

Autism, Neurodiversity and Autism Acceptance: Information That Everyone Should Know

Resources Compiled From Information Shared By the Autistic Community

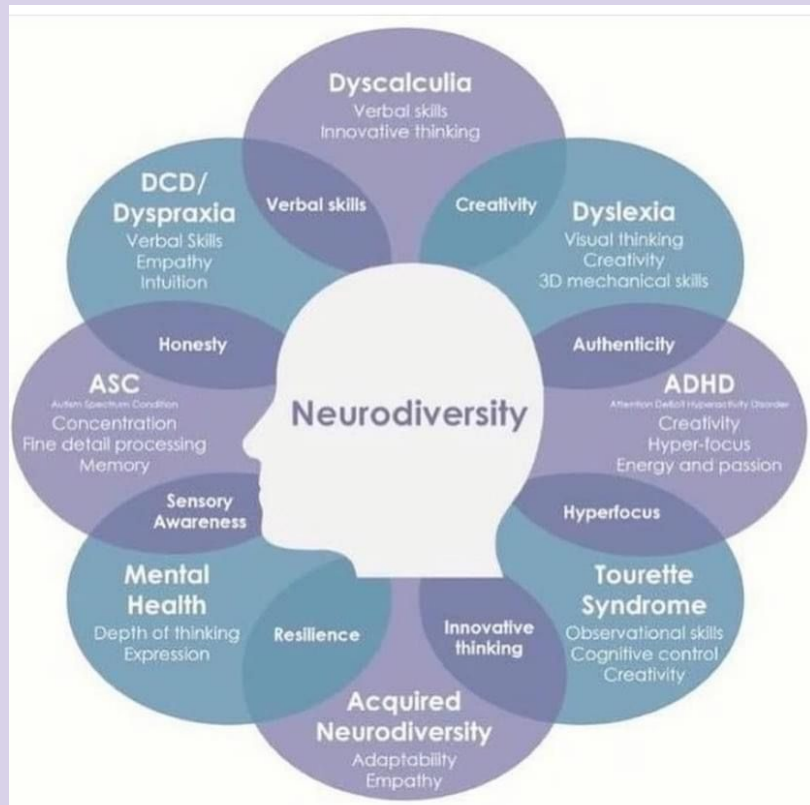
About Autism

- [What is Autism?](#)
- [Welcome to the Autistic Community](#)
- [About Autism](#)
- [Autistic Science Person](#)
- [Autism 101: Resources from the Autistic community](#)
- [A Guide to Understanding Your Autistic Child](#)
- [How To Ask An Autistic 101](#)
- [Is Everyone A Little Autistic?](#)
- [Introduction to Autism, Part 1: What Is Autism?](#)



Neurodiversity

- [Neurodiversity: Some Basic Terms & Definitions](#)
- [Neurodiversity: An Insider's Perspective](#)
- [Throw Away the Master's Tools: Liberating Ourselves from the Pathology Paradigm](#)
- [Unleash the Power of the Neurodiverse Brain](#)
- [THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO AUTISM: Neurodiversity FAQ](#)




“The Spectrum”

- It's a Spectrum Doesn't Mean What You Think
- Understanding the Spectrum - comic strip explanation

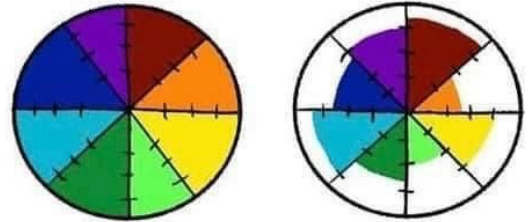
Autism Spectrum

The Autism spectrum is not linear



less autistic very autistic

The Autism Spectrum looks more like:



