

## Autism/Asperger's

- Probably present from birth but more obvious when speech emerges (or doesn't or is lost)
- Wide variety of presentations from people with no speech to others with complex speech but usually involves routines, rituals, sensitivities (to light, touch, sound, taste), a need for order, detail over 'big picture'
- Autism v Asperger's – same disorder but people with autism have no interest in relationships, those with Asperger's do but struggle to understand them.
- Empathy is lacking or impaired but differs from psychopathy by lack of insight by which to manipulate the feelings of others
- Often seen as 'geeky', interested in single topics, patterns, rather than social signals
- Savants are people with very specific exceptional skills that stand out from their other capabilities
- Affects more men than women but this might be due to under-diagnosis in women who express ASD differently

### Whitney Bradley: *My Poverty, Like My Asperger's, Is Not a Myth*

Talking about why he's had so many jobs

Why have I had so many? I wish I had a good answer for it. One part is I get paid a bit better when I'm doing the haunted house stuff. But it's seasonal. Another, more common, problem is the more average jobs are filled with people who are less socially able than I am (which is a feat, because "Aspie"). Sooner or later they find out I'm autistic and it becomes a game to them. It's a handicap they can make fun of. They'll disorganize things because it amuses them to see me frantically clean them up. They'll touch me just to see me flip out. They'll make loud noises simply to upset me. When I swallow my emotional response they just try harder. When I go over their heads and ask someone to stop this behavior, I generally get chastised for "being a snitch" or whining. So I've stopped doing anything about it. I take the abuse as long as I can and I move on when the nervous breakdown is about to start.

Why did I preface this with bragging? Because being an "Aspie" means sometimes I act a bit... obtuse, tactless and blunt. So unless I'm fixing your bicycle, drawing a picture or finishing a Rubik's Cube in less than two minutes, I don't necessarily get on with people all that well. In a professional environment, where I can enjoy rigid expectations of how I am meant to interact with customers, I am usually regarded as the warmest, friendliest server you know.