# **Social Literacy Class**

A 12-week program specifically designed for young adults on the autism spectrum transitioning to adulthood

February 18th to May 5th, 2016

Thursdays 6:00-8:00PM



Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders have unique social deficits that interfere with their ability to communicate effectively, find employment, and develop meaningful interpersonal relationships. Many cannot process nonverbal social cues such as facial expressions and body language. Their ability to intuit others’ emotional states is limited, and therefore they cannot anticipate behavior in other individuals. This “mindblindness” causes problems in communication and often leads to their misperceptions of other people’s emotions and motivations. Social Literacy, a curriculum developed at the University of Pennsylvania and taught for over 10 years, has been featured in the *New York Times* and NPR’s Radio *Times*.

* + The program focuses on developing an awareness of nonverbal cues, conversation skills, job interviewing skills, and interpersonal relationship skills.
	+ The participants practice these skills in class and then work individually with a social coach to reinforce these skills. In response to current views of social cognition and the importance of imitation in the development of empathy, our curriculum emphasizes observation of social behavior, rehearsal (imitation) of those behaviors and experience using the behaviors in a variety of settings.
	+ The social coaches are instrumental in creating these experiences and therefore in the participants’ developing new compensatory social behaviors.
	+ The curriculum incorporates material from anthropology, social psychology, neurobiology, and primatology as it relates to human social behavior.
	+ The class has been taught in New York and Philadelphia locations for 12 years with over 500 participants.

**Developed by**

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