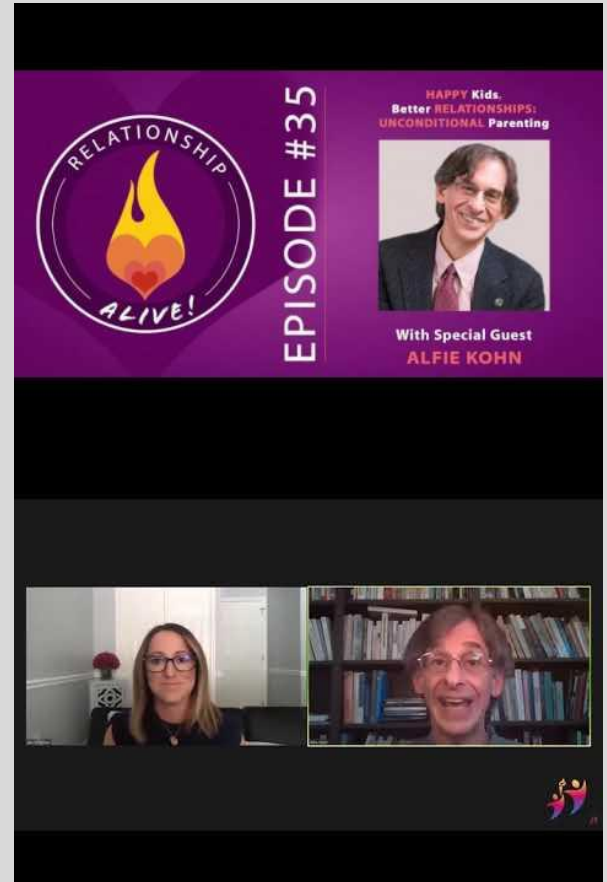
- Social skills
- fixations
- routines
- sensory issues
- stimulation
- perception
- executive func.
- other

→ Terms like “high functioning” and “low functioning” are harmful and are not used anymore

Autism - sketches

Behaviors, Resources and How to Help

- A checklist for identifying sources of aggression
- About the CPS Model
- Strategies and Interventions\
- Autistic peer-to-peer information transfer is highly effective
- Why Punishment Doesn't Work and What Does
- Recognizing How Autistic Children Express Love
- PARENT SUPPORT
- Females And Autism / Aspergers: A Checklist
- Autistic Anxiety
- Neurotypical individuals fail to understand action vitality form in children with autism spectrum disorder
- The Explosive Child
- 100-ish Books on Autism and Neurodiversity – Not an Autism Mom
- Neurodivergent Narwhals



Common Challenging Behaviours ➡ What's Really Happening?

BEHAVIOUR	MAY LOOK LIKE	MAY BE
Non-compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willful misconduct • Attentions seeking • stubbornness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty translating verbal directions into action • difficulty understanding
Repetition of mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willful misconduct • being manipulative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty linking cause to effect • difficulty seeing similarities • difficulty generalizing
Failure to sit still	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention seeking • interference with others • willful misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neurologically may need to move while learning • sensory overload
Failure to work independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willful misconduct • poor parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic memory problems • difficulty translating verbal directions into action
Failure to complete homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irresponsibility • laziness • unsupportive parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • memory deficits • difficulty transferring what is learned in class to a homework assignment
Lack of punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laziness, dawdling • poor parenting • willful misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty understanding the abstract concept of time • need for assistance to organize
Poor social judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor parenting • willful misconduct • effects of child abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty interpreting social cues from peers • lack of knowledge of what to do
Physical intrusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willful misconduct • deviancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hyper or hypo sensitivity to touch • difficulty understanding social cues re: boundaries
Stealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberate dishonesty • lack of conscience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty understanding concept of ownership over time and space • immature thinking ("finders keepers")
Lying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberate lying • sociopathic behavior • lack of conscience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problems with memory and/or sequencing • difficulty accurately recalling events • attempt to please by telling you what you presumably want to hear • confabulation (creating false memories – see glossary)

How to Create an Autism Accessible Home

Follow these seven principles to create a home that is accessible and accommodating to your child's unique neurology. Individualize these strategies to your child's needs and create an environment for them to naturally thrive!



Subtract Dysregulating Sensory Experiences

Eliminate sensory experiences that cause distress. Modify to make things less overwhelming. Find alternatives for achieving the same ends. Protect and warn against what is distressing or distracting. Don't punish meltdowns.



Add Regulating Sensory Experiences

Provide positive sensory input. Have an on-the-go sensory toolkit. Encourage stimming! Create a dedicated safe space they can always go to when needed.



