



NAME: DWIGHT

PROFILE: 18 Y/O MALE, FIRST-YEAR; PHYSICS MAJOR; CELLIST IN THE WESTMONT ORCHESTRA

DX: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

## Background:

Dwight is a first-year student who is focused on achieving a career in physics. Several weeks into the semester, you notice that he has above-average attention to detail in his academic work and is often very enthusiastic about specific topics that are presented in class. However, his communication during class is frustrating to other students, especially when he talks out of turn. Occasionally, Dwight seems to lose focus on the topic at hand and talks about subjects other than the lecture you are presenting. When he speaks in class, he seems to deliberately avoid eye contact. He also seems agitated when there is a lot of stimulating activity and noise in the classroom. Dwight gets frustrated when he cannot sit in the same seat or work with the same partner. What you may not know is that Dwight was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at a young age. Thus, he has a unique set of personal characteristics that influence how he learns, socializes, and interacts with people, and various environments.

## Signs and Symptoms:

**Differences in Social Interaction:** Dwight may struggle with social cues, maintaining eye contact, and understanding non-verbal communication. He may prefer solitary activities or have difficulty initiating, maintaining conversations, or understanding how to conclude a conversation.

**Repetitive Behaviors:** Dwight may engage in repetitive movements (stimming) or have specific routines he adheres to strictly. These behaviors can help him cope with stress or sensory overload.

**Sensory Sensitivities:** Certain sensory stimuli, such as loud noises, bright lights, or certain textures, may be overwhelming for him. He may seek out quiet, calm environments to avoid sensory overload, or want to utilize repetitive stimuli he is familiar with.

**Specific Interests:** Dwight may have intense, focused interests in specific topics or hobbies. These interests often provide comfort and fulfillment, but he may have a challenge with shifting focus away from them.

**Difficulty with Transitions:** Changes in routine or unexpected events can be difficult. He may require additional support and time to adjust to new situations.





## Common Accommodations that may meet Dwight's needs:

- **Extended time for assignments and exams** may help him to process information and complete tasks effectively.
- **A private testing location** will help him avoid the distraction of environmental sensory stimulation.
- **A choice to sit in a preferred location** in your class can help with reducing sensory overstimulation and allow for the classroom consistency that he requires to participate fully in class.
- **The ability to stand in the back of the class** when needed will allow him to reduce unexpected sensory stimulation.
- **The ability to take occasional breaks from class** will assist him with self-regulation when the classroom is overstimulating.
- **Flexibility in attendance policies** may help with difficulties with transitions from one setting to another.

## Common Referrals that may meet Dwight's needs:

- **CAPS**
  - Therapy can be very beneficial to people with ASD. It can assist them with managing and navigating their sensory stimulation activities and social interactions. Many people with ASD also struggle with depression and loneliness as they have a desire for social connections, but they may find making or maintaining those connections to be difficult.
- **Student Center for Success**
  - **Peer Coaching:** Participation in peer mentoring or support groups can provide Dwight with social connections and opportunities to develop social skills in a supportive environment.

## Conclusion:

Navigating college as a student on the autism spectrum presents both challenges and opportunities for growth. With the right support and accommodations in place, Dwight can thrive academically and socially, contributing their unique perspectives and talents to the college community.

