

What do we mean when we talk about Autism?



What is Autism?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4G0HTIUBLI>

The Positives of Autism

Strengths

Interests you can use

Independent behaviour

Good rote memory

Not easily bored

Enjoys routine

Visual and spatial skills

“Stickability”



Social communication

I may repeat myself

Some words may confuse me

I may be very literal in my understanding

I may be very articulate



I might be able to recite a whole episode of Dr Who

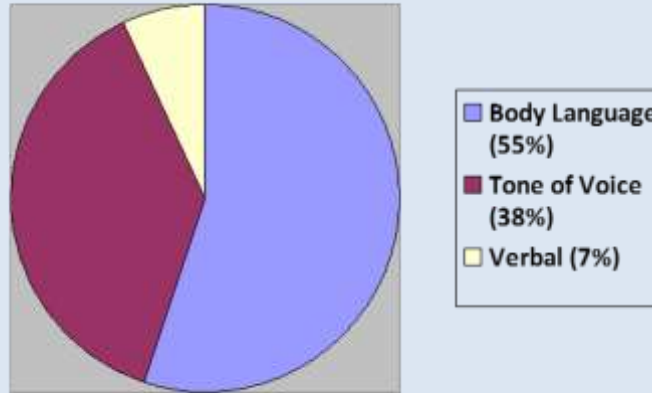
I may speak with an American accent

I may walk away when you are talking to me

I may be completely non verbal

Communication

93% of communication is non verbal



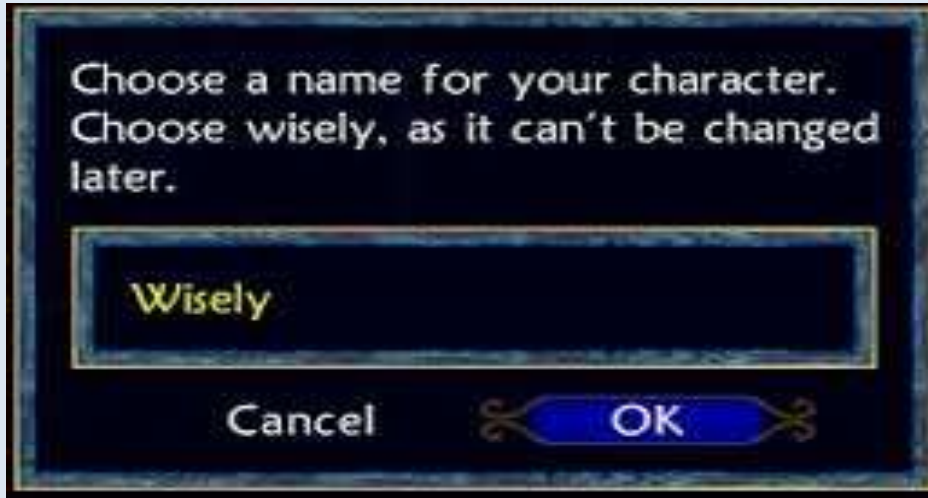
May not understand subtle conversational clues e.g. facial expressions indicating surprise, anger etc., people fidgeting or looking away because they are bored or in a hurry

Communication (Verbal)