Teach to Your Child's Learning Style

Is your child a visual learner? Kinesthetic? Do they learn best by watching or doing? Do they have a hobby or passion they frame experiences by?



Structure Daily Activities & Environments

Use explicit instructions and systems for daily activities. Utilize visual schedules. Label and color-code to make things visually organized. Give clear indications when an activity is complete. Find ways to orient them to the space they are in.



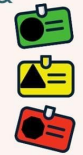
Allow Time for Processing & Transitions

Use visual timers and transition cues between activities. Let your child finish what they're doing before moving onto the next task. Give them time to shift focus and process questions or commands.



Honor All Communication & Teach Self-Advocacy

Honor all forms of communication, not only spoken words. Remember behavior is communication, too! Provide robust alternative forms of communication. Make needs easy to communicate alternatively even for speaking children. Teach bodily autonomy and consent. Respect "NO". Teach self-understanding and self-advocacy.



Eliminate Unhelpful Expectations

Ask yourself what the core concerns of your expectations are - health, safety, happiness? Ask if those needs can still be met in a different way. Does your child need to learn *exactly* this behavior? Do they need to engage in *that* task in *exactly this way*? Think creatively!



Sensory Resources

- What's In Your Sensory Kit?
- How Autistic People Hear the World: Auditory Chaos and the Search For Silence
- Autism & Sensory Diets for Sensory Regulation- An Autistic Perspective
- Sensory Processing is Only Half the Story: Movement Differences in Autistic People



SENSORY SEEKING VS. SENSORY SENSITIVE

Sensory Seeking (Boy):

- I could bounce on a trampoline & spin in circles on the tire swing all day long
- I like to smell things
- I love to play with the lights and turn them on and off
- I enjoy making lots of noise – the louder the better
- I don't notice if my clothing is disheveled or not on right
- Tackle me, roll on the floor with me, give me bear hugs
- I love taking risks, jumping from high up and crashing into things
- I love having my hair brushed or played with
- I chew on everything in sight. I love crunchy foods
- I love being tickled and massaged
- I hate wearing shoes

Sensory Sensitive (Girl):

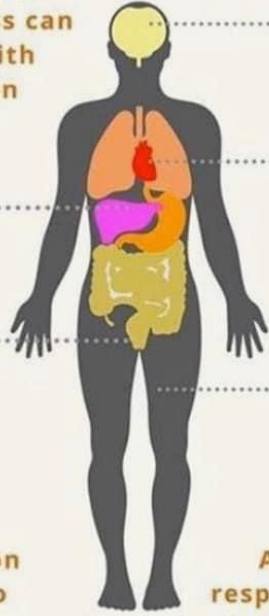
- I am scared of trampolines, monkey bars or to swing high
- I dislike having my hair brushed
- I hate certain food textures so I'm a picky eater
- I close my eyes in bright lights
- I cover my ears to loud noise
- I'm very sensitive to smells
- I take out the tags in my clothes and there's some fabrics I won't wear
- I don't like being tickled
- Don't touch me
- I'm really cautious with every step I take
- I hate being barefoot

Interoception

- Interoception Kit
- Interoception and sensory processing issues: What you need to know

INTEROCEPTION

THE EIGHTH SENSE: KNOWING WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE YOUR BODY



Evidence suggests poor interoception awareness can lead to difficulties with emotional regulation

Overeating or forgetting to eat, not feeling thirsty or feeling thirst too frequently

Not feeling the urge to urinate or feeling an intense urge to urinate frequently


Disrupted interoception awareness can lead to autistic meltdowns

Inability to recognize signs of getting tired or fatigue

Not noticing increased heart or breathing rate or noticing it to the point it becomes distracting or overwhelming

Unusually high tolerance or sensitivity to pain, may not notice if cold or overheated

A person can be over-responsive to one particular internal signal and under-responsive to another



NEUROPOSITIVE LIVING

Vestibular System



Vestibular Cheat Sheet



Created By Lemon Lime Adventures 2011

Vestibular Avoiding Behaviors

- * Scared of Movement Activities
- * Fearful around playground equipment such as stairs, swings, merry-go rounds, etc
- * Fearful of elevators
- * Dislikes being turned upside down or picked up
- * Can appear clumsy or Uncoordinated
- * Can appear stubborn
- * Avoids stairs or holds on tightly with both hands on the railing

