



Section 5

Top tips and practical resources
for autistic young people

Tools for young people

How to talk about autism

Talking about being autistic can be difficult. You don't have to tell someone straight away if you are autistic, you can get to know them a little bit first. It can be scary to talk about being autistic as you don't always know what other people know about autism. It can be useful to find out what they know before telling them about yourself.

Some people describe autism in different ways. It can be described as 'a way of seeing the world differently' or 'being really good at one thing and not so great at others'.

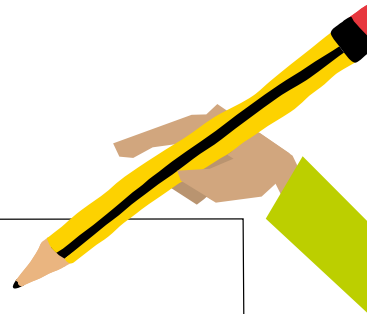
Being autistic is not bad or less than someone else, you might just have difficulties with socialising with other people or find overwhelming environments a challenge.

When you think about autism and how being autistic might impact you, you can describe where your differences are. For autistic people they usually have four areas in which they are different to non-autistic people. These are social interaction, social communication, routines and repetition (social imagination) and sensory issues. Use these headings to help you when describing autism.

Talking to the other young people at your youth group is something you can work on with your youth group leader. They can help you choose a specific time during a session to talk about autism and being autistic. You can talk to the young people in your group about things you do, say or think so that they can understand when they are around you or working with you in the future. You don't have to talk to the group alone; ask someone to support you to talk about yourself or any differences you have.

Ultimately, telling people that you are autistic is up to you. You don't have to tell people if you don't want to. Telling people you are autistic can mean better understanding and support for when things might go wrong.

What autism means for me



My name is _____ and I am autistic.
I was diagnosed with autism when I was _____.
My special interests are _____.

Being autistic means I am a little bit different from other people.

I have many strengths, but I also have challenges in some areas. In the boxes below I have listed these things so that you can understand me a bit better.

Social interaction



Social communication



Routines



Sensory issues



Autism means that I can _____.



Top tips for peers



As well as a comfortable and accessible environment, a huge part of going to a youth group or club are the other young people you get to meet. Unfortunately, lots of us found that peers weren't particularly welcoming or friendly and made going to these clubs quite uncomfortable.

Here are our top tips for peers:

- ✓ If you have any questions about autism, please ask. If the young person doesn't feel comfortable explaining, you can use the [section](#) of Include Autism with more information.
- ✓ Don't laugh at others for the way they move. Things like waving hands, flapping arms, playing with fidget toys and tapping rhythms are called 'stims' or 'stimming' and are really important for self-regulating and keeping calm. If you stop someone from stimming it can make them very distressed.
- ✓ Meltdowns and shutdowns aren't funny – please don't try and make others have either of these. Instead ask what the best thing to do to help during a meltdown or shutdown is. It might be offering a distraction, allowing for some space or helping them to a quieter area. It's really important that we don't dwell on the meltdown or shutdown as it is the past and we would like to move onto the next task.



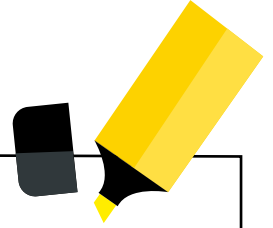
When your peers accept you as you are you finally get a sense of belonging. It's a feeling like nothing else.

- ✓ Sometimes an autistic young person might be really good at talking to other people and taking part in the youth group and sometimes they might really struggle. When this happens know that they aren't trying to ignore you or trying to be rude, they just aren't able to be our normal selves.
- ✓ Autistic people can have really focused hobbies or interests which they like to talk about a lot. This means that because they're so excited to talk about their interests they don't always realise other people might not be as interested.

What might I need for support?

This tool is something you can bring with you to a youth group to help tell the youth group leaders what they can do to include you and make you feel comfortable.

You can ✓ tick options that you like and add your own.



Things you must know about me

Name: _____ Age: _____

Parent/Carer name: _____

Parent/Carer contact details: _____

My diagnoses: _____

My medication: _____

What to do during a meltdown / shutdown

I like to be:

- left alone
- allowed to leave
- checked on by staff
- sat somewhere quiet

Please:

- let my parent or carer know
- let me move onto the next activity
- let me play with a toy
- other

Behaviours to look out for

Things that show I'm upset:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| scratching | looking scared |
| not talking to anyone | covering my ears |
| leaving the room | jumping around |
| looking angry | other |

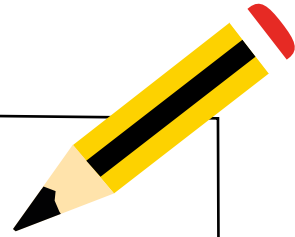
Things that show I'm happy:

- | | |
|---------------|---------|
| flapping | dancing |
| talking a lot | humming |
| smiling | other |



What might I need for support?

continued...



These are my strengths

I like to talk about:

I am good at:

Who supports me

parent
carer
support worker
Their name is _____
They help me with

They are called:

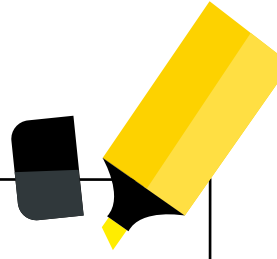
personal assistant
mum
dad
name
carer
supporter
Other _____

Things that are important to me



What might I need for support?

continued...



Preferred communication

I like to talk with:

words
hands
my tablet

someone reads my responses
other

I can:

talk in front of a group
talk to one person

talk when prompted
talk in a quiet area
other

I can hear:

in quiet areas
when there is lots going on

when you talk to me directly
when you say my name
other

Please talk to me with:

words
pictures
respecting my communication badge

other

Things that help me understand

visual information
written instructions
one question at a time
give me time to think
I need to know beforehand
I need to do something else while listening

I prefer to work in a quiet space
fidget toys keep me calm and help me concentrate
I like words and pictures
I use ear defenders
other



One page profile about me

If you don't want to fill in the support table you can use a one page profile.



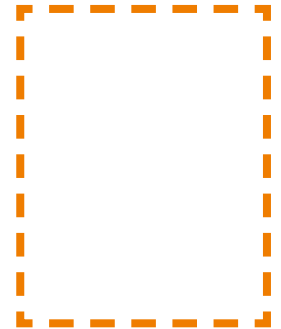
MY ONE PAGE PROFILE

My one page profile

Your name: _____

Age: _____

Occupation: _____



What people appreciate about me

What is important to me

How to support me