



5 Ways to Win

Growing our awareness of diverse needs can empower others to offer appropriate support. Here are five common anxieties experienced by autistic people.

Each autistic profile is different, so these are by no means applicable to every one.

1. Unpredictability

Autistic people commonly find routines comforting. Routines deliver a safe structure that reduces anxiety associated with uncertainties. Yet one of the most predictable things about life, is its unpredictability! On transport, at work, in the classroom - the world delivers changes. Too many all at once, or a single significant one appearing without warning can be stressful.

2. Textures and tastes

Food, as well as the fit or fabric of certain clothing or furniture, can provoke strong sensory responses that neurotypicals may not relate to. It's common, therefore, for autistic people to have sustained preferences for a narrower range of particular food choices and clothes. Not only are these more palatable, but the experience of these is predictable (see 1).



3. Crowds

For those who are hypersensitive to a lot of sensory input, a crowd can trigger sensory overload. The combination of large numbers of people in close proximity, individuals' movements, a symphony of noises, and a wide variety of aromas can be intoxicating and overwhelming. Furthermore, this sensory cocktail requires a lot of processing, which can be both stressful and exhausting.

4. Getting things wrong

A world built for neurotypicals presents a lifetime of daily challenges for autistic people. Navigating this, together with repeated experiences of dealing with a world that doesn't always make sense, can result in a deep-seated fear of getting things wrong.

5. Social differences among peers

Autistic people often report that they grew up feeling starkly different beside their peers in social contexts, such as schools. They are usually keenly aware of this, and social contexts can sometimes unwittingly highlight differences more than similarities.

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