

NO  
ONE  
SHOULD  
FEEL  
ALONE



Safe Families



# AUTISM

AWARENESS  
TRAINING



# WHAT IS AUTISM?

‘If you know one person with Autism,  
then you know one person with Autism.’

– Dr. Stephen Shore

Talking about autism:

- Person with autism
- Autistic Person



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# DEFINITION OF AUTISM

Autism is a lifelong developmental diagnosis

Communication and social interaction differences  
Restricted and repetitive behaviours and interests.'



Autism is a <b>hidden</b> disability	It is a spectrum condition meaning it affects each person differently
Autism is not a mental health problem	Autism is not a learning disability
More boys are diagnosed than girls	It is not due to poor parenting



# Social Communication and Social Interaction Challenges

- Varying degrees of challenge
- Difficulties expressing oneself
- Possibly non-verbal
- May take things literally
- Can require extra processing time
- Struggle to identify or understand the feelings of others
- May not understand social hierarchy
- Personal space or eye contact challenges



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# Theory of Mind

Understanding and anticipating what other people may think or feel

Experience of previous interactions with people in general and each individual in particular

Autistic people are more consistent in their choices



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# Repetitive and Restrictive Behaviour

- Preference for routine and predictability
- Routines may become strict and inflexible
- Repetitive behaviours like rocking, finger tapping, hand flapping or repeating phrases
- Stimming
- Objects may be used – twirling pens or opening and closing a door
- It can look like self harm



# Sensory Differences



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# Food

- Not feeling full
- Never feeling hungry
- ARFID – Avoidant and Restrictive Food Intake Disorder
- Predictability and routine



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# Meltdown

Signs of distress before a meltdown

- rumble stage

Signs of anxiety

- pacing, seeking reassurance, rocking, still

Distraction, diversion, calming strategies

- remove potential triggers



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**COMFORT BREAK!**



# Communication Strategies

- Keep language short and simple
- Say what you mean
- Use their name
- Tell the person what you want,
  - not what you don't want
- 10 second rule



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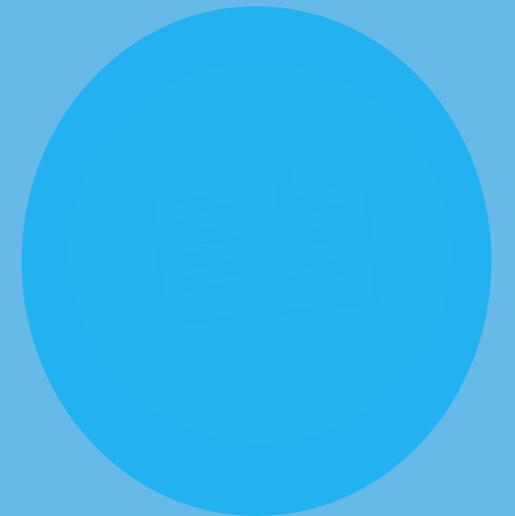


# Temple Grandin

‘If I want to talk about cats, I have to go to the filing cabinet in my brain, find the c’s, go through the c’s and find ‘cat,’ open the file and then I can talk about cats, but it all takes time!’



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# Executive Functioning

- Memory Recall
- Problem Solving
- Planning/Sequencing
- Motor Co-ordination

Executive Function difficulties mean autistic people are likely to have challenges with these skills



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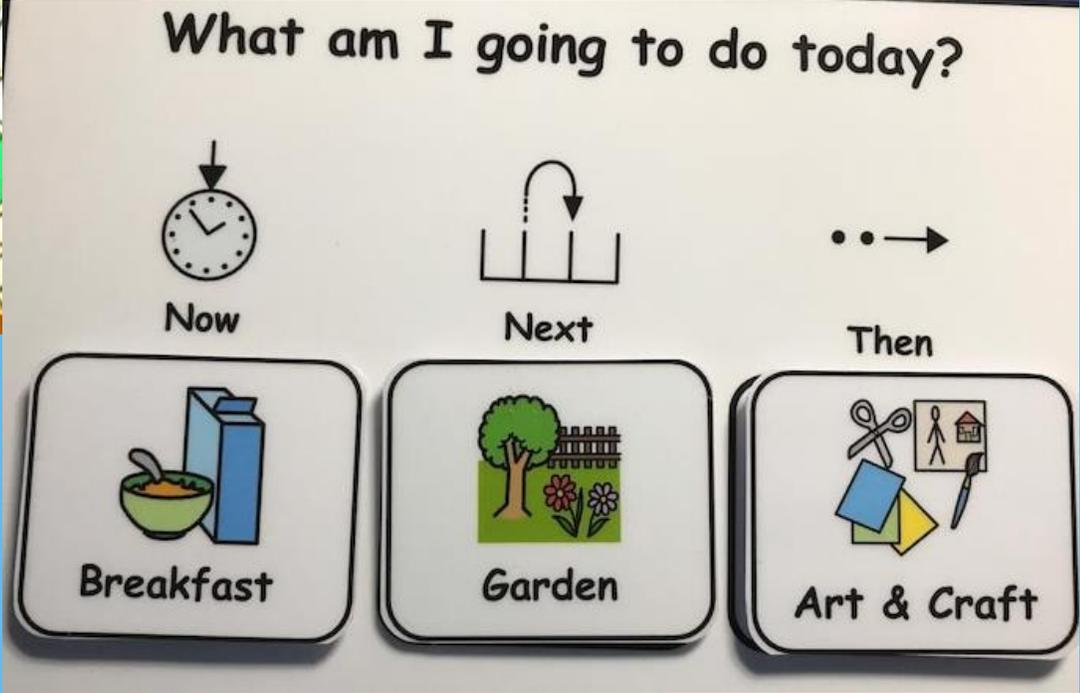
# Visual Strategies

