

## Autistic People are Socially Disabled

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### Abstract

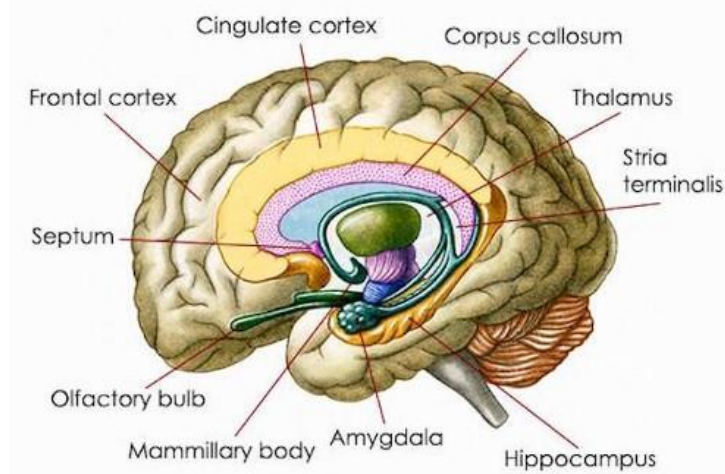
Autistic people are born into this world without innate biologically provided ways of emotionally connecting with other people. In the autistic brain, a dysfunctional cingulate gyrus (CG) keeps attention permanently fixated in the left frontal lobe (logical/analytical) – with no ability to access the right frontal lobe (emotional, creative), which plays a central role in spontaneity, social behavior, and nonverbal abilities. Autistic people live in a specialized inner space that is entirely intellectual, free from emotional and social distractions. They process their emotions intellectually, a process that can take 24 hours, by which time it is too late to have felt anything. To an autistic person, emotions are simply information. Autistic people cannot be emotionally available to others. Their unique neurophysiology creates for them the lifelong experience of being outsiders from society.

**Keywords:** *Autism, Asperger, Neurophysiology, Cingulate Gyrus, Hyperfocus*

### Introduction

Autistic people are born into this world without innate biologically provided ways of emotionally connecting with other people. [1,2] Autistic people live in a specialized inner space that is entirely intellectual, free from emotional and social distractions.[3] Autistic people process their emotions intellectually, a process that can take 24 hours, by which time it is too late to have felt anything. To an autistic person, emotions are simply information.[4]

### Neurophysiology of the Autistic Brain



The neurological structure of the autistic brain is the same as for any other brain. What is different about the autistic brain is how it functions with respect to its neurophysiology.[3]

<b>Cingulate Cortex/Gyrus</b>	Dysfunctional	The cingulate gyrus (CG) is that part of the brain which focuses attention. In autism, the CG keeps the person's attention fixated in the left frontal lobe, creating a perpetual state of hyperfocus.
<b>Left Frontal Cortex/Lobe</b>	Dysregulated	In the autistic left frontal lobe, alpha frequencies (8-12 Hz) predominate over beta (12.5-30 Hz), which is the exact opposite of the neurotypical brain. Higher alpha frequencies in the left brain appear to be compensating for the inability to access creativity and intuition from the right brain.
<b>Right Frontal Cortex/Lobe</b>	Inaccessible	There is normal brainwave activity in the right frontal lobe, with alpha frequencies predominating over beta. However, autistic people are completely unaware of anything that happens in their right frontal lobe, the place where emotions and social connectivity are experienced by neurotypical people.
<b>Amygdala</b>	Inactive	The amygdala plays a central role in the expressing of emotions, especially fear. A dysfunctional CG restricts the autistic person from feeling any emotion, with the result that the amygdala is non-functional. Autistic people are incapable of experiencing fear.

In a neurotypical brain, the cingulate gyrus (CG) acts like an automatic transmission that seamlessly switches attention back and forth between frontal lobes, as needed. In autism, a dysfunctional CG keeps the person's attention permanently fixated in the left frontal lobe (logical/analytical) – with no ability to access the right frontal lobe (emotional, creative), which plays a central role in spontaneity, social behavior, and nonverbal abilities. Some neurotypical people are left-brain dominant whereas others are right brain dominant. Autistic people are left brain exclusive. They speak factually, in a monotone voice, and with an expressionless face.[5]

The right frontal lobe, the place where emotions are experienced, is inaccessible to autistic people. The amygdala, the place where emotions are expressed, is inactive in the autistic brain.

