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## How to understand adolescents with Asperger Syndrome: a clinical account and observations over 17 years

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Numerous papers have been published since the first description of a condition which was originally described by Hans Asperger in 1944 as „autistic psychopathy“, was later called „Asperger syndrome“ and is now subsumed under the term „autism spectrum disorders“, and still, the condition is an enigma. After some remarks on history and classification as well as on assessment and differential diagnosis, the talk will concentrate on considerations about etiology and about different approaches towards understanding the condition. Currently, neuropsychological theories seem to be the best way of approaching children and adolescents with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. A theoretical concept will be presented including theory of mind, executive functions, and central coherence, and an attempt will be made to understand the condition in terms of integration deficits affecting the cognitive, affective, and social functioning cerebral systems.

The main features, the developmental course and also the result of treatment measures will be exemplified by videotapes of a patient whose development could be followed up for 17 years. The diagnosis was made when he was 15, followed by numerous intensive treatment activities. He is meanwhile 32 years old and a high school teacher.