Vestibular Seeking Behaviors

- * Unable to sit still
- * Needs to be in constant motion (fidget, rocking, swaying, spinning)
- * Level 10 on most movement activities
- * Can be very impulsive
- * Can't get enough movement
- * Runs everywhere, instead of walks
- * Takes unsafe risks both inside and outside
- * Prefers to be upside down or hang off a couch or chair

Vestibular Activities

- * Swinging
- * Games like Freeze Dance
- * Riding on Trikes and Bikes
- * Spinning
- * Jumping on Trampolines
- * Hanging Upside Down

*These are merely suggestions and should be used as a resource. Please consult with a certified OT before starting any sensory diet.



THE VESTIBULAR SYSTEM an internal GPS system for the body

CAR -

Where the vestibular is housed (You begin at home)

ROADS -

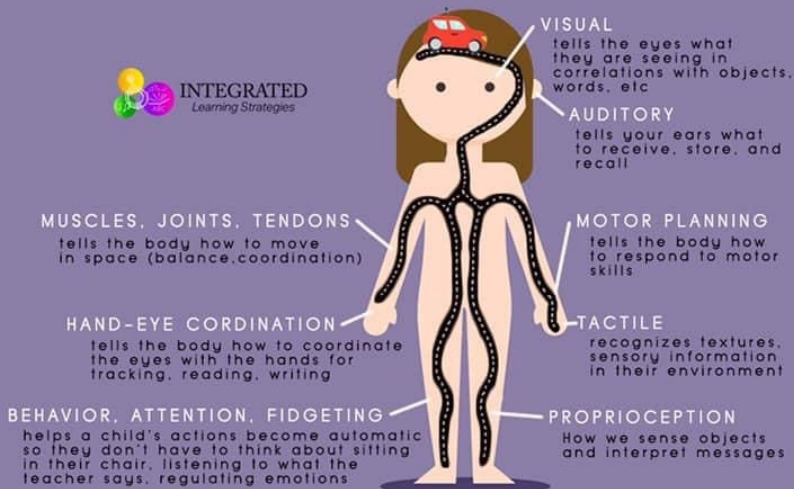
Vestibular or GPS system sends messages and signals of which roads the body must follow

DESTINATIONS -

Where your vestibular system directs you to

BASE OR GROUND -

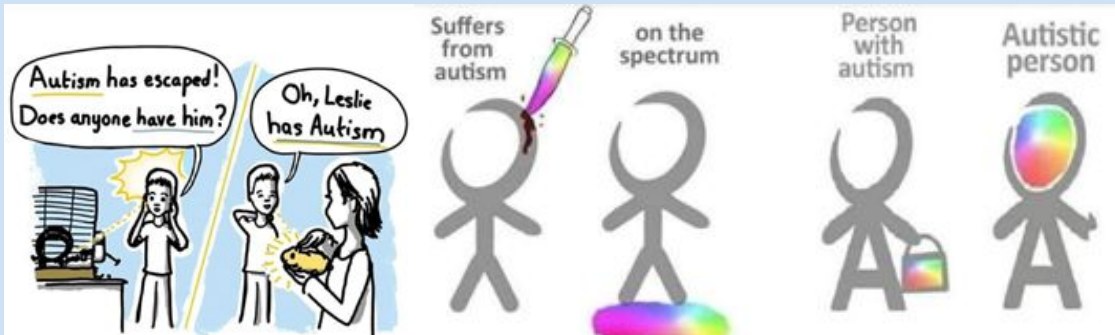
Gravity (The vestibular tells the body where it is in relations to time and space)



Most Autistic Individuals Prefer Identity-First Language

- Identity-First Vs Person-First Language
- Identity-First Language
- Editorial Perspective: The use of person-first language in scholarly writing may accentuate stigma
- Resource: key articles on identity-first language
- 'Autistic' or 'has autism'? Why words matter and how to get it right

<p>Person with autism</p> 	<p>Person with gay</p> 	<p>This is how 'person-first language' ('person with autism') sounds to a lot of autistics.</p> <p>Autism cannot be extracted from the personality and therefore most autistics prefer 'identity-first language' ('autistic people').</p> <p>(But you should always ask the individual and say whatever they prefer, not what YOU prefer).</p> <p> Pebbles Art Instagram: mental_health_for_you www.pebblesart.wordpress.com</p>
<p>Person with blind</p> 	<p>Person with Norwegian</p> 	



Neurology is not an accessory
www.identityfirstautistic.org

Why Not the Puzzle Piece?

