

Seven Stars Content

What is included in this document: 2 diagnosis content blocks, all the general content blocks, and all the requested links.

Diagnosis Content Blocks

Asperger Syndrome

How Does Seven Stars Help Teens with Asperger Syndrome?

Asperger Syndrome, sometimes referred to as Level 1 Autism, is a subtype of Autism that has now been lumped into the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis. Aspergers in children is considered a high functioning form of autism.

Seven Stars sees the potential for the teens with this disorder. Aspergers treatment often requires a multifaceted approach because no single treatment addresses all the symptoms. Upon entering the program, a multidisciplinary team thoroughly assesses each teen. From there, an individualized treatment plan is created based on the student's specific needs and strengths.

Seven Stars' holistic approach to treatment gives teens with Level 1 Autism a chance to develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Students participate in intensive social skills training, therapy, medication management, experiential learning, and adventure therapy while in the program. Each student's goal is reaching their highest potential to live a happy, productive life.

What are the Causes of Asperger Syndrome?

[Asperger Syndrome](#) used to be considered its own condition. In 2013, the DSM-5 changed the classification and included it on the autism spectrum. This high functioning form of autism tends to affect boys more than girls. Incidences of this disorder are on the rise, but this could be due to more effective assessment procedures to identify aspergers in children.

Like Autism, the causes of Asperger Syndrome are not readily known. Researchers do know brain abnormalities are to blame for autism and Aspergers. It is widely accepted that heredity plays a role in a child developing this condition. Since the number and severity of symptoms vary among individuals, it is suspected multiple genes play a part in Aspergers. Some research suggests Asperger syndrome may have a [stronger genetic component than autism](#).

Since the prevalence of Asperger Syndrome and Autism has increased over the last few decades, some researchers believe changes in human lifestyle may play a role. Although there is much disagreement about the topic, some possible environmental factors include:

- Heavy metal toxicity
- Perinatal factors
- Stress
- Infectious disease
- Some vaccinations

Researchers agree, however, that Level 1 Autism is not a result of poor parenting or emotional deprivation while growing up. It is definitely a neurobiological disorder not yet completely understood.

Symptoms of Asperger Syndrome

Although the symptoms and severity vary for each individual, some of the common [symptoms of Asperger Syndrome](#) include:

- Limited or inappropriate social interactions
- “Robotic” or repetitive speech
- Very good language skills but poor nonverbal communication
- Constantly talking about self rather than others
- Troubles engaging in conversation
- Obsession with specific, sometimes unusual, topics
- Lack of eye contact
- Inability to understand nonliteral phrases
- Difficulty understanding emotional or social issues
- One-sided conversations
- Awkward mannerisms
- Not responding to universal cues like facial expressions
- Difficulty understanding others’ perspectives
- Trouble controlling emotions
- Intense focus on subjects of interest
- Extensively relating facts about a subject of interest

Asperger Syndrome Treatment and Intervention

No single treatment for Level 1 Autism has been identified. Researchers agree, however, the earlier the intervention starts, the better the outcome. For children and youth, [specific interventions](#) include treatments and training for communication, language, and social skills. The encouragement of an individual's special skills can increase self-confidence and willingness to learn. Teachers as well as physical and occupational therapists are a great resource in shaping the skills of children and teens with Asperger syndrome.

No treatment for Asperger Syndrome can alleviate all symptoms. A combination of interventions, however, can help someone with Aspergers live a full, productive life. Some interventions include:

- Reinforcement of appropriate social behaviors
- Using communication and language strategies

- Development of social skills
- Relaxation therapy
- Encouragement of unique skills
- Career counseling and orientation
- Management of depression and other comorbid disorders

By holistically treating a child with Asperger syndrome, the outcomes for a happy, productive life are much more successful.

ADHD

How Does Seven Stars Help teens with ADHD?

Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a complex medical disorder often needing treatment. If you feel your ADHD teenager is out of control and not functioning well in traditional school settings, Seven Stars can help. Our unique residential program for teens with neurodevelopmental issues helps students develop strengths through a multi-phase process. Each student undergoes a thorough assessment process to determine the most effective individualized treatment plan. By understanding the needs of each student, creative interventions dedicated to continuous learning, practicing skills, and personal growth help each child with ADHD.

Teens with ADHD often require multiple approaches to address the complex needs of the disorder. In addition to medication management and intensive therapy, students take an active, hands-on approach to personal growth through our unique adventure therapy program. By using a variety of proven interventions, students with ADHD develop social skills, coping mechanisms, and the ability to succeed despite their challenges.

What are the Causes of ADHD?

It must be understood that ADHD is not just the result of poor personal habits such as laziness, lack of motivation, poor upbringing, or disobedience. ADHD is a [medical disorder](#) caused by factors affecting the brain's development and function.

There is no single cause for ADHD. Several areas of the brain including the frontal lobe, basal ganglia, and cerebellum play a role in the development of ADHD. The complex processes that regulate behavior, referred to as executive functions. These functions include processes such as inhibition, working memory, planning, and emotional regulation. When these areas of the brain are impacted by fetal exposure to toxic substances like alcohol and tobacco, exposure to lead, and trauma to the brain from a head injury or illness, ADHD has the potential to develop. In addition, heredity can also play a role in ADHD.

Since there are many myths about ADHD, here are some factors that do NOT cause ADHD:

- Diet: No research backs up the idea that food allergies or sugar causes ADHD.

- The vestibular system: Despite the opinions of some clinicians for years who tried treating ADHD with anti-motion sickness medicine, no research suggests the system of the brain that affects balance is to blame for ADHD.
- Poor parenting: No studies support the idea family environments cause ADHD. Inconsistent parenting, however, could make symptoms worse.
- Television: No studies have found a correlation between television viewing and ADHD

Symptoms of ADHD

ADHD is often diagnosed in children by the time they are teenagers. The average age of diagnosis is 7 years old. Common [symptoms of ADHD in children](#) include:

- Self-focused behavior: the inability to recognize others' needs and desires.
- Interrupting
- Trouble waiting for their turn
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Having angry outbursts at inappropriate times
- Difficulty sitting still
- Trouble finishing tasks
- Doesn't appear to listen when spoken to directly
- Lacking the ability to focus
- Avoiding tasks needing extended mental effort
- Trouble following instructions
- Daydreaming or ignoring what's going on around them
- Difficulty getting organized
- Forgetfulness
- Easily distracted

Though most children will exhibit at least some of these behaviors from to time, it may be a concern if these behaviors are persistent and affecting performance in school and social interactions.

Treatments for ADHD

ADHD treatment medication

Most experts agree medication is a key to [managing the disorder](#). The two main types of medication for ADHD include stimulant and non-stimulant. Medication shows positive results for about 80 percent of kids when proper type and dosage is determined.

Therapies for ADHD

The combination of medication and therapy is effective in helping children and teens with ADHD. A few of the common therapy options include:

Behavior Therapy

The goal of behavior therapy is to replace negative behaviors with positive ones. This is often achieved by using a reward system developed with the unique interests and needs of a child or teen.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

This talk therapy aims to get kids to think about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When teens replace negative or irrational thoughts with more realistic and positive ones, they can build a solid foundation for change. In addition, CBT helps with anxiety and depression--common co-occurring disorders related to ADHD.

Social Skills Training

Teens with ADHD often receive social skills training in the classroom, residential treatment centers, or other therapy settings. This helps kids learn and practice interaction skills making them more socially aware.

ADHD Natural Treatments

ADHD treatment without medication offers a more holistic approach to dealing with the disorder. Exercise, outdoor activities, supplements, changing diets, and mindfulness practices all offer benefits for some teens with ADHD. It's best to consult with a doctor before trying some supplements or dietary changes.

