



The Essential 5

THE PRACTICE METHOD FOR INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

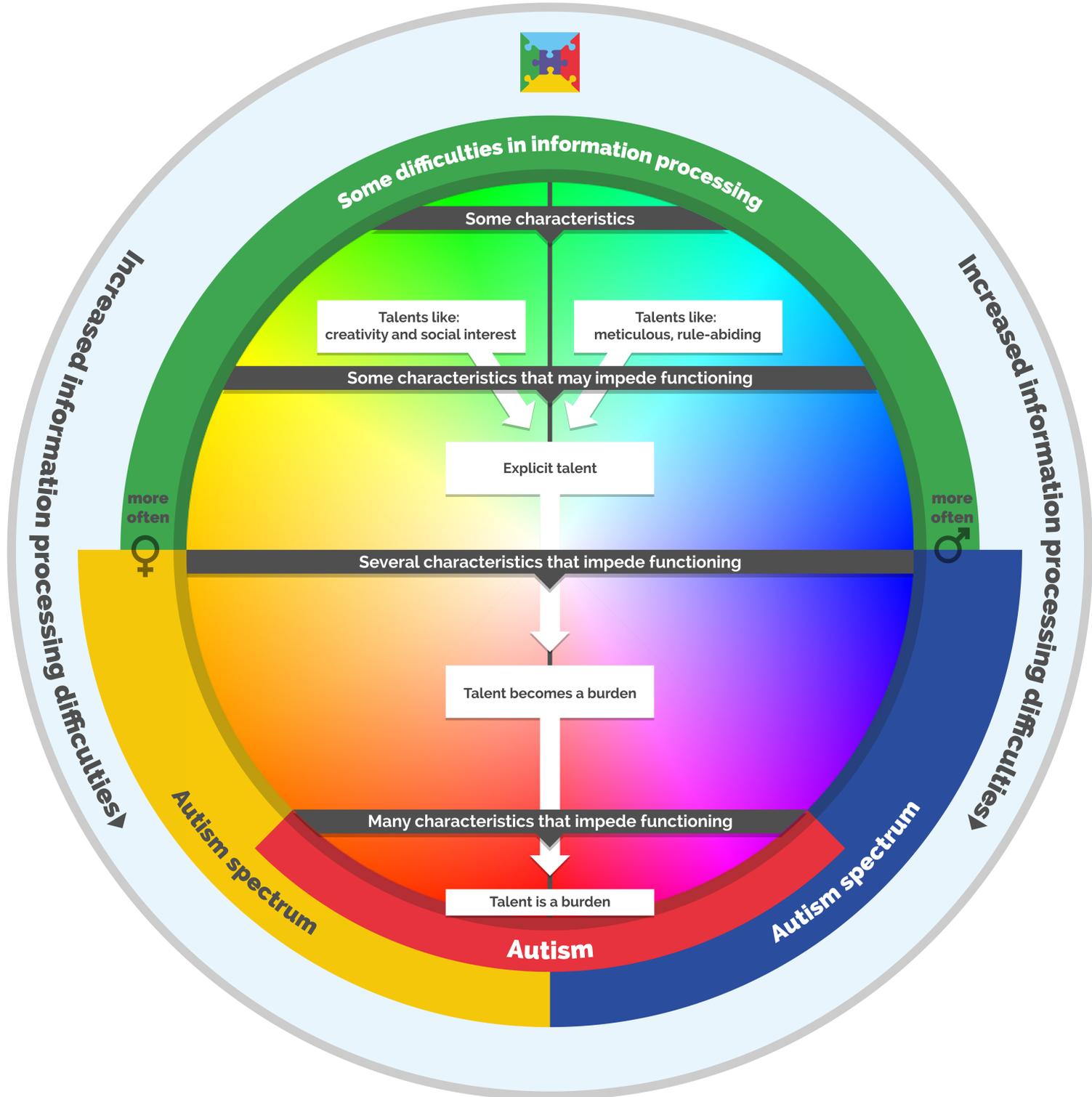
CIRCLE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM SYMPTOMS

Erasmus University Rotterdam



STRENGTHS

INCREASEMENT OF INFORMATION PROCESSING PROBLEMS BUT MORE OFTEN MISDIAGNOSED

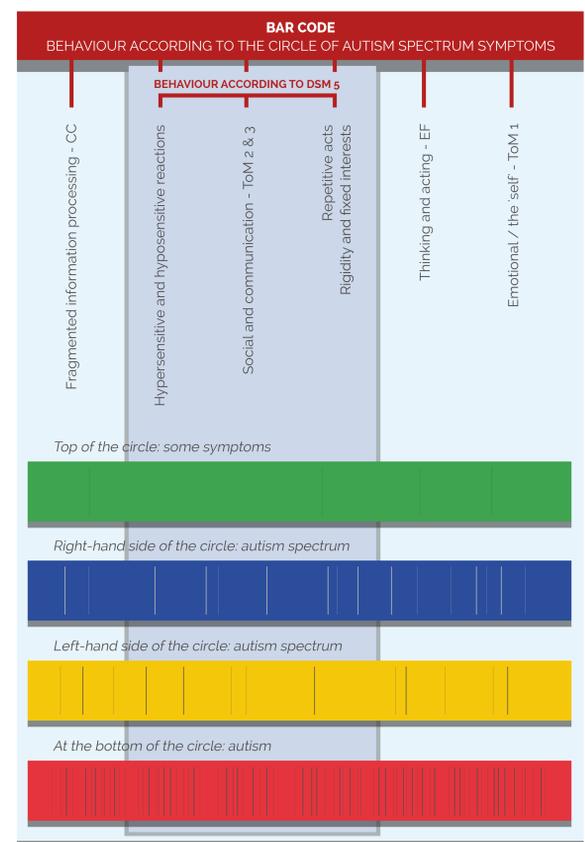


INCREASEMENT OF INFORMATION PROCESSING PROBLEMS AS DESCRIBED FOR ASD

STRENGTH BECOMES WEAKNESS

Autism is diagnosed three times more often in men than in women. However, nowadays, more women are getting the diagnosis and it becomes more clear that the symptoms women display differ from men substantially. Women who receive the diagnosis show interest in other people and are more socially involved. Also their interests are less eccentric. The symptoms do not meet the criteria for ASD as described in diagnostic manuals. The characteristics of autism are described as a line in which the autistic symptoms increase in number and/or severity. However, investigating the symptoms that are described, including those of women who receive the diagnosis, the autism spectrum appears more a circle than a line, ending in the autism spectrum. The circle consists of other symptoms that are a result of information processing problems, ultimately leading to autism.

Every person has his/her own strengths and weaknesses. But instead of focussing on weaknesses, the focus should be on strengths. These strengths are described in the Circle of Autism Spectrum Symptoms in the upper region. On the right side of the circle, the strengths are being very accurate, great eye for details, etc. On the left side of the circle, the strengths are creativity and being able to make connections. However, when these strengths are so explicitly present, that they impede daily functioning, for example focussing on details too close so that the overall picture is lost, or connecting so many things together that focus is lost, these strengths can become weaknesses. This weakness may lead to the diagnosis autism, regardless the expression of the symptoms described on the left or right side of the circle. The right side is described thoroughly. The left side needs more exploration, so misdiagnosis can be avoided and behavioral effects of information processing problems can be investigated in the broad autism spectrum, in both men and women.



* CIRCLE IS DESCRIBED IN MORE DETAIL IN THE BOOK: 'THIS IS AUTISM, FROM BRAIN FUNCTION TO BEHAVIOUR'.

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