- The Ableist History of the Puzzle Piece Symbol for Autism
- Puzzle Piece is Hated by the Autistic Community: the history and what to use instead
- #AskingAutistics: How Do You Feel About the Puzzle Piece Symbol?

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T USE THE PUZZLE PIECE FOR AUTISM

- It was created in 1963 by an organization who believed we suffer from a "puzzling condition"
- The puzzle piece ribbon represents hope of abusive therapies changing who we are
- Commonly associated with Autism Speaks, an organization that speaks over and often blocks autistic people
- Autistic people were never consulted on the puzzle piece
- Many of us view it as a hate symbol and usually have to distrust people who use it, because they often speak over our concerns
- The infinity symbol is recognized for autism and neurodiversity rights movement(s)!
- Rainbow infinity represents overall neurodiversity and gold infinity is for autism

NO Thanks   

TAYLOR LINDOFF
ASPIRATIONAL AUTISTIC

Autism: which symbols?

Most people within the Autistic community have strong preferences (with good reason) about particular symbols associated with autism.

How do you get it right?

Remember that autistics' preferences take precedence over neurotypical allies'.

Here's a quick guide:



Autistic Self-Advocacy
Network (ASAN)
by autistics for autistics



Neurodiversity
*designed by autistics to
represent the diversity of
the autistic spectrum*



National Autistic Society (UK)
*Not perfect but does listen to
autistic voices and
encourages acceptance*



Autistic Pride
*Official Autistic Pride flag
Autistic Pride Day: June 18th*



Autism Speaks
*Does not speak for autistics
Regarded as a hate group by
the autistic community*



Light It Up Blue
*Autism Speaks' genderised
manipulation of World Autism
Awareness Day*

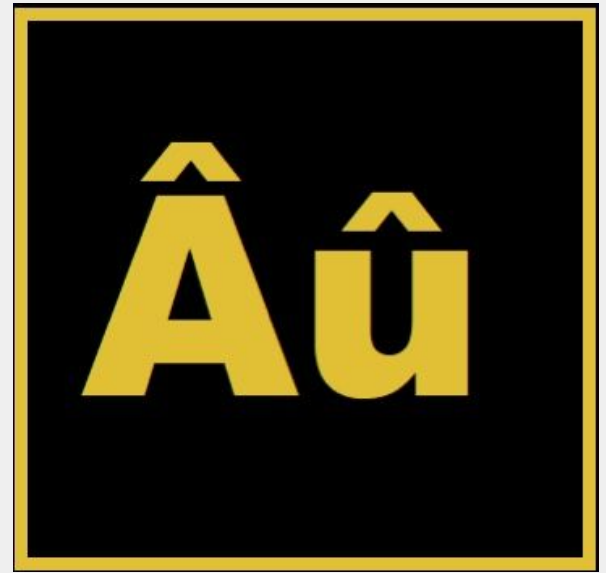


Puzzle piece
*Old symbol for autism
Widely rejected now by the autistic
community*



Autism Awareness
*Awareness not acceptance
Autistics reject the puzzle piece*

The Autistic Community Has Chosen These Symbols to Represent Themselves



Autism Awareness Month/Day

- 5 Shocking Reasons NOT to Light it Up Blue for Autism Day - Autistic Mama



APRIL IS AUTISTIC ACCEPTANCE MONTH
As an autistic or as an ally, any colour but Blue please,
Acceptance (about autistics) YES!
not Awareness (about parents) please,
and no Puzzle Pieces, burden talk, quack cures either please.

