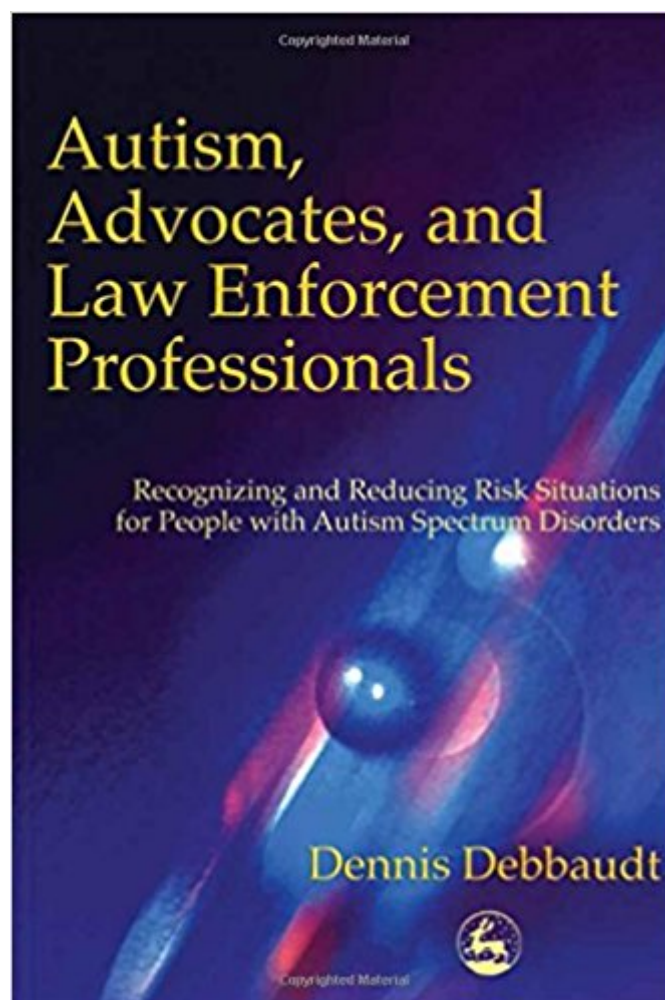




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# **Autism, Advocates, And Law Enforcement Professionals: Recognizing And Reducing Risk Situations For People With Autism Spectrum Disorders**





## Synopsis

Individuals with developmental disorders are seven times more likely than other people to come into contact with police and their responses to encounters with the law may not always be socially appropriate. How can the needs and responses of people with autism spectrum disorders be reconciled with the duties of the police to serve and protect the community? In this book, private investigator and autism advocate Dennis Debbaudt provides essential information for both groups. He explains how typical manifestations of autism spectrum disorders, such as running away, unsteadiness, impulsive behavior or failure to respond, may be misunderstood by law enforcement professionals, with serious consequences. For individuals with ASDs, he offers advice on how to behave in encounters with police and other law enforcement professionals. Aimed at raising awareness and facilitating communication between people with autism and law enforcement professionals, this much-needed book will be a valuable resource for both communities.

## Book Information

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The book highlights some important issues that UK police forces will do well to learn from -- The Journal of Adult Protection In this book Dennis Debbaudt provides essential information for both groups. I highly recommend this book specially for the police and mall security people although it is quite useful for the caregivers too. -- OAARSN Book Reviews

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Journal of Adult Protection)In this book Dennis Debbaudt provides essential information for both groups. I highly recommend this book specially for the police and mall security people although it is quite useful for the caregivers too. (OAARSN Book Reviews)

This a superb resource for law enforcement - and for those interested in helping people with autism handle potential contacts with law enforcement better.

