



## Participant Information Sheet

### Where is the 'auto' in autism?

#### Self-salience and social skills in adults with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder

Forty adults are being sought for this research between May and July 2016: **twenty adults with high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome, and 20 adults without a diagnosis.** Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand what the research will involve and why it is being carried out. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if required. Feel free to ask the researcher for more details or clarification.

*Thank you for your time.*

#### What is the purpose of the study?

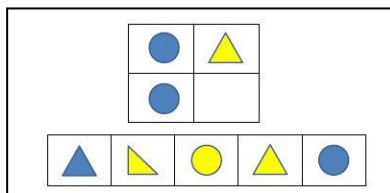
Who we are is made up of a number of ideas; for example, what we look like and how we spent last weekend. There is some evidence that we learn self-awareness quickly because it helps us to survive in a social world. Being able to differentiate between ourselves and others might play a key part in successful interactions. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can find it hard to form relationships. It is possible that these difficulties are associated with problems in distinguishing between aspects of themselves and other people. The aim of this research is to investigate further the development of a sense of self and its links with social skills, in those with and without ASD.

#### What does taking part involve?

The research will be carried out at a mutually-agreed time and place. You will be given this Participant Information Sheet and asked to sign your consent at the bottom. If you decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving the researcher a reason. The session will include four tasks and last for around **one hour**, although breaks will be available on request. Upon completion of the study, you will be entered in to a prize draw to win one of two £25 vouchers.

#### 1. Words and Pictures

The first activity involves listening to some words and saying what they mean to you. Afterwards, you will be shown some unfinished pictures and asked to choose the piece that is missing from five options.



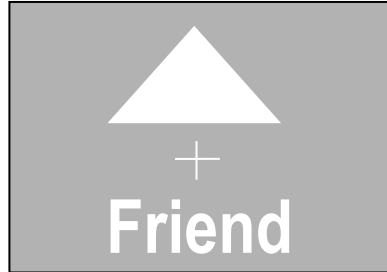
Picture courtesy of [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)

Word Reading Card					
A	the	up	he	you	box
	at	said	out	jump	fish
	one	cup	wood	bird	clock
	ring	water	window	men	light
B	oil	ship	running	dig	money
	paper	gate	knock	heel	skin
	coat	carpet	brick	thin	building
	tail	travel	babies	writing	climb
C	collect	early	place	piano	whistle
	invite	guest	electric	enormous	shoulder
D	wreck	favour	supplies	encounter	universal
	ceiling	generation	employment	cough	character
	avenue	experience	radiant	statue	audience
	curiosity	obscure	diameter	chaos	bolterous
	tentative	trauma	jeopardy	silhouette	disubory
	resentment	divulge	diplomacy	rheumatism	lyrical
	catastrophe	regurgitate	delicious	infinite	tertiary
	criticism	archaic	monosyllabic	mnemonic	facetious

Image from [www.ioe.ac.uk](http://www.ioe.ac.uk)

## 2. *Shapes and Names*

You will be shown some shapes on a computer screen and asked to learn names for them. Next, you will be presented with shape-label pairs. Your task is to decide if the names and shapes are matched correctly or not. You will indicate your decision as fast as you can by pressing one of two buttons on the computer keyboard. The time that it takes you to answer will be recorded.



## 3. *Relationships*

The third task requires you to think about the way in which you get on with other people. You will be given a questionnaire containing different sentences about social interactions. By choosing a number from 0 (not at all) to 3 (a lot), you will demonstrate how well each item describes your own relationships. You may choose not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

## 4. *Hidden Figures*

The final activity involves you being given simple shapes along with more complex figures. Your goal is to point out the basic shape in the larger image as quickly as possible. Your responses will be timed.



Figure from [www.link.springer.com](http://www.link.springer.com)

### **What are the benefits and disadvantages of participation?**

The research is not intended to benefit you directly. Nonetheless, your participation in this study is expected to help us to understand better the impact of self-awareness on social functioning. In the future, this information may be used to help individuals who have difficulties interacting with others. There are no known risks to taking part.

### **Will people know if I take part?**

The University of Stirling is responsible for the research. Only those who are involved in designing, conducting and managing the study will have access to your personal details. Confidential information will be kept in lockable filing cabinets and on password-protected computers. A code (rather than your name) will be used to identify your responses and the code key will also be kept securely. If you withdraw from the study part way, your data will be destroyed immediately. Otherwise, it will remain accessible for up to 10 years.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

Results will be reported in writing as part fulfilment of the researcher's MSc. qualification. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings, please provide your e-mail address below. Results may also be published in journals and used in presentations for autism services and academic institutions. The coded data may be shared with responsible representatives from the University of Stirling and scientific journals to ensure that the study has been run correctly and to support similar research in future. No information about the identity of the participants will be included at any time.

**Who has approved the study?**

The research has been approved by an independent group of people forming a Research Ethics Committee (REC). The purpose of the REC is to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity. Should you have any concerns, you can contact the Psychology REC, University of Stirling by emailing [psychethicssubs@stir.ac.uk](mailto:psychethicssubs@stir.ac.uk).

**Research Team details**

Thank you for reading this information. Please feel free to contact the researcher if you are unsure about anything that is written here.

**Yvonne Plenderleith (Researcher): Psychology, University of Stirling**

**Telephone: 07557657092 or E-mail: [yvonne.plenderleith1@stir.ac.uk](mailto:yvonne.plenderleith1@stir.ac.uk)**

Dr. Magdalena Ietswaart (Supervisor) and Prof. Peter Hancock (Second Supervisor);  
Psychology, University of Stirling.



Participant Code:

**Participant Consent Form**

**Where is the 'auto' in autism?  
Self-salience and social skills in adults with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder**

*Please tick the box to show that you agree with each statement.*

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to think about taking part and to raise questions and concerns with the researcher.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can stop taking part at any time without prejudice or penalty. If I withdraw from the study, information about me will be destroyed.
- I realise that responses collected during the study may be looked at by those who are designing, conducting and managing the research. My consent form will be kept separately from the results of the research. Personal information will be stored securely in line with Data Protection arrangements.
- I want to participate and I consent to the terms of the study.

Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please delete as appropriate to indicate your response.*

- I would like to receive a summary report of the results of the study. **Yes / No**
- I am happy to be contacted about future similar research. **Yes / No**

Participant e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your time.*