#LIUG #LightItUpGold **#WalkInRed**
#RedInstead

#ToneItDownTaupe

Autistics Worldwide FB Group



Awareness
suffering
cure
tragedy
afraid
desperate
burden
missing
epidemic
deficits
tsunami

Acceptance
inclusion
strengths
teach
respect
accommodations
help
community
support
love

#LightItUpBlue **#REDinstead**

Autism Acceptance

- A manifesto for allies adopting an acceptance approach to Autism
- Celebrating & nurturing Autistic identity
- Pathologising Autism
- The Changing World of Autism – a generational story
- MY LIFE IS NOT A LAMENT
- Moving Beyond Awareness, Working Toward Autistic Acceptance, Empowerment, & Inclusion – Neurodivergent Rebel

"It's time society stopped looking at our kids' neurodifferences as things in need of 'fixing' and instead considered the possibility that today's increasingly large population of atypical children may actually be a modern-day evolution."

DIFFERENTLY WIRED

DEBBIE REBER



Messages for Autistic Children From Autistic Adults

- Dear Autistic Kid, on school and isolation
- Dear autistic girl, on shame and social rules
- Dear Autistic Kid, on meltdowns and shame



AUTISTIC adults exist,

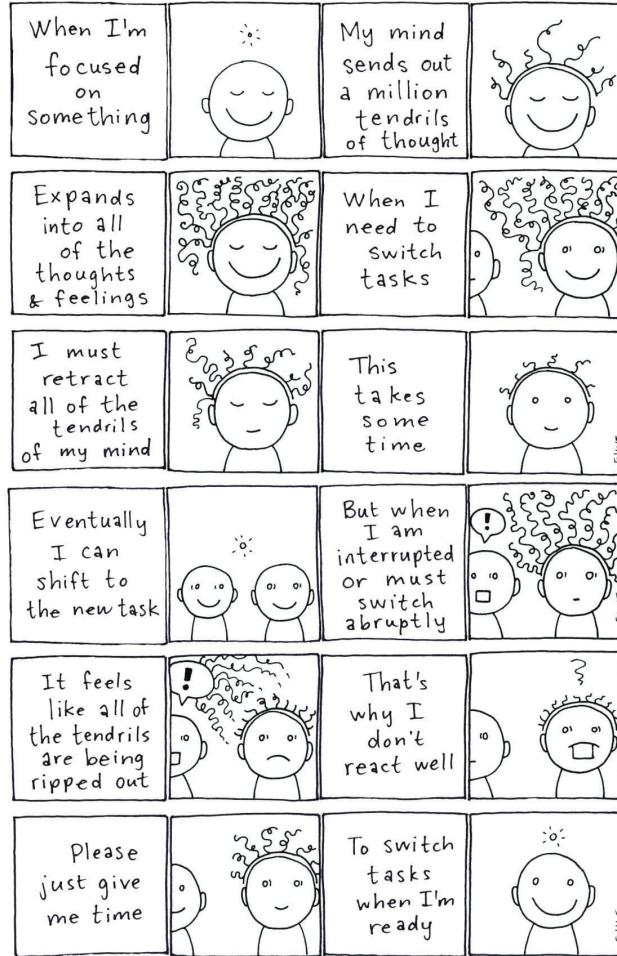
and they are advocating for a better future for Autistic children...



Transitions

Why it's hard to switch tasks

(Let's call it Tendril Theory)



The Spoon Theory

- What Is Spoon Theory?

The Spoon Theory



The Spoon Theory is a creative way to explain to healthy friends and family what it's like living with a chronic illness. Dysautonomia patients often have limited energy, represented by spoons. Doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day.

If you only had 12 spoons per day, how would you use them? Take away 1 spoon if you didn't sleep well last night, forgot to take your meds, or skipped a meal. Take away 4 spoons if you have a cold.



get out of bed



get dressed



take pills



watch TV



bathe



style hair



surf the internet



read/study



make & eat a meal



make plans & socialize



light housework



drive somewhere



go to work/school



go shopping



go to the doctor



exercise

The Spoon Theory was written by Christine Miserando, which you can check out on her website www.butyoudontlooksick.com.

