
Jane Lesslie jane@hitechnology.com.au	

**Secretary:**

Wendy Marshall waadfsecretary@westnet.com.au	Jane Klinken janek@dsc.wa.gov.au
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John Wray John.wray@health.wa.gov.au	Sabrina De Beer sabinad@dsc.wa.gov.au
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Board Meetings are held every 4–6 weeks. Please contact a Board Member if you have any issues you would like discussed.