General Seven Stars Content

Adventure Therapy Programming at Seven Stars

As part of Seven Stars' comprehensive treatment model, we use experiential activities and adventure therapy to engage our students and bring them out of their comfort zones. These therapeutic activities provide unique opportunities for learning, growth, and building self-confidence. Once students go off-campus to explore the beautiful landscape surrounding Seven Stars, they see a world beyond their own troubles and struggles. They are able to connect with nature and others through challenging, instructional experiences.

Most teens love to learn by doing. While traditional schools and therapy has its benefits, our experiential activities provide a hands-on approach to personal development. At the Seven Stars residential phase, students split their weeks between residential treatment and adventure therapy.

Some of the adventure therapy activities we provide:

- Hiking
- Backpacking
- Mountain Biking
- Skiing
- Canyoneering
- Water Activities

Led by trained staff monitoring safety and progress, the adventure therapy activities are designed with each student's strengths and needs in mind. Though these programs are challenging and test the skills of our students, we ensure students are fully supported and not overwhelmed by the experience. As students embrace the fun and engaging activities, they learn real-life ways to interact and support others, build emotional resilience, and appreciate outdoor recreation as a positive life skill.

The students' progress during these excursions is remarkable. Not only are they exposed to new lifelong leisure skills, they encounter an amazing growth in social skills and personal development. These opportunities are a favorite for many of our students.

Stabilization and Assessment at Seven Stars

Available Stabilization Services

When students arrive at Seven Stars, they are often experiencing significant disruptions in their lives. During the application process, our team examines your child's current needs and history. From there we can assess if stabilization is necessary in our Acute Psychiatric Unit. Though many students do not need stabilization services, this unique feature of Seven Stars is a necessary step for some students with significant difficulties.

During the optional stabilization phase, students are closely monitored by the Seven Stars treatment team. Appropriate evidence-based approaches and medication management are used to address the immediate needs of your child. This phase can last from a few days to a few weeks.

The Assessment Process

Students at Seven Stars often have complex neurodevelopmental, psychological, and psychiatric needs. In order for your child to grow and thrive, the multidisciplinary treatment team develops a comprehensive individualized treatment plan to meet your child where he or she is at. This involves several assessment services from our diverse team of professionals to understand your child's specific strengths, needs, and challenges.

By using two types of assessments, we develop a better view of your child's potential. These include:

- **Formal Assessments** are administered in a prescribed timeframe. These proven standardized tests give insights into the treatment process.
- **Functional Assessments** involve observing behaviors over time as the student works through treatment. Trained staff conduct these ongoing assessments to determine the effectiveness of treatment and interventions. This allows the treatment team to develop continued behavioral, social, emotional, and academic progress goals.

By understanding each student from multiple perspectives during the assessment process, Seven Stars can provide the most effective interventions for each individual student.

How Do Students Gain Social Skills at Seven Stars?

Children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental issues often have severe deficits in their social interactions. This affects every area of their lives including relationships with family and friends, academics, and daily functioning. Struggles with relating to others and expressing emotions often leads to poor self-confidence, social isolation and anxiety, and depression.

Families reaching out to Seven Stars are often frustrated by their child's lack of progress with other interventions and treatments. They know their child has potential, but may not know the best way to reach it.

At Seven Stars, helping students learn and improve social skills is a continual process with a multi-dimensional approach. This begins with a comprehensive assessment process to learn your child's unique abilities and social struggles. From there, a highly trained and dedicated team improves social skills through therapeutic relationships and positive psychology--focusing on your child's strengths then building on them piece by piece until the desired skills are learned and fluent.

Seven Stars' nurturing residential environment goes far beyond typical classroom settings. Students practice social skills on a daily basis through therapy groups, specialized academic programs, interactions with teachers and mentors, and social activities with peers.