Socialization

- Are Social Skills 'Deficits' an inherent part of Autism? Or, do both Autistic & Neurotypical people need to learn how to socialize with each other?
- Communication is a Two-Way Street: Reframing autism & neurodivergence as a difference, rather than a disorder

BOTH AUTISTIC & NEUROTYPICAL PEOPLE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO SOCIALISE WITH EACH OTHER

Research tells us both Autistic people and Neurotypical people demonstrate effective social skills when interacting with their own neurotype.



How language is used is understood, emotional expression through face and body movement is understood, social interactions are successful.



How language is used is understood, emotional expression through face and body movement is understood, social interactions are successful.

Research tells us social interactions are often less successful for both Autistic and Neurotypical people when interacting with a different neurotype.



Autistic people can and often do learn to interpret neurotypical use of language and neurotypical facial expression and body language. They often use these learnings to bridge interactions with neurotypical people, including through mimicking and masking.

Current research suggests Neurotypical people find it difficult to interpret Autistic expression and that there is a general absence in Neurotypical people learning to interpret Autistic social expression.

Social interactions are bidirectional - a two way interaction between individuals. Each group has equal responsibility to learn how the other uses and understands language, and how each uses facial expression and body movement as part of their emotional expression. Each group has equal responsibility for successful social interactions.

Masking

- One day they will join us in the sun
- But they have no problems in School: Autistic Masking The Hidden Trauma of Our Children
- Camouflaging Autism- What is Masking?

The Outside

Them: Oh hey how's it going?! I didn't know you were in today.

Me: Pretty good, how are you?

Them: I'm actually doing really well! [explains what they've been up to]

Me: Oh that's cool! *nods and smiles*

Them: So, what have you been up to?

Me: Same old stuff, just doing X/Y/Z like usual.

Them: Cool, well it's nice to see you again. I have to go, see you later!

Me: Cya! *smiles and waves*

Masking Sensory Processing

I can hear a whole conversation outside, I wonder who they are and what they're talking about.

This person's starting to talk too loudly, I wish I could put my headphones on.

Ow, that door slamming hurt my ears! Don't grimace or blink! Smile instead.

What is that awful high-pitched buzzing noise? Is there a machine acting up or something?

That clinking noise startled me! I couldn't stop myself from twitching my shoulders but they didn't notice maybe?

They left, now I can figure out who's talking outside, or was that a radio or a phone call?

Masking Socially

I should smile, am I smiling?

Look up at their face

Make your tone sound happier and less monotone or sad.

Stop looking at the floor again, keep looking up. Look at the door right behind their head so they think you're looking at them.

Select option: "Pretty good."
"I'm alright."
"I'm doing well."

Select the first one.

Chuckle, you're not smiling.

Keep smiling since your tone is getting worse.

I looked in their eyes, that was awful, why did I try that? Look at the door.

@AutSciPerson
www.autisticscienceperson.com

Social Cue Interpretation

Is that a smile or a smirk?

They're standing really close to me. Are they angry or happy?

They seem happy so I can say I'm doing well.

They're staring at me for a long time, are they trying to intimidate me or something? Is there something I'm supposed to say?

Their hands are in their pockets now, do they want to leave? Should I stop asking them questions?

I should give a short answer in case they don't really want to talk to me.

Did they really mean it was nice to see me? Or were they just saying that?

Crap I forgot their name. I know I've interacted with them before! Where have I seen them before?

Using Functioning Labels

- Autism spectrum – Large study supports discarding the term ‘high-functioning autism’
- 5 Major Problems with Using Autism Functioning Labels
- Autism Functioning Labels are Inaccurate and Harmful to Autistics (autisticmama.com)
- Functioning Labels are Lazy and We Can Do Better – Not an Autism Mom

Can we please just ditch the functioning labels that some people apply to autism? They don't help anyone and are misleading at best.

Yenn Purkis



Eye Contact

- Gaze aversion as a cognitive load management strategy in autism spectrum disorder and Williams syndrome
- For Those With Autism, Eye Contact Isn't Just Weird, It's Distressing
- THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO AUTISM: Eye Contact: For The Recipient's Validation Only
- Look me in the eyes: constraining gaze in the eye-region provokes abnormally high subcortical activation in autism
- How do adults and teens with self-declared Autism Spectrum Disorder experience eye contact? A qualitative analysis of first-hand accounts
- Many therapists and educators insist on eye contact for children with autism. Is it necessary?
- Eye Contact and Autism

Many individuals on the autism spectrum have trouble making or maintaining eye contact. It is important to keep in mind that individuals on the spectrum are not avoiding eye contact as a choice, but rather because of a neurological difference. Facial expressions constantly change during communication, so people with autism may find them distracting and difficult to follow. Some may find it painful to maintain eye contact, because doing so makes them anxious.

