

Autism & Communication



Autistic people may find it difficult to filter out less important information. Too much information can lead to 'overload' where no further information can be processed.

These tips can help you better communicate with Autistic friends or colleagues.



Engage directly

- » Use their name at the start.
- » Engage them by talking about what they're doing.
- » Look for signs they are engaged before asking a question or giving an instruction.



Think about visuals

- » Reduce non-verbal communication like eye contact, body language and gestures if someone seems to be getting anxious.
- » Use visual aids like timetables.



Be clear and concise

- » Say less and talk slowly.
- » Use key words.
- » Pause between phrases.
- » Don't ask lots of questions.



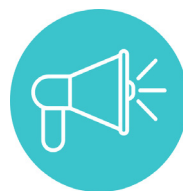
Avoid open ended questions

- » Keep questions short.
- » Ask only necessary questions.
- » Offer answer choices.
- » Be specific e.g. "did you enjoy your lunch?" instead of "how was your day?"



Consider literal thinking

- » Avoid irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms or exaggeration.
- » If you use these you may need to explain what you really mean.



Be aware of the environment

- » Bright lights, noise, or a crowded room may affect how much information someone can process.

Adopted from the work of the National Autistic Society (UK) 2021.

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