In addition, Seven Stars encourages new social experiences through adventure therapy. From outings in the wilderness to specialized team building activities, our students get an engaging, hands-on approach to interacting and relying on others to complete a team goal. In addition, adventure therapy helps students build self-confidence, emotional resilience, and problem-solving skills.

Being able to interact socially is an essential life skill necessary for a child's independence, feeling of self-worth, and overall happiness. Seven Stars will help your child discover his or her social potential.

Rebuilding Family Bonds at Seven Stars

When a child is diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental issue, often parents and families are overwhelmed. Caring for a child with significant needs is a full-time commitment, but, like all families, there are so many other things needing attention--careers, maintaining a house, tending to siblings. In addition, upon initial diagnosis, most families have very little knowledge about these disorders and proper interventions. Needless to say, all these issues can cause a significant strain on parents, siblings, and the child diagnosed with the disorder.

Seven Stars knows the importance of family in a child's life. We understand families seek answers and struggle for the best ways to care for their child. This is why family involvement is one of the main focuses on a student's treatment.

Seven Stars residential treatment provides a "time out" for the entire family. As your child progresses through the program, parents and siblings have a chance to recharge and rebuild family relationships. Providing a much needed break, however, is only the beginning of what we offer families.

From the moment parents contact us to beyond your child's graduation, we offer family support and education. Your child's therapist will consult with the family and provide guidance on rebuilding family relationships. We teach families the best practices to support their child and each other. Our therapists will help your family learn communication techniques, behavior interventions, and insights into how your child's mind works.

We encourage families to attend one of our Family Workshop weekends. This provides everyone in the family an opportunity to reconnect with their child/sibling, celebrate achievements and successes, and participate in family therapy sessions. Families also get a chance to rebuild bonds during recreational activities.

At Seven Stars, we believe changes have to occur in our students and their families. That is why we are dedicated to involving the family in every step of the growing process.

The Power of Positive Psychology

Students at Seven Stars, just like anyone, thrive when given a chance to use their strengths to live a better life. [Positive psychology](#) is a scientific study focusing on personal strengths to enable change in the individual. This relatively new form of psychology emphasizes the positive influences in a person's life. Positive psychology believes happiness is derived from both mental and emotional factors.

In positive psychology, the concept of happiness is broken down into three manageable components:

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Meaning

The exercises and techniques of positive psychology are designed to enhance one or more of these components in a person's life. By identifying happiness in the moment rather than reflecting on an experience later on, people develop a greater appreciation and meaning in their lives.

Positive psychology offers the students at Seven Stars several [benefits](#) including:

- **Reducing stress while boosting well-being:** Positive emotions help lessen the impact of stressful events. By regulating stress, students feel better physically and mentally.
- **Aids coping and emotional resilience:** Learning to better cope with events helps students with cooperation, socialization, and self-control.
- **Increases engagement and performance in life:** Developing positive emotions help improve physical and mental health, social relationships, and self-confidence to try new things.

At Seven Stars, we embrace the concept of positive psychology and all its benefits. We use the strengths of our students as a starting point of the healing process. Since every student comes to us with unique abilities, our thorough assessment process determines how we could use positive psychology for their benefit. From there, our dedicated multidisciplinary team finds the best treatment approaches to allow students to harness their strengths for personal growth. Instead of focusing on what is wrong with a student, we discover how potential can change lives.

Why You Shouldn't Wait to Get Help for Your Teen

If your child has been diagnosed with autism or another neurodevelopmental disorder, getting help as soon as possible can significantly improve your child's quality of life. Since many developmental disorders could get progressively worse if left untreated, enrolling your child in a quality program like Seven Stars could lessen the symptoms and give your child a better chance at reaching his or her potential.

