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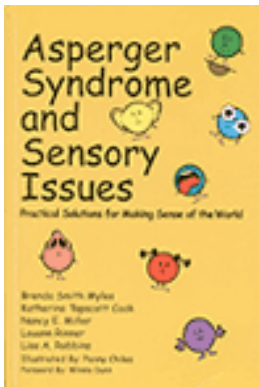
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## INTRODUCING THE SENSORY GANG



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# AAPC

Autism Asperger Publishing Company

Newsletter



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## Newsletter

### ★ A closer look

**Stephen Shore**  
(September 2004)

Most of us get up in the morning and go to one job from 9 to 5, with only minor variations. How would you handle the daily tasks connected to at least four different careers in one day? You would probably feel overwhelmed.



But for Stephen Shore, it's all in a day's work. On any given day Stephen may find himself in the college classroom, busy writing his latest book or finalizing notes for his next workshop. Even after all this, he still has time to teach private music lessons to children with autism spectrum disorders and work on his doctorate in special education. All this from a man who was diagnosed with atypical development with strong autistic tendencies himself.

Stephen was born in Boston on September 27, 1961. At the time, his mother suffered from undiagnosed agoraphobia, an atypical depression. His older brother had been recently diagnosed as mildly retarded. At birth, Stephen seemed perfectly healthy. He began talking at about six months, but then quickly stopped. He didn't talk again until he was four years old! As Stephen's parents contacted various professionals suspecting that something was wrong with their son, they were told he was too sick to be treated on an outpatient basis, and it was recommended that he be institutionalized. But believing that there was potential for improvement, his parents refused to follow the recommendation. Stephen's mother spent a lot of time talking and playing with him, especially after his older brother started preschool. Stephen says even though he didn't appear to be aware of her and what she was doing, she continued her efforts believing that, somehow, what she was doing was beneficial to him. It worked, as he slowly began admitting her into his world. Later, with a lot of help from his parents, teachers and others, Stephen worked hard to find his place in school and among his peers.

In his book *Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome*, Stephen describes the struggles he faced in elementary, junior and high school before finding a more accepting place in college.

"Acceptance is getting better. There is a greater awareness now," Stephen said during a recent phone interview with AAPC.

Over the years, one of Stephen's biggest struggles has been whether or not to disclose that he has autism. "I was working with a mentor to help me with facial recognition. I didn't tell my mentor for a long time I was on the spectrum. When I finally did, my mentor was pretty surprised!"

As Stephen became more comfortable with himself, he found it easier to tell others about his autism. And he found ways to fit in that have made his life full.

Most days find Stephen teaching classes on autism, statistics, computers, special education or music on the college level. He is associated with five different institutions of higher learning - Boston University, Salem State College, Emerson College, Leslie University, and a local community college. If he's not teaching, he may be in the classroom himself, as a student. He is completing work on his doctoral degree in special education at Boston University with a focus on helping people on the autism spectrum develop to their fullest potential.

Stephen's teaching extends beyond the classroom to his love of music and children. He works with children on the spectrum, teaching them how to play a variety of musical instruments. "But I don't teach drums! They are too loud," he said. As a person on the spectrum, loud noises can seem even louder to Stephen than they would to others. He starts most children off on the piano or the recorder because these instruments are simple and easy to learn. "It's very therapeutic," Stephen says. "Learning how to play an instrument gives them a real life skill for community interaction they can use in life." Stephen's wife, Yi Liu, also plays music. Many times they collaborate at home, with Yi Liu on the piano or the harp and Stephen playing the trombone, flute, piano or the latest instrument he is attempting to learn.

When not in the classroom or teaching private lessons, Stephen travels the world giving workshops and lectures on autism and related issues. As a highly sought after speaker, he makes about 40 to 50 appearances a year.

All that Stephen has learned and experienced over the years as a person with autism has been a basis for his two books, *Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome* and the recently released *Ask and Tell: Self Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum*. (See the review of *Ask & Tell* in this newsletter.)

Stephen's schedule is very busy but his life is very fulfilling. "Just like with all people, the potential of those on the autism spectrum is unlimited," he notes. And Stephen Shore is proving the sky is the limit.