



ACTIVITY BOOKLET

NAME



What Is Autism?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be someone who has:

- difficulties in social interaction (making and keeping friends)
- verbal and nonverbal communication (talking / listening and understanding body language – eye contact and facial expressions)
- repetitive behaviours, including:
 - following a set routine each day (the same lunch packed)
 - having changes in routines clearly explained, with notice.

Each individual with autism is unique. Many of those on the autism spectrum have exceptional abilities in visual skills, music and academic skills. About 40 percent have average to above average intellectual abilities.



light the world up blue!





What is Autism? – ACTIVITIES

SCENARIO

Please read the scenario then answer the following questions.

You have just moved to a new school interstate and don't know anybody. At recess you don't know who to sit with, so end up sitting alone. During lessons everybody already has their seats and no one is talking to you. You try to make a conversation with the person next to you but they don't really seem interested in talking to you. At lunch you see a group of kids sitting, eating, chatting and laughing.

1. How would being in this situation make *you* feel? _____

2. Would *you* think they were really laughing at you? _____

3. What would *you* do in this situation? _____

A person with Autism will perceive the world differently to you. They may be happy to not engage with the people around them. Or, they may really want to fit in with their peers, but don't know how to. Not knowing how to relate to the people around them is a common characteristic of someone with autism. However, they will usually try to. Have ***you*** ever tried to relate to someone with autism?



Autism Facts

- A:** A kid with _____ looks just like you and me;
Autism just changes the way their _____ works.
- U:** A kid usually has autism from the time they are _____.
- T:** You can _____ a lot of cool things from the kid with Autism
just as they can learn from you.
- I:** The most important thing to _____ is that kids with
autism are just kids, like you and me.
- S:** A kid with autism enjoys the same things as you do, like
playing music, birthdays, _____ and playing video games!
- M:** Kids with autism can like having and making new _____!

MISSING WORDS

born	friends
brain	remember
Autism	dancing
	learn



THE SENSES

A person with autism may have very heightened senses, including:

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____ ,
 _____ , _____ , _____ .

People with autism can be over or under sensitive in any or all of these areas. These senses can become overloaded with too much information, for example:

- Loud noises
- Strong smells
- Unknown tastes
- Crowded places
- Extreme temperatures

1. Describe a loud noise / strong smell / extreme temperature for **you**? _____

For a person with autism, a loud noise or strong smell may be something as simple as:

a) _____

b) _____

2. How do **you** react when things all get a “bit too much”?

Famous People with Autism

Composer of Classical Music



Actor

Examples of work:

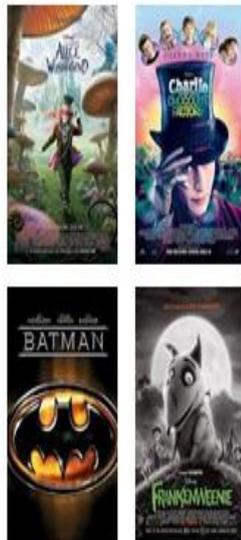


Director

Examples of work:

Actor

Examples of work:





How do I Respond / React to someone with Autism?

What can I expect from a person with Autism?

PERSONAL SPACE

Give them extra personal space. Crowds can be a little overwhelming for someone with autism, however we all like our personal space don't we?

EXTRA TIME

A person with autism may sometimes need extra time to respond to a question. This doesn't mean they are unintelligent, just that they are considering the question carefully.

BE SPECIFIC & CONCRETE

Try and avoid speaking in sarcasm and slang as people with autism can be very literal or "black and white".

ABOVE ALL ...

A person with autism is more similar to you than different. They may be experiencing the same difficulties as you are (friends, relating to the opposite sex, finding their place in the world!). At the end of the day, we're all just people. So let's be understanding and accepting of each other's differences. If we were all the same how boring would that be?? 😊

Our differences are what makes us **AWESOME!**

Autism is **NOT** a disease.

Ignorance is the Disease.

Acceptance is the Cure!

Thankyou

Some Extra Reading for Those Who Are Interested

Sensory Sensitivities

Sight

Situated in the retina of the eye and activated by light, our sight helps us to define objects, people, colours, contrast and spatial boundaries. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo (under-sensitive)

- Objects appear quite dark, or lose some of their features.
- Central vision is blurred but peripheral vision quite sharp.
- A central object is magnified but things on the periphery are blurred.
- Poor depth perception – problems with throwing and catching; clumsiness.

