

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Please welcome students who are neurodivergent learners. Many have several strengths which can benefit ABE classrooms. Be aware of the following common Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) characteristics:

- Students may have a need for routine and may become anxious when there is a change of plans.
- They may prefer to work by themselves rather than work in group settings.
- Many are visual learners.
- They may interpret information literally.
- They may have sensitivities to bright light, loud noises or certain textures.

Helpful hints for teaching a student with ASD:

- Meet privately with the student and ask about their learning style and how you can support them in class.
- Provide clear, explicit expectations and instruction.
- Write the class schedule on the board.
- Allow the student to work alone, if requested.
- Use visual learning strategies as much as possible. For example, giving instructions in writing and using visual aids, such as pictures, YouTube videos, drawings, or graphs to assist their learning.
- Avoid unnecessary changes. If changes must be made, provide advance warning and give the student a chance to ask questions.
- The student may need more guidance in addressing abstract concepts. Work with them to develop rules, models, learning aids, or protocols for representing and applying new subject matter.
- Some of the instructional strategies described in the chapter on ADHD will apply to students with ASD, if they report challenges with focus.