

## **Assessing Asperger Behavior**

Using self-report methods is problematic when assessing children or adolescents with a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome (AS) or other high functioning individuals on the autistic spectrum. Reliability of self-report data by diagnosed A.S. individuals is of particular concern.

Our clinical experience with self-ratings has consistently revealed a lack of reliability on test-retest measures, self-report and concurrence with video data, and self-report with parent and or treatment provider assessment. These student self-report data improve with repeated training and practice over time in 'closed' environments, such as self-contained classrooms or highly structured residential settings. But such data requires qualified and cautious interpretation, even under those conditions.

The unreliability of self-report data is not surprising given AS individual characteristics such as social judgment deficits, misreading social cues, literalism in conceptualization of social conventions, impulsivity and generally poor self-estimation ability in their academic and social competence.

Data obtained on the James Rest Protocols for Moral Development Assessment, as with other methodologies, for measuring different types of domains, was assessed to be unreliable when reported by AS individuals.

AS data for environment specific tasks related to concrete demonstrations of performance within a highly structured environment, consistent task format and rehearsal, and timely feedback with record keeping, improved over time with repeated practice.

Self report of pain levels, or emotional status, that depend upon proprioception are also unreliable self report data when provided to pediatricians or other persons providing medical services or clinical treatment. In summary, AS individuals are unreliable self-reporters.