



# EuroHPC Summit Week 2022



Inclusion of a person with Asperger's Syndrome in the  
workplace.

From 22 to 24 March 2022 | Paris, France

#EHPCSW #PRACEdays



## .What is Asperger's Syndrome?

- It is a neurological condition, coined by a psychiatrist named Hans Asperger, in 1943.
- It is marked by difficulties in social situations, decoding non-verbal cues, situations in their context, seeing the whole picture. Focused on details rather than the generalities. Difficulties with abstract reasoning of concepts like timing, priorities, appropriateness.
- Strengths in tasks that requires focus on some details, like programming skills, technical skills, tasks that require assembly, motivated by curiosity and exploration.





## What is Asperger's Syndrome (continued)

- Many people may have the condition without having diagnosed, especially if their community accepts their quirks. Others may need help adapting to social conventions, and society may need help in understanding their quirks.
- A number of people with the condition have succeeded thanks to their skills, like Temple Grandin, who's success is attributed to understanding animal behavior, Elon Musk, is known to have Asperger's Syndrome. So does Dan Akroyd, as well.





## My condition.

- I was diagnosed in 1995, by Dr. Laurent Mottron.
- This helped me learn more about my differences, my quirky interests, and eventually integrate in a career that fits my personality.
- In 1997, I started to work at Université du Québec à Montréal, as a computer technician. I had mentoring from a colleague. I also had informal social skills training.
- Before, I lost jobs due to not understanding what was unsaid, and taking things too literally. (not doing overtime, and leaving at the same time, because I did not know the context called for overtime).





## My condition (Continued..)

- Support groups for people with Asperger's syndrome helped me a lot, for socializing. I had one participant share that neurotypical people use telepathy. That is because, nonverbal cues, and contexts, not being perceived make it look like telepathy.
- Problems with adapting to changes cause problems. I have a problem with changing fashions, and I am stuck in the 1970's in that department, however when it comes to changing technology, I adapt quite well, except for subscriptions models for software.





## Transitioning from School to Work

- Learn the rules of verbal and non verbal communications.
- Understanding expectations.
- Integration in social activities, and after work activities.
- To help clarify expectations:
  - Put in writing (Using e-mail, or Teams) instructions for tasks.
  - Use Calendar apps like Outlook, for deadlines and reminders.
  - No need for specialized tools, but regular tools may be need for extra reminders, including reminders to keep on task. The Pomodoro technique may be useful.





## Social anecdotes from 1998

- I met Philippe Segers when he was a student in climate sciences at Université du Québec. We became friends instantly, because, for one, we share a similar sense of humor, which is often a critique of social norms I find absurd. Often a mix of dark humor, at times, often attacking those who insist I change things that do not need be changed.







*“Tous les vices à la mode  
passent pour vertus.”*

*Molière*

Here is an example of my kind of humor, using a photoshopped image of Molière, the famous French playwright, where his long hair is transformed into a modern haircut. Here I was mocking the tendency for the entertainment industry to “Disneyfy” classic movies, when remaking them, and adapting ancient styles to modern styles. Today there is a major debate over a similar thing happening with a new made for TV version of Lord of the Rings.

The caption translates to “All vices that are in fashion pass as virtues”







## Maturing with Asperger's Syndrome.

- Time flies, as I am nearing 63 years of experience in life.
- As I grew older, I get to know the ropes of life with neurotypicals.
- I value long term friendships, and fidelity in relationships.
- My curiosity with respect to new technology hasn't changed.





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The EuroHPC Summit Week conference series receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 823767 (PRACE-6IP), 824151 (HPC-GIG).

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