

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



ADDvanced Solutions
Supporting you to find the answers

ASD Severity Levels

The changes to the DSM-5 criteria for Autism gathered different presentations of autism under one diagnosis – Autism Spectrum Disorder. As a result, severity levels were agreed in order to distinguish between the varying levels to which individuals are affected; these are explained on the table below:

<i>Severity level for ASD</i>	<i>Social Communication</i>	<i>Restricted interests; repetitive behaviours</i>
Level 3 <i>requiring very substantial support</i>	<i>Severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills cause severe impairments in functioning, very limited initiation of social interactions and minimal response to social overtures from others</i>	<i>Preoccupations, fixated rituals and/or repetitive behaviours markedly interfere with functioning in all spheres. Marked distress when rituals or routines are interrupted. Very difficult to redirect from fixated interest or returns to it quickly.</i>
Level 2 <i>Requiring substantial support</i>	<i>Marked deficits in verbal and non-verbal social communication skills; social impairments apparent even with supports in place. Limited initiation of social interactions and reduced or abnormal response to social overtures from others.</i>	<i>RRBs and/or fixated interests appear frequently enough to be obvious to the casual observer and interfere with functioning in a variety of contexts. Distress or frustration is apparent when RRB's are interrupted. Difficult to redirect from fixated interest.</i>
Level 1 <i>Requiring support</i>	<i>Without supports in place deficits cause noticeable impairments. Has difficulty initiating social interactions and demonstrates clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful response to social overtures from others. May appear to have decreased interest in social interactions.</i>	<i>Rituals and repetitive behaviours (RRB's) cause significant interference with functioning in one or more contexts. Resists attempts by others to interrupt RRB's or to be redirected from fixated interests.</i>

Intellectual ability is not mentioned here though generally those at higher severity levels will have more difficulty academically. Individuals previously diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome will most likely be at level 1 in both RRBs and social communication.

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