- People with autism are often visual learners
- Visuals help with organization, independence and can reduce anxiety
- Visuals are concrete, whereas words disappear as soon as they are said
- Visuals can be objects, words, pictures, symbols and photos



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# First/Then or Now/Next Cards



# Visual Schedules



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# Asking for Help Cards



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# What Zone Are You In?

Blue Zone	Green Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
SAD HURT SICK TIRED	HAPPY FOCUSED CALM EXCITED	SURPRISED CONFUSED WORRIED SILLY	ANGRY RAGING TERRIFIED ANNOYED
What can I do?	What can I do?	What can I do?	What can I do?
<b>REST</b>	<b>GO</b>	<b>SLOW DOWN</b>	<b>STOP</b>
Take a break Ask for help Talk to someone Jump up and down 5x I can also.....?	Think happy thoughts Finish my work Help others Share ideas I can also.....?	Take deep breaths Talk to someone Go for a short walk Count to ten I can also.....?	Take a time out Run a lap Squeeze a stress ball Drink water I can also.....?

# Emotional Regulation

**It's okay to be angry**  
Just follow the angry rules

- No hurting others
- No hurting yourself
- No hurting property
- Talk/draw about how you feel

# Timers



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# Emotional Regulation Strategies

- Models
- Self awareness
- Emotional Vocabulary
- Connect body sensations to emotions
- Learning strategies to manage emotions
- Calming toolkit



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# Fidget Toys



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# Teenagers and young adults

- Screen Time
- Social Groups
- Coercion
- Identification
- Female late diagnosis



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# (Autism is a spectrum)

**NOT** like this

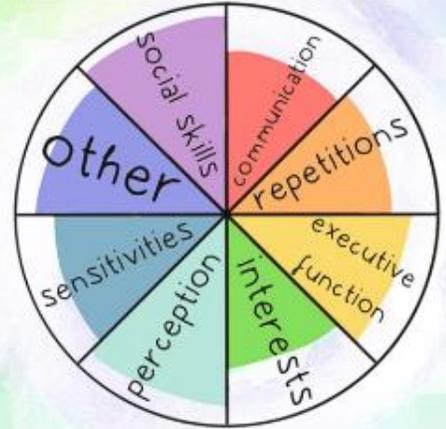
very autistic?  
No!



a little bit autistic?  
No!

**But** like this

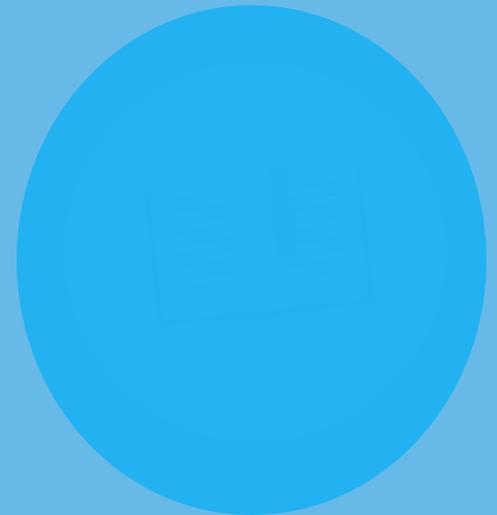
We're both autistic...



...but we have different strengths and difficulties



@autism\_happy\_place



# WEBSITES FOR MORE INFO...

THE NATIONAL  
AUTISTIC SOCIETY

[WWW.AUTISM.ORG.UK](http://WWW.AUTISM.ORG.UK)

AUTISM NI

[WWW.AUTISMNi.ORG](http://WWW.AUTISMNi.ORG)



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