

NEWS RELEASE

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Asperger Syndrome Experts Endorse New "INTRICATE MINDS" Peer Awareness Video

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Winston-Salem, NC – Some of the country's leading experts in Asperger Syndrome (AS) have endorsed a new video designed to help classmates accept and befriend students with AS, who are now frequently subjected to teasing, harassment and isolation. The video is titled, "INTRICATE MINDS: Understanding Classmates With Asperger Syndrome."

Asperger Syndrome is a neurobiological disorder on the higher-functioning end of the autism spectrum. While people with AS typically have IQ's in the "normal to very superior" range and are usually educated in mainstream classrooms, they also typically have serious deficiencies in social and communication skills. The number of persons diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome is on the rise and it is increasingly likely that students will have classmates with AS.

"INTRICATE MINDS" features moving interviews with students who have AS describing how they think, act and feel – and how they're routinely treated. The students talk about their strengths as well as their challenges and describe how important it is to them to be treated with respect. The 12-minute video notes speculation that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein had AS.

Although the video focuses on Asperger Syndrome, the points it makes about acceptance and tolerance are applicable in a wide range of school bullying-prevention programs. It's designed to be shown to high school and middle school students and used as a staff development tool.

Coulter Video of Winston-Salem, N.C., produced the video. The Asperger Syndrome Education Network (ASPEN), a volunteer, non-profit organization based in Edison, NJ, provided input to the content of the program and is making an initial purchase of 1,000 copies. ASPEN will be donating a copy of the INTRICATE MINDS video to every school district in the state of New Jersey during March, 2005.

The video retails for \$30.00 plus shipping and is available for purchase at the Coulter Video website: www.coultervideo.com.

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**EXPERT ENDORSEMENTS OF
“INTRICATE MINDS: Understanding Classmates With Asperger Syndrome”**

Fred R. Volkmar, M.D., Yale University, Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Psychology

“This video provides an excellent introduction to Asperger Syndrome for typically developing adolescents and children. Individuals with the disorder movingly describe their own experience of the condition. This video will serve as an excellent resource for teachers, school psychologists, speech pathologists, and guidance counselors in helping typically developing peers understand classmates with AS.”

Brenda Smith Myles, Ph.D., University of Kansas, Associate Professor

“Intricate Minds offers an authentic view of Asperger Syndrome through the eyes of adolescents with this exceptionality. This poignant video is a must-see for teachers and children who interact with students with AS. It fosters an understanding that is unfortunately rare in today's world.”

Jed E. Baker, Ph.D., Director, Social Skills Training Project

“Every school system must have this video! What better way to understand and build acceptance for students with Asperger Syndrome than to see and hear such unique, intelligent, and likable teens speak for themselves. It is both enlightening and compelling to watch these individuals explain their difficulties and simply ask to be accepted for who they are. All middle and high school students should see this!”

Robert L. Hendren, D.O., University of California, Davis; Professor of Psychiatry; Executive Director, M.I.N.D. Institute; Chief, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

“This much needed educational videotape has teenagers with Asperger Syndrome touchingly describe what it feels like to have the disorder. Young people and adults will learn to interact with people who have Asperger Syndrome with greater understanding as a result of this well-produced video. I highly recommended it to teachers and librarians to review and show to their students.”

Charles Cartwright, M.D., UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School; Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry; Medical Director, The Autism Center

“This teaching video is a very important and worthwhile endeavor that can help promote positive interactions between individuals with AS and their peers. I commend ASPEN and the producers of the video for providing this valuable resource to middle and high schools. It will surely offer an excellent opportunity to raise teens' awareness of AS and increase their willingness to engage with a classmate or peer with AS.”

Additional information about the INTRICATE MINDS program and sample clips from the video are available at www.coultervideo.com. Additional information about Asperger Syndrome is available on the ASPEN website at www.aspennj.org.

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