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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

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For information on:

ADA Accommodations

Meeting our Staff

Policies and Procedures

ADA Moves to Office for Equity & Inclusion (OEI)

ADA Services would like to announce that by the end of fall 2009, we will complete our transition from Human Resources to the Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI). This departmental relocation was recommended by two expert ADA consultants who visited last fall to review Virginia Tech’s ADA policies and procedures. The move is part of VT’s efforts to provide accessibility and accommodations for people with disabilities combined with its mission to increase and retain diversity.

Important Updates: Starting October 2009, the Human Resources Service Center will be answering the University ADA Services main phone line (540) 231-4638. The customer service representative will provide basic information about ADA Services and the accommodation process. ADA will maintain its same phone/fax numbers and physical location at Southgate Center throughout the fall.

ADAM

Starring Hugh Dancy as Adam and Rose Byrne as Beth, *Adam* is an endearing romantic comedy about a young man with Asperger’s Syndrome (AS—a form of highly-functional autism that makes social situations challenging or difficult.) When a beautiful young woman named Beth moves into the apartment above him, their unique courtship ensues. Overlooking their initial awkward exchanges, Beth eventually realizes Adam’s uniqueness is due to circumstances beyond his conscious. In one magical night, Adam and Beth find a familiar commonality in the stars and each other...

Check out the trailer! <http://www.foxsearchlight.com/adam/>



A story about
two strangers.
One a little stranger
than the other...

Adam

ADA Brown Bag Lunch

November 30th, 2009 12-1pm
Torgersen Museum
Room 1100

**Employing People with Disabilities:
Policies Performance and Best Practices**

REGISTER HERE:

October 15th - November 15, 2009

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1253029790200>

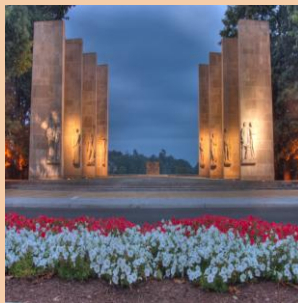
For those without computer access
call 231-4638 to register

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation, please contact the ADA office @ adainfo@vt.edu

Disability Studies Group

A Disability Studies Group has been created at Virginia Tech. The group consists of faculty and staff members from the Office for Equity and Inclusion, School of Education, University ADA Services, Political Science and others. “Disability Studies refers generally to the examination of disability as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon. In contrast to clinical, medical, or therapeutic perspectives on disability, Disability Studies focuses on how disability is defined and represented in society. From this perspective, disability is not a characteristic that exists in the person so defined, but a construct that finds its meaning in social and cultural context.”

(Taylor, S., Shultz, B., & Walker, P. (2003). *Disabilities Studies: Information and resources*. Retrieved August 21, 2009, from http://thechp.syr.edu/disability_studies_2003_current.htm)



We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.



Many people with Asperger's Syndrome live fully functional lives and make noted contributions to society. In fact, some of history's greatest figures are suspected to have AS —Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, Napoleon Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln, Leonardo Di Vinci, Henry Ford, Marilyn Monroe, and Bill Gates⁴

We wish to thank
Sharifa Felix,
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and Sandra Ratliff, ADA
Administrative Assistant
for serving as the ADA
Today Author & Editor.

If you or your office would like more information on ADA Services, please use the contact information below.

To receive this newsletter in an alternate format, please contact 231-4638, or adainfo@vt.edu.

Background and Common Traits

Autism is a neurological developmental disorder that affects the social interaction and communication areas of the brain. Asperger's Syndrome is a form of highly-functioning autism discovered in 1944 by Austrian physician, Hans Asperger. As part of the Autism Spectrum Disorders, Asperger's Syndrome (AS) affects an estimated 2.6 out of 1,000 people in the U.S.¹

The most prominent trait of people with AS is their obsession with one particular topic or area—"the geek factor" some call it. Their subject fascination combined with their extensive vocabularies commonly conveys the impression of "little professors" to their peers.²

While their book knowledge may be thorough, people with AS find social settings and interpersonal exchanges challenging, because they struggle observing and processing subtle verbal and non-verbal cues—people skills. As a result, others may describe people with AS as long-winded conversationalists, fast talkers, lacking a sense of humor, unempathetic or lacking tact.²

In addition, people with AS may have rigid or awkward body posture and movements. Some people with AS have increased perception of the five senses—sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing. So new environments or changes in routine can be overwhelming or can cause anxiety.²

For some individuals, a formal diagnosis may not come until late into their adult years, because the combination of traits may not be recognized or attributed to "just" inherent personality traits. Females more so than males tend to go undiagnosed because many researchers have not identified what Asperger's Syndrome exactly "looks like" in females and the fact that females tend to find effective or socially acceptable ways of coping with their "poor social skills."³

Treatment and Accommodations

Asperger's diagnosis is not a condemning one, but rather an enlightening one that allows individuals to appreciate their uniqueness and learn how to actively address the challenges in their lives.

In addition to traditional means of treatment, like doctor/specialist consultation, medication, and support groups, individuals with AS (and their employers) can implement simple workplace changes to insure optimum productivity and minimize anxiety. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/> provides an extensive list of suggestions for providing support for employees with AS. All accommodations should be coordinated through university ADA services (employees) or SSD (students.)

Check it Out

University ADA services has a library with videos, books, and materials that can be checked out. If you would like to read some of our books on Asperger's you can check out:

- *The Speed of Dark* a novel by Elizabeth Moon
- *The Curious Incident of the dog in the Night-Time* a novel by Mark Haddon

Sources:

1. "Asperger's Syndrome Characteristics." *Asperger Syndrome Institute*. Asperger Syndrome Institute. 16 Jul 2009 <<http://www.asperger-institute.com/aspergers-syndrome-characteristics.htm>>.
2. "Asperger's: My life as an Earthbound alien." *CNN* 28/03/2009 Web.14 Jul 2009. <<http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/conditions/03/28/autism.essay/index.html>>
3. Kitchen, Suzanne G. "Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Asperger Syndrome." *Job Accommodation Network*. 16 Jul 2009 <<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/asperger.html>>.
4. Fattig, Michelle. "Famous People with Aspergers Syndrome." *Disabled World* 28/12/2007 Web.14 Jul 2009. <http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_2086.shtml>