I wish every law enforcement organization would have this as REQUIRED reading in their training, with follow-up by a professional person with knowledge of Autism! As a parent, I used it to explain the actions of the police when they took my Autistic son into custody for shop-lifting. Fortunately, as far as I know, he was treated ok, but didn't understand that a "holding cell" was jail. He was high-functioning enough to cooperate with the personnel. Our local Autism Society chapter held a training session for all law enforcement and emergency medical personnel with a well-qualified sheriff's deputy, who has a son with Autism, from San Diego, CA doing the training, and no one showed up, which showed a lack of interest in educating themselves, so there must be training incorporated into their official training! They need to understand behaviors and comprehension levels common in those with Autism--both in males and females, which could be different. Such understanding could lessen negative behavioral reactions, making the whole situation easier for everyone. A few years ago in our county, a developmentally-disabled young man with Autism, was killed by law-enforcement personnel who didn't understand that he was unable to understand what was going on. If they'd been trained to recognize symptoms, he could be alive today. Everyone should read this book to understand the difficulties that both sides face when encountering people of all ages with Autism in a law enforcement situation.

Although I was personally disappointed in this book, I can't fault the author. My motive in purchasing it was to learn how to help someone I know well, who has Asperger's Syndrome, deal with police officers (or better yet, avoid them entirely.) Unfortunately, that book may not yet have been written. Debbault's book does help me understand how officers can and should be trained in dealing with persons with autism, and I wish such training were mandatory, since there are now many, many potential problems due to the prevalence of autism in its various forms.The author's website is probably just as helpful to advocates and higher functioning persons with autistic spectrum disorders as is this particular book. Perhaps, one day, this author will write an article for those of us with a loved one who has autism, so that we can educate him or her, for those times when the law

enforcement or security person has only minimal training, but still has authority. The book does provide information to law enforcement officials in how to avoid what the author terms "unfortunate situations." Until this knowledge is more broadly disseminated, there will be too many of those situations. So, if you are a cop or know one, buy this book and pass it along.

As a mother of a four year old autistic child, I'm plagued with the worries of "what will happen to my child when I'm gone." As such, we have set up our wills and our estates to take care of him. However, there are even more practical issues to worry about that Dennis Debbaudt brings to light in his book. People with developmental disorders are seven times more likely to come into contact with law enforcement than regular citizens. Our autistic children are socially impaired, and the ignorance of this disorder is rampant among police ranks and other "first responders" to an emergency situation. Often "autistic traits" can be misinterpreted as drug abuse, hostility and belligerence, dementia, or suspicious behavior that can appear as criminal intent. People with autism have been accidentally killed in crime situations, or have given false confessions to crimes they didn't commit largely due to police ignorance of this disorder. This is a good primer for police and other first responders. It gives a good overview of why certain investigation techniques are not effective in dealing with autism. The second half of the book is directed at parents and caregivers - with good tips about informing local police of your child's condition, keeping your child safe at home, in school, and while traveling. There are also tips on spreading autism awareness to police and other first responders on a grassroots basis.

This was a very informative book regarding the difficulties law enforcement individuals face when confronted with what looks like "red flag" criminal behavior by individuals who are rarely in control of their behavior and who generally do not respond to verbal commands. While written five years ago, this is still a timely topic, not just for law enforcement professionals, but for families who care for loved ones diagnosed with Autism. The perspectives of the author are definitely written from the heart as well as from a solid professional foundation. Anyone who is caring for a loved one afflicted with Autism should read this book and put into practice the recommendations identified.

A must for law enforcement who are unfamiliar with autism and related behavior. It should be used in conjunction with "Dangerous Encounters--Avoiding Perilous Situations with Autism" by Bill Davis. In 2007, Raymond Lee Mitchell, a young man with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), died after a struggle with sheriff deputies from alleged autism-induced "excited delirium syndrome", a condition

theorized to lead to sudden cardiac arrest. Raymond was throwing a tantrum and the mother felt forced to call the police. The deputies got into a struggle with the youth, who died as a result. The officers in this case may not have realized that a person with ASD has difficulty understanding verbal commands and body language. To prevent tragedies such as Raymond's, guidelines provided in this book can be used by police and correctional officers regarding identifying aggression and challenging behavior in these youth. It should be used with real-life examples and in-depth training.

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