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The Autistic Spectrum: Characteristics, Causes and Practical Issues

Jill M Boucher

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'The author of this excellent new book states in the preface that she intended to "provide an account of autism that people with little or no specialist knowledge will find comprehensible and digestible, but which at the same time offers more advanced readers a clear summary of existing knowledge". In my opinion, she has achieved her stated goal, in a most impressive volume which does justice to the complexity of the subject covered, without being over-long or alienating the less knowledgeable reader. This is no mean feat, as the book covers topics as disparate as the potential genetic cause of autism and the principle of inclusive care as applied to people with autism. The result is a handbook which I would have no hesitation in recommending to an intelligent parent of a child with autism, a teacher, and undergraduate student or a clinical trainee. In fact, I feel that this book has something to offer even a supposed "expert" in the study of autism since it so neatly synthesises historic and current understanding of the condition... a thoughtfully written book, which makes a modern, through and readable account of a complex and intriguing condition' ***- Autism***

'This is an authoritative, accessible and original approach to our current understanding of autistic spectrum disorders' - ***Rita Jordan PhD, Emeritus Professor in Autism Studies, University of Birmingham***

'Jill Boucher is a leading academic and clinician who brings an individual and authoritative perspective to the autism field. In this book she does an excellent job of communicating a broad range of practical as well as theoretical issues to a general audience, making up-to-date information about this puzzling condition accessible to a wide readership. Boucher's book is a welcome and unique addition to the literature' - ***Tony Charman, Professor of Neurodevelopmental Disorders, University College of London***

What are the historical foundations of autism and what precisely is meant by the 'autistic spectrum'? How can we explain behavioural patterns of people with autism, young or old, and what are the major theoretical bases for understanding these? What is the latest thinking regarding diagnosis, and what are the most effective strategies for assessment, education and care for people with this condition?

This provocative new text sets out to answer these questions. It charts developments in understanding the nature and causes of autistic spectrum disorders, guiding students through theories at the psychological, neurobiological and 'first cause' levels to methods of assessment, intervention, education and support.

Written as an introductory text for those with little prior knowledge of autism but also as a source of basic information and references for those already familiar with the field, this book will be invaluable for a broad range of vocational and academic students and for parents and professionals who want an account of current facts and theories.

Jill Boucher is Professor in the Autism Research Unit at City University and Honorary Professor of Psychology at Warwick University.

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