While autism and other developmental disorders are generally a lifelong condition, scientific research suggests getting help early is definitely beneficial. Programs like Seven Stars that offer a holistic approach using developmental and relationship-based techniques as well as applied behavior analysis, can offer the [following benefits](#):

- **Academic success:** Students learn how to use their strengths to excel in their academic pursuits.
- **Better communication:** Students with neurodevelopmental disorders often have difficulty communicating with others. Intervention programs teach communication skills and apply them in real-life settings.
- **Improved IQ:** Early intervention programs have the potential to increase a student's IQ by 18 points.
- **Gaining speech skills:** Nonverbal students entering early intervention programs are more likely to gain verbal skills.
- **Decreasing negative behaviors:** If your child has difficulty communicating which often leads to "melt-downs" or other troubling behaviors, enrolling in intervention programs teaches children coping skills and ways to communicate their difficult emotions.
- **Better physical health:** Holistic programs designed for teens with neurodevelopmental disorders often incorporate physical and experiential activities into their intervention strategies. This promotes an appreciation for being active and steers children away from a sedentary lifestyle.
- **Lessening comorbid conditions like anxiety and depression:** When a child with neurodevelopmental disorders is given a chance to embrace their strengths and discover meaningful social interactions, they boost their self-confidence and feel more connected to others.

When a student enrolls in the Seven Stars program, we thoroughly assess their needs and strengths and provide interventions for them to grow. Don't wait to let our program have a huge influence in your child's life.

Links:

Do you think your child might have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a simple [checklist of ADHD symptoms](#) to help parents determine if further investigation from a healthcare provider is needed. It is a simple, user friendly page any parent could use. In addition, parents could print out a copy of the checklist to bring to their child's healthcare provider.

Asperger syndrome used to be considered its own condition until being incorporated into the autism spectrum. An article by [Kidshealth.org](#) is a great primer to this form of high functioning autism. If your child has been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome and you are wondering about the disorder, treating it, ad ways to help your child, this article is a valuable resource.

There are many myths surrounding autism and Asperger syndrome. Some of the most misinformation revolves around the causes of the these developmental disorders. If you are wondering about the connection between vaccines and autism, [this article by Kidshealth.org](#) will set the record straight. This is a must-read for any parent concerned about vaccinating their child.

Nonverbal learning disorder (NVLD) involves difficulties recognizing and responding to unspoken or nonliteral communication. It can be hard to spot the signs and symptoms for this developmental disorder. [Understood.org](#) breaks down "what you're seeing" in this disorder for various age groups including, preschoolers, grade-schoolers, middle-schoolers, and high-schoolers.

Has your child recently been diagnosed with autism? There's a good chance you're feeling overwhelmed and not sure where to find information and resources. A good start would be checking out this article about the [top ten autism websites recommended by parents](#). Here you will find information about research, treatments, and finding support for you and your child.

[Autism Beacon.com](#) was started by a mother of a child with autism. Knowing how alone and in the dark she felt when her child was diagnosed, she created a website to guide parents through others' knowledge and experience. Autism Beacon is a place of sharing with several informative articles from research, bullying, everyday life, and so much more.

If you are searching for information to better understand and care for your child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Chadd.org offers a great [page dedicated to tips and resources](#). You could find local and national resources, support groups, and learn about evidence-based practices for ADHD.

Social media is more about sharing photos and connecting with friends. The Autism Moms support group has a [dedicated Facebook page](#) with over 38 thousand likes. Parents could like and follow this page to get more information on parenting a child with autism. The community is welcomed to everyone and seeks to give comfort to struggling parents.

If your child suffers from anxiety or others emotional issues, you might want to consider incorporating positive psychology into your parenting strategies. Positive psychology involves harnessing a person's strengths create a happier, more meaningful life. Be sure to check out this article from the [Anxiety-Free Child](#) to learn about positive psychology and parenting.

Technology is a big part of all our lives. From social media, smartphones, video games, and streaming movies, it is hard to get away from all the temptations of screen time. Unfortunately, all our access to technology could be taking a toll on your child. If you fear you child is addicted to technology, consult with [this article from Child Psychologist.com](#). You will find the common symptoms as well as tips for helping your child.