

Strategies and Resources: **The Four Areas of Difference**

Communication	Understanding others
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Misinterpreting language and/or written word• Difficulties thinking quickly and responding-delayed processing• Knowing when to speak. Is the other person interested• Monotone vocalisation• People reading things and other agendas into what we are saying• Instructions appearing ambiguous to us• Humour not translating to us	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low tolerance• Our expectations of others not being met• Not being able to predict others' reactions• Lack of social filter• Not seeing others' points of view/being single-minded• Believing others too readily - not seeing hidden agendas• Difficulty reading others• Blurred boundaries or changing boundaries, particularly around professional interactions and social interactions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unspoken/unwritten rules
<p>Interests and information processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of focus unless it is on a special interest • Going into things at too much depth • A need to be busy/low boredom threshold • Bore easily/restless/can't engage/can't focus • Slower or faster processing speed of information • No special interest can lead to a questioning of our diagnosis • Losing sense of time when engaged in our interest • Feeling overwhelmed by our interest 	<p>Sensory processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight includes: Difficulties with hyper/hypo sensitivity to light (particularly unnatural/florescent lights), shiny floors/surfaces, certain colours appearing bright and overwhelming • Touch: Touch feeling too light or too heavy, flinching at touch, a dislike to being touched. Some textures feeling uncomfortable to touch or pleasant to touch • Sound includes: Difficulties with hyper/hypo sensitivity to certain noises/sounds. Speaking too quietly or loudly • Under-sensitivity or over-sensitivity to pain • Smell; hyper/hypo sensitivity to differing odours. Only using specific products due to smell • Taste: Texture can play a part in what we like dislike to eat. Hyper/hypo sensitivity to spice/strong flavour. Emotional eating • Poor balance and/or body awareness in relation to space and other people

Solutions

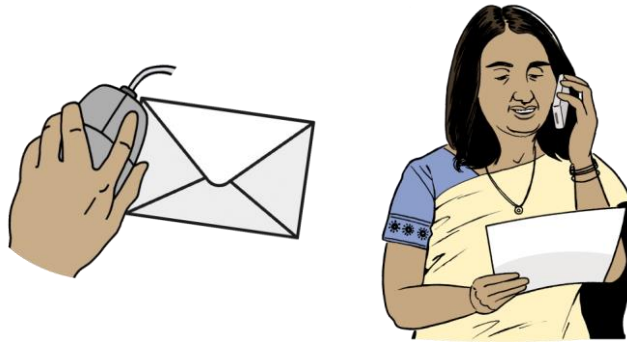
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to think about what works for you. Do you like things to be written down? Do you follow instructions or do you prefer to find your own way to do things? 	<p>Understanding Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to consider what is being asked of you and don't jump in to answer 'yes' to everything straight away
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to explain to others how you best hear and process information. Does it help you to make notes of conversations for example? • Would you prefer to communicate certain things through text or email? For some people, the use of emoticons is helpful as they process visual elements better than written. Emoticons and picture symbols can also be used as a technique to prevent us from sounding so blunt • Practice using inflection when speaking or softening your voice • Don't be afraid to say you don't understand something or to ask for it to be repeated or explained in a way that suits you better-we are all different with differing strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to someone you trust. Check things out with them if you feel like you have not fully understood a situation or conversation • A person we trust may also act as a buffer and help to filter some of the things that we can struggle with, like understanding social cues, jokes/sarcasm etc. • Consider reducing masking if you feel able to, especially around close friends or family that you trust. This may help those around you appreciate more how you view and interact with the world
<p>Interests and information processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to communication; make some time to consider how you process information • What helps and what hinders? • Do you find it easier to engage with others initially if you have a common shared interest? Can this be used as an icebreaker and tool when in social situations or when thinking about forming new friendships? • Has an interest become overwhelming? Think about breaking it down and limiting the time you spend on it 	<p>Sensory processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of what your sensory processing difficulties are. This means you can pick the strategies that best suit your needs • Wearing tinted, dark or transition glasses can help with brightness • A sleep mask or blackout blinds/curtains may aid sleep if light bothers you • Some people find the use of a weighted blanket helpful for anxiety. Tight clothes may have a similar effect • Ear defenders or headphones/music may reduce noise

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember that not everyone will share your interests. Practice asking others about their interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a sensory trigger cannot be avoided limit the amount of time you are exposed to it. Work out how much time is bearable/manageable for you• Take breaks frequently
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Contact Us

This guide was produced by **Autism AIM**, part of The Advonet Group. We are a free service co-led by and run for autistic adults (aged 18+) in the Leeds, Bradford and Craven areas.



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