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Cook's "The Asperkid's secret book of social rules:The handbook of (not-so-obvious) neurotypical social guidelines for autistic teens (10th anniversary edition)" (book review)

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Book Review



Cook, J. (2022). *The Asperkid's secret book of social rules: The handbook of (not-so-obvious) neurotypical social guidelines for autistic teens* (10th anniversary edition). London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 304 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 9781787758384

Jennifer Cook's 10th-anniversary edition of *The Asperkid's Secret Book of Social Rules* includes a new chapter titled "Leveled Up: Dating, Flirting and Just-Friends-Ship," discussing dating and attraction, but still includes Cook's wit, honesty, and "hold the pillow" truths for autistic tweens and teens. From her own experiences as an autistic person and mother to three autistic children, Cook understands the challenges of unspoken social rules. Her book aims to provide autistic teens with guidelines about these unspoken rules from hygiene to personal space and even making friends and dating.

The handbook is like other teenage self-help books but with a specific autism focus. Although, the social rules Cook highlights are good reminders for anyone on the human spectrum. The book begins with an introduction explaining Cook's experience with autism and her support for those reading the book. The remainder of the book discusses the unspoken social rules first listed as need-to-know rules in bullet form followed by chapters to further explain them. Finally, Cook includes several rules in short single sentences that would fit on a sticky note and comic strip practice situations. In each part of the book, Cook ensures that Asperkids or kids with autism are understood as special and unique. She ensures readers are encouraged and supported both through her logical explanations and willingness to share embarrassing stories from her past.

All areas of social rules are addressed including the fact that different cultures have different rules. As Cook is an American, her rules apply most specifically to American culture, but much of the advice is applicable to any culture. Cook is teaching Asperkids that although not neurotypical, they do not have to be outcasts and friendless. This handbook would be a great addition to high school and middle school libraries as well as public libraries. Community service organizations or churches with outreach to teens would benefit from having Cook's book. It should be noted that this book does not have a Christian focus and thus the rules do not include social rules explicitly based in Christian values.

Reviewer

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