### Autistic Traits

The unique and defining characteristic of autism is hyperfocus, the state of intense single-minded concentration fixated on one thought pattern at a time to the exclusion of everything else, including one's emotions.[6] All autistic traits are caused by the inability to run more than one mental program at a time.

<b>Mental Traits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense single-mindedness</li> <li>• Trapped in thoughts, mind always busy</li> <li>• Interruptions trigger mental anguish</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Traits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biologically incapable of feeling emotion</li> <li>• Incapable of reacting emotionally to anything</li> <li>• Processes emotions intellectually</li> <li>• Emotions are information</li> <li>• Understands love but cannot feel love</li> <li>• Understands empathy but cannot feel empathy</li> <li>• Incapable of experiencing fear</li> <li>• Cannot nurture self psychologically</li> <li>• Shrinks from emotional displays by others</li> <li>• Unable to defend against emotional attacks</li> </ul>
<b>Social Traits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences self as an outsider to society</li> <li>• Lacks innate ability to socialize</li> <li>• Unaware of feelings and needs of others</li> <li>• Oblivious to how perceived by others</li> <li>• Unaware of socially appropriate responses</li> <li>• Cannot pick up on subtleties, unable to take hints</li> <li>• Interested only in information</li> <li>• Bored by small talk</li> <li>• Content of conversation important, context irrelevant</li> <li>• Takes everything literally</li> <li>• Easier to monologue than dialogue</li> <li>• Misinterprets sarcasm</li> <li>• Unaware of social cues and nonverbal communication</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have difficulty following topic changes</li> </ul>
<b>In Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands love intellectually but cannot feel love</li> <li>• May understand empathy but unable to feel it</li> <li>• Cannot be emotionally available to others</li> <li>• Others cannot provide an emotional safety net</li> </ul>

## Irreconcilable Differences

Autistic Brain	Neurotypical Brain
▪ biologically incapable of feeling emotion	▪ highly motivated by emotion
▪ uses technically accurate words	▪ may use vague words and idle phrases
▪ interested only in information	▪ connects emotionally while talking
▪ prefers monologue to dialogue	▪ enjoys dialogue
▪ unaware of nonverbal communication	▪ aware of nonverbal communication
▪ oblivious to how perceived by others	▪ social awareness
▪ cannot be emotionally available	▪ may be emotionally supportive
▪ spontaneity not possible	▪ tends to enjoy spontaneity
▪ always direct and forthright	▪ can be indirect and subtle

## The Relationship Dilemma

Autistic people cannot feel what neurotypicals feel. They are incapable of imagining what it is like to live in a body that feels emotion.

Neurotypicals cannot feel an autistic person's inability to feel. They are incapable of imagining what it is like to live in a body that cannot feel emotion.

In romantic relationships, neurotypicals tend to avoid saying what they really mean. They beat around the bush and hint at what they want. They assume the other person will understand the implied meaning. This doesn't work on autistic people. If you want something from an autistic person, you have to say so.

Autistic people cannot provide the emotional support that a neurotypical partner usually expects. Neurotypicals do not understand that when autistic people are upset, they prefer to be alone. The best way to help them is not to help them.

## Conclusions

Autistic people come into this world without innate biologically provided ways of emotionally connecting with

other people. In the autistic brain, a dysfunctional cingulate gyrus (CG) keeps attention permanently fixated in the left frontal lobe (logical/analytical) – with no ability to access the right frontal lobe (emotional, creative), which plays a central role in spontaneity, social behavior, and nonverbal abilities. The unique and defining characteristic of autism is hyperfocus, which is the state of intense single-minded concentration fixated on one thought pattern at a time to the exclusion of everything else, including one's emotions.

Autistic people live in a specialized inner space that is entirely intellectual, free from emotional and social distractions. They process their emotions intellectually, a process that can take 24 hours, by which time it is too late to have felt anything. To an autistic person, emotions are simply information. Autistic people lack an innate ability to socialize and are oblivious to how they are perceived by others. They are unaware of the feelings and needs of others and cannot be emotionally available to others. Their unique neurophysiology creates for them the lifelong experience of being outsiders from society.

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