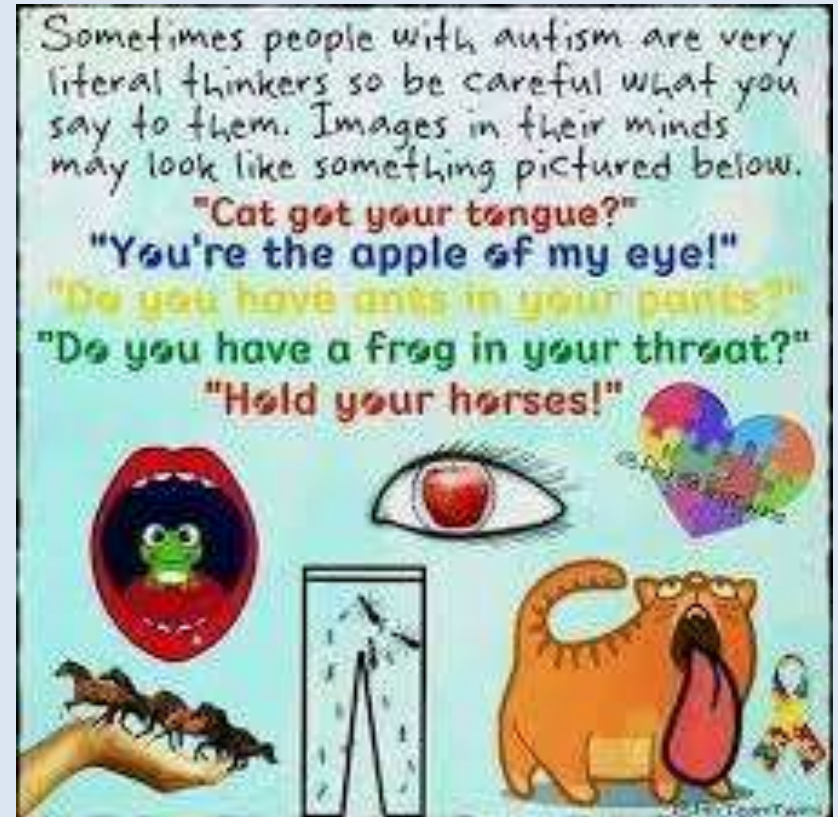
- Some young people may not develop spoken language
- Even those with developmentally appropriate verbal skills often have problems with their **use** of language when talking to others
- Processing of spoken language may take longer
- May have a very literal understanding of speech



Literal thinking



<https://en-gb.facebook.com/PeterKayClips/videos/school-memories/1148890405161724/>



Social interaction

I may find it difficult to read your non-verbal language.

I might not know or be interested in how you are feeling

I may not understand sharing

I might share different interests to you.

I may not find it comfortable to look at people

I may not feel the need for friends or know how to make friends.

I might stand too close to you



Social Relationships

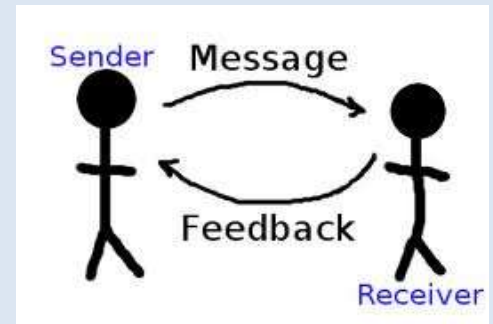


Helping with social use of language

- Teaching idioms, 'Think it Say it'
- Opportunities need to be identified and personalised e.g. *social stories*
- Modelling situations in a 'safe' context e.g. *practising roles and language*
- Problem solving before and after events e.g. *cartoon strip conversations*
- Discussing situations observed from film and TV which can be paused and rewound to study again
- Specific Intervention, 'Time to talk', 'Socially Speaking.'



Hot Top Tips



- Use your child's name to get their attention
- Less language – clear, simple, unambiguous
- Beware of literal understanding
- Visual prompts – age appropriate practical
- Say what you mean & mean what you say
- Don't promise what you can't deliver
- Break instructions down into smaller parts
- Allow processing time
- Be consistent

Restrictive repetitive behaviours

I may appear very single minded and stubborn.

Change sometimes upsets me and I may like to know exactly what will happen

My thinking is inflexible. I see things in black or white

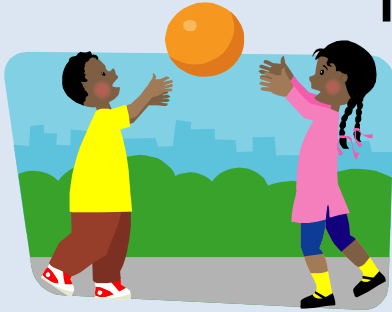
I may like to tell people what to do

I might know lots about subjects that interest me.

