

from the Reach Library....

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Chantal Sicile-Kira, who previously wrote the award winning “Autism Spectrum Disorders”, looks at adolescence in this book I highly recommend. It’s a much needed addition to current literature on autism. Focusing on adolescents is a great idea, and the book is full of good, research-based information on both autism and adolescent development. It’s easy to read and has a personal, caring feel to it. Sicile-Kira herself has a seventeen year old son with autism, which lends authenticity to her writing.

The book begins with facts about autism spectrum disorder and how the characteristics are manifested in adolescence. It’s a great introduction to autism offering discussions regarding health, behaviour, sensory issues, motor skills, cognitive challenges, emotional issues and communication challenges.

The next chapter addresses family life at home with a teenager. Topics here range from acceptance of ASD, to sibling issues, marital issues, self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-care. She also talks about parents needing to take care of themselves. In all of these areas Sicile-Kira has concrete suggestions to make.

Next is “Puberty and Hygiene, Grooming and Dressing, and Sexuality” which includes when and how to speak to your child about these issues. She stresses the importance of these matters, reminding the reader that for all teenagers, looking good is very important. Also discussed are IEPs, learning styles, and advocacy, as well as preparing your child for these major transitions.

Underemployment of persons with autism is very common and in this next chapter which focuses on transition planning, Sicile-Kira emphasizes it is just as important for persons with autism to find meaningful employment, matching interests and skills, as it is for anyone else. There are also good sections in this chapter on determining your teenager’s needs and on college and living arrangements.

The book concludes with therapies and treatments. Sicile-Kira has tried almost every treatment available for her son and has found that almost all of them did some good. She offers

a nice summary of different approaches, including vitamins and medications, and talks about things to consider when you are trying to decide on an approach. This chapter is full of information on resources, such as books and links to websites for those looking for more detailed information.