-An Employer's Guide to Managing Professionals on the Autism Spectrum

Information For Schools

- A Guide To Understanding, Developing, And Applying #ReasonableAccommodations For Autistic People
- The Autistic Classroom

What Neurotypical People Need to Know

- The World Doesn't Bend for Disabled Kids (or Disabled Parents)
- Neurotypicals: Listen to Our Words, Not Our Tone
- Avoiding Ableist Language: Suggestions for Autism Researchers

Social Skills for Neurotypicals

@more than one neurotype

Reduce how much you glare at eyeballs.

Only ask questions if you want full and detailed answers.

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

Substantial subject matter is prioritised.

Oversharing is a myth, it doesn't actually exist.

Conversations are to be nonlinear.

There are never enough 'random facts' in any interaction.

Show empathy through sharing your own experiences.

Background details and side stories are always relevant

Autism Research Links

- [Ann's Autism Blog: Autism: Some Vital Research Links](#)

The Suicide Scale

1: I am so happy that I will literally go insane if the happiness is sustained for any length of time.

2: I am feeling pretty rad. I vaguely recall times I have been unhappy, but it feels like distant memories now. Things are looking up!

3: It is not the best day of my life. I have stuff on my mind, but I don't think of suicide, except for when that one weird friend brings up stupid hypotheticals..

4. Suicide doesn't occur to me except in moments of frustration or stress. It is like a weird escape hatch my brain has decided to just go to in an attempt to escape stress. It doesn't feel serious...it's almost a joke.

5. The joke is getting really stale. Suicide ideation and other intrusive thoughts keep happening, but I am mostly interested in other things. It's like a low key death affinity.

6. I am thinking about suicide a lot. It is seriously troubling. I can distract myself if I really try. However, if an out of control semi was headed toward me, I might not move. I am passively suicidal.

7. I cannot stop thinking about suicide, and, unfortunately, I can't distract myself. I might be doing more risky things, like driving recklessly or drinking to excess. I have graduated from passively suicidal to having a death wish. I need help.

8. I am no longer fighting the thoughts, just sort of indulging in them. I sort of want to make the decision to make the suicide plan, but I am stopping myself. I am holding on, but only barely. It isn't safe for me to be alone. I am suicidal.

9. I am actively making a plan to end my life. I am telling people good-bye, settling accounts, and starting to write THE note. I am actively suicidal. I need to tell someone.

10. I am actively trying to kill myself. If I do not get medical attention, it is very likely I will die.

Autism and Suicide

Is Camouflaging Autistic Traits Associated with Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours? Expanding the Interpersonal Psychological Theory of Suicide in an Undergraduate Student Sample

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM AND THE CULTURE OF AUTISTIC PEOPLE, SO AUTISTIC PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE TO MASK/CAMOUFLAGE THEIR AUTISM IS SUICIDE PREVENTION.

@ Lisa Morgan Consulting LLC 2021t

About ABA

- The Great Big ABA Opposition Resource List
- My Concerns With ABA
- If Not ABA, Then What?
- 5 Important Reasons Even “New ABA” is Problematic
- Evidence of Increased PTSD Symptoms in Autistics Exposed to Applied Behavior Analysis
- Is ABA really like “Dog Training for Humans” ?
- Autism and Behaviorism
- Invisible Abuse: ABA and the things only autistic people can see
- Why ABA Harms Your Autistic Child
- Alfie Kohn: Autism and Behaviorism: New Research Adds to an Already Compelling Case Against ABA
- The controversy over autism’s most common therapy
- I ABUSED CHILDREN FOR A LIVING
- BCBAs Respond To The Dog Trainer Who Called Out ABA
- Long-term ABA Therapy Is Abusive: A Response to Gorycki, Ruppel, and Zane