Hyper (over-sensitive)

- Distorted vision: objects and bright lights can appear to jump around.
- Images may fragment.
- Easier and more pleasurable to focus on a detail rather than the whole object.

She was Mrs Marek, a face upon which light danced maniacally, turning her into more of a cartoon than a human being. Welcome to Toon town...I'd like you to enter this torture chamber I call my kitchen and meet my wife who is a 3D cartoon. Gillingham, G. (1995), page 51

Sound

This is the most commonly recognised form of sensory impairment. Hearing impairments can affect someone's ability to [communicate](#) and possibly also their balance. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- May only hear sounds in one ear, the other ear having only partial hearing or none at all.
- May not acknowledge particular sounds.
- Might enjoy crowded, noisy places or bang doors and objects.

Hyper

- Noise can be magnified and sounds become distorted and muddled.
- Particularly sensitive to sound and can, for example hear conversations in the distance.
- Inability to cut out sounds – notably background noise, which often leads to difficulties concentrating.

Do you hear noise in your head? It pounds and screeches. Like a train rumbling through your ears. Powell, J. (in Gillingham, G. 1995), page 41

Touch

Touch is important for social development. It helps us to assess the environment we are in (is an object hot or cold?) and react accordingly. It also allows us to feel pain. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- Holds others tightly - needs to do so before there is a sensation of having applied any pressure.
- Has a high pain threshold.
- May self-harm.
- Enjoys heavy objects (eg, weighted blankets) on top of them.

Hyper

- Touch can be painful and uncomfortable; people may not like to be touched and this can affect their relationships with others.
- Dislikes having anything on hands or feet.
- Difficulties brushing and washing hair because head is sensitive.
- Only likes certain types of clothing or textures.

Every time I am touched it hurts; it feels like fire running through my body. Gillingham, G. (1995), page 3

Taste

Chemical receptors in the tongue tell us about different tastes - sweet, sour, spicy and so on. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- Likes very spicy foods.
- Eats everything - soil, grass, Play-dough. This is known as [pica](#).

Hyper

- Finds some flavours and foods too strong and overpowering because of very sensitive taste buds. [Has a restricted diet](#).
- Certain textures cause discomfort; some children will only eat smooth foods like mashed potatoes or ice-cream.

Smell

Chemical receptors in the nose tell us about smells in our immediate [environment](#). Smell is the first sense we rely upon. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- Some people have no sense of smell and fail to notice extreme odours (this can include their own body odour).
- Some people may lick things to get a better sense of what they are.

Hyper

- Smells can be intense and overpowering. This can cause [toileting problems](#).
- Dislikes people with distinctive perfumes, shampoos, etc.

Smells like dogs, cats, deodorant and aftershave lotion are so strong to me I can't stand it, and perfume drives me nuts. Gillingham, G. (1995), page 60

Balance (vestibular)

Situated in the inner ear, our vestibular system helps us maintain our balance and posture, and understand where and how fast our bodies are moving. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- A need to rock, swing or spin to get some sensory input.

Hyper

- Difficulties with activities like sport, where we need to control our movements.
- Difficulties stopping quickly or during an activity.
- Car sickness.
- Difficulties with activities where the head is not upright or feet are off the ground.

Body awareness (proprioception)

Situated in the muscles and joints, our body awareness system tells us where our bodies are in space, and how different body parts are moving. People with an ASD may experience the following differences.

Hypo

- Stands too close to others, because they cannot measure their proximity to other people and judge personal space.
- Hard to navigate rooms and avoid obstructions.
- May bump into people.

Hyper

- Difficulties with fine motor skills: manipulating small objects like buttons or shoe laces.
- Moves whole body to look at something.

Synaesthesia

Synaesthesia is a rare condition which some people with an ASD experience. A sensory experience goes in through one system and out through another. So a person might hear a sound but experience it as a colour. In other words, they will 'hear' the colour blue.

Ways to Help

Here are some ways you may be able to help a person with sensory sensitivity. Often, [small changes to the environment](#) can make a difference.

Three points to remember are:

- **be aware:** look at the environment to see if it is creating difficulties for people with an ASD. Can you change anything?
- **be creative:** think of some positive sensory experiences
- **be prepared:** tell people with an ASD about possible sensory stimuli they may experience in different environments.