

Masking

Masking is when a person hides their true selves and traits to appear more neurotypical. This often occurs to fit in, to follow the rules, for safety, and to please others. However, masking can be harmful and result in the following:

- Higher stress and anxiety
- Depression and suicidal thoughts
- Feelings of not fitting in
- Exhaustion (burnout)
- People unable to get diagnosis
- Loss of identity

Masking does not make the need for supports go away, yet people who mask are less likely to receive supports because they are deemed too "high functioning".

Stimming

Stimming is a self-regulatory, self-stimulatory, and at times automatic behavior.

Examples are spinning, tapping, vocal noises, repeating sounds, or hair twirling.

Stimming can help soothe, regulate, and be an expression of emotions. Unless it is harmful to themselves or others, it can be helpful and should be accepted.

Echolalia

Echolalia is the repetition of what someone hears. It can be immediate or delayed. Delayed echolalia can consist of scripts, or gestalts, to communicate. Echolalia is meaningful. It can be used to communicate and interact or it can be used to regulate. The longer the script is, the more unintelligible it may be. It can take detective work to determine the meaning behind a person's script, but it should be acknowledged!

AAC

Some people are non-speaking or minimally speaking and require the use of alternative modes of communication. Some speaking people can go silent or mute at times, especially when burnt out or dysregulated. It is always necessary to have access to different and preferred modes of communication. There is no one best way to communicate and all modes should be accepted.

Takeaways

Everyone communicates differently and there is not one way that is better than the other. Just because we are used to one style does not mean there is only one right way.

It is important to respect everyone's communication styles even if it is different than what you are used to. We shouldn't expect someone to change their personality or preferences for our own.

Autistic

Communication Differences

We may see communication differences between neurotypical and neurodivergent people. We may socialize differently and view social rules differently.

We might see differences in eye contact, body language, tone of voice, and conversational styles.

Different is not a bad thing!

