



About autism

Autism is often called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

When people have autism we say they are autistic.

Many people in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are autistic.



You cannot always tell that someone is autistic just by looking at them.



Autism is a disability.

It is not an illness or disease.

It does not go away.

People are autistic for all of their lives



Autistic people may also have other things like:

a learning disability

a mental health condition.

This is when people may feel upset, worried or scared a lot.



Autistic people can still do lots of things and learn new skills.

They just need the right support.



Everyone who is autistic is different.

Some people need more support.

Some people need less support.



What support may autistic people need?

Autistic people may find it hard to:

meet people and make friends



say what they need

say how they feel

understand how other people think or feel



understand jokes or ideas that are not clear or that may mean more than one thing.



Some autistic people may find other things hard like:

some smells, sounds or colours bright lights

people touching them



Other autistic people may like these things.

Autistic people may have something they are very interested in.



Or something they are very good at.

This may be art, music or something else.



Autistic people may like to do the same things every day.

This helps them feel safe

It can be hard for people to change things.

Sometimes things can feel too much for autistic people.

They may feel worried or scared.



They may want to spend time on their own.



Communicate



How do autistic people communicate?

Some autistic people may not speak. Or they may speak a bit.

Some autistic people use other ways to say things.

Like sign language or pictures.

Some autistic people find it hard to know what other people say.

They may copy what other people say to make sure it is right.

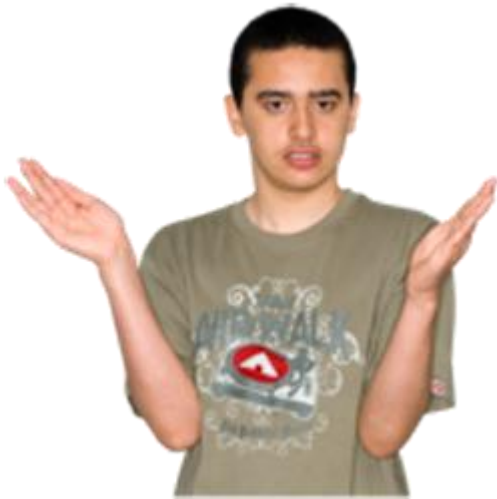
Or they may talk about their favourite subject instead.



It can help to give autistic people:

clear information

enough time to understand what someone says



Why are people autistic?

No one knows why people are autistic.



It is not something that parents or autistic people do wrong.

Sometimes autism can pass from parents to their children.



Finding out if someone is autistic

People can go to the doctor to find out if they are autistic.



The doctor may ask other health people to see if someone is autistic.



It is good to find out if someone is autistic.

It can help them get the right support.