I find it difficult to generalise and predict the consequences of my actions



Restricted Repetitive Behaviours



- May include having inflexible (black or white) thinking
- Inability to problem solve (generalise) and predict the consequences of their own actions
- Difficulty coping with adult direction and imposed routines
- Difficulty coping with changes and new situations



Hot Top Tips



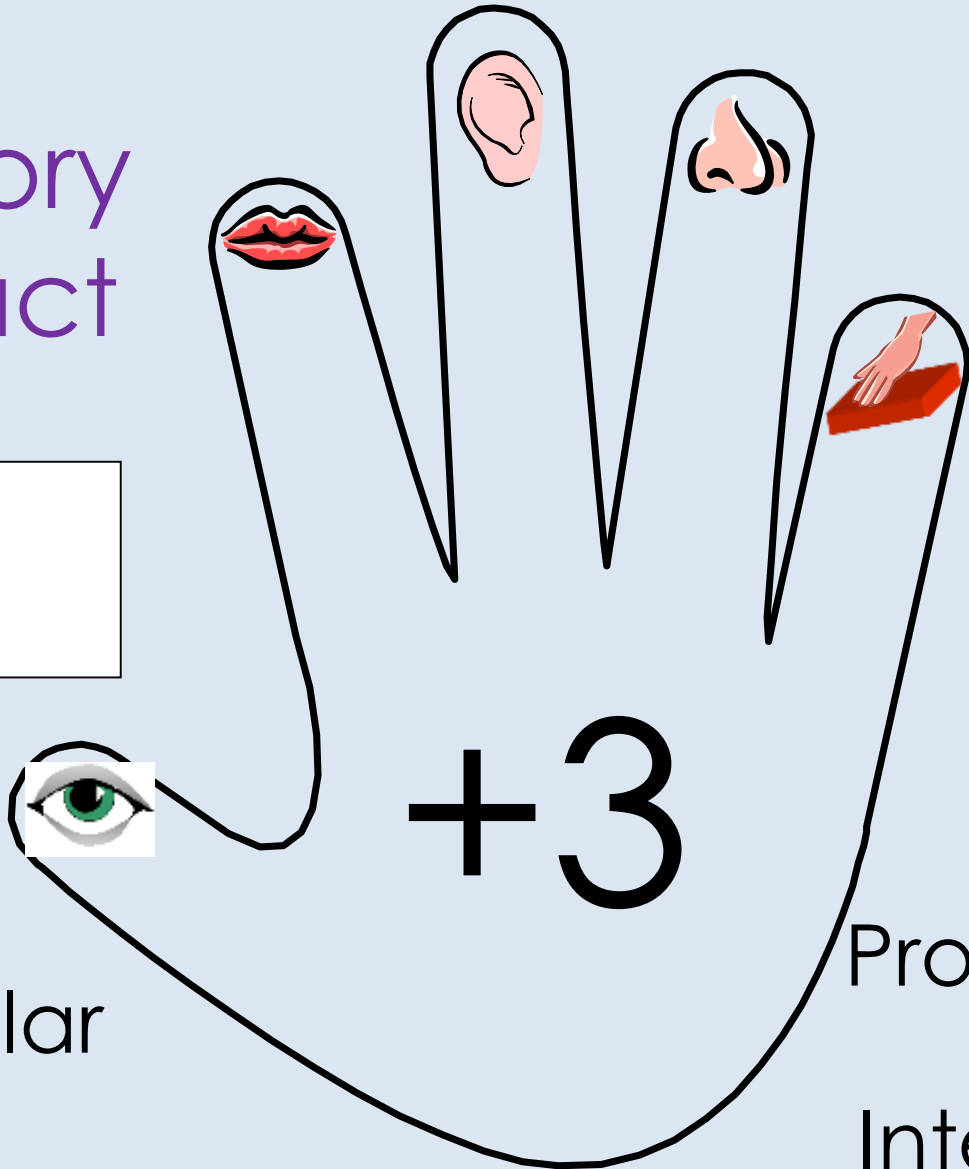
- The use of a visual timetable.
- Use of pictures and symbols to increase understanding of changes to the environment.
- To help with decision-making you could break tasks down into manageable chunks or use a decision tree.
- You may want to look at ways of reducing exam pressure, by providing more mock or practice sessions, additional time, or a quiet area to or a quiet area to complete the test.

Sensory Impact

Hyper –
(intensified)

Video clip

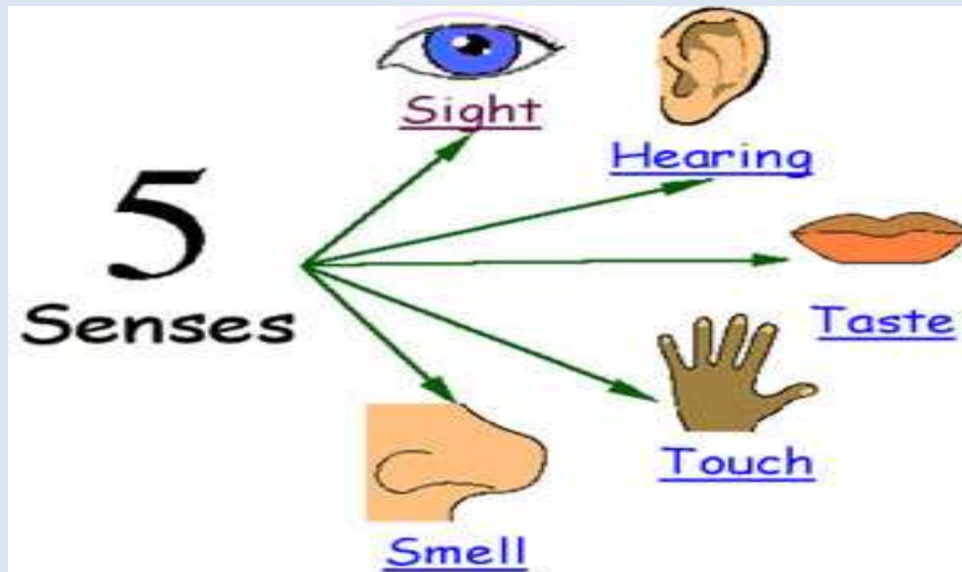
Hypo –
(diminished)



Vestibular

Proprioception
Interoception

How sensory are our classrooms?



Anxiety



High levels in people with social communication difficulties/autism.

Can be caused by:

- Change
- New situations or people
- Lack of understanding
- Environment (sensory)
- Personal pressure – “perfectionist”
- Expectations of others – peer / academic

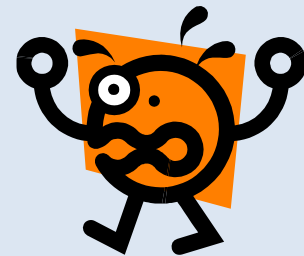
Activity

Don't forget the coke



Presentation of Anxiety

- Behaviours that challenge
- Increased withdrawal
- Irritability
- Repetitive behaviours
- Intensity of restricted interests
- Sleep / appetite disturbance
- Physical symptoms



Views From The Inside

'It's my hyper awareness that causes my biggest anxiety. You know what you are expected to do, what you should do, but for some reason you can't, like your body's been possessed. In your head you're doing the right thing but, physically you can't get started, like someone has stolen your motivation.'

From inside Theglassjar



The Girl with the Curly Hair

Motivation

- Match reward to child

Change

- Develop strategies to deal with changes in routines.
- Preparation is the Key
- Be consistent in approach

Accessing Support

- School referral to SI Team with parental consent
- Pupils may have a diagnosis of Autism, be on a pathway (CDC/CAMHS) and /or presenting with social communication and interaction difficulties

Autism Information and Advice Service

Who are they?

A service which offers information, advice and training to families relating to autism.



Any Questions?

Thank you!

