



“Are You Autistic?”: Truths and Misconceptions

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Who we are



“Are You Autistic?”: Truths and Misconceptions

Are
you
Autistic?

Autism myths

- ▶ “Autism is just for boys”
- ▶ “Autism disappears at 18”
- ▶ “All autistic people have no empathy”
- ▶ “All autistic people are the same”
- ▶ “All autistic people fit in to one of two boxes”

Masking

- ▶ How do we mask?
- ▶ Being believed - masking leads to being refused diagnosis and services, especially for women¹
- ▶ Impact on mental health:
 - ▶ Know Your Normal^{2, 3}: 4 in 5 autistic people have experienced mental health issues
 - ▶ Cassidy et al. 2018³: Camouflaging is a risk marker for suicide amongst autistic people

Sensory differences

- ▶ Our sensory differences - good and bad!
- ▶ Social impact

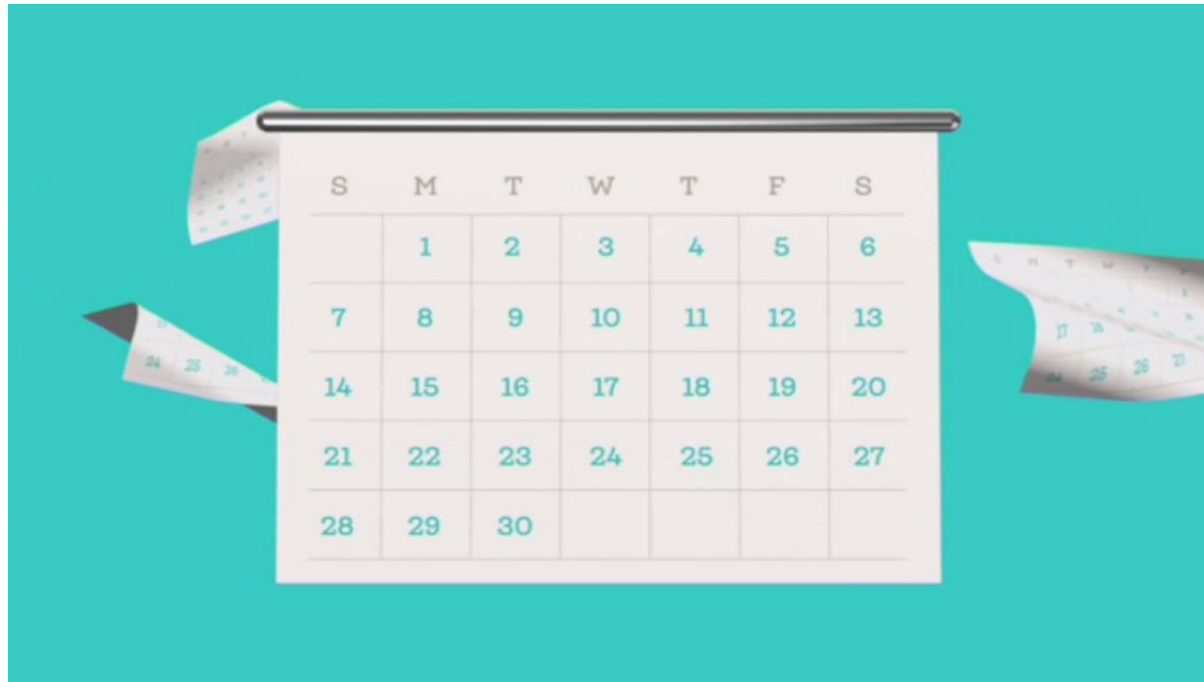


Social interactions: THE RULES

- ▶ Going out - “starts at 9” doesn’t actually mean it starts at 9! (another example is “come between 3-5”)
- ▶ What to wear - always depends on where you go with your mates. Some venues might ask for a specific dress code. Even if they don’t have a dress code, the element of ‘dressing up’ for some nights out can be stressful
- ▶ Travel!! - going to and from a place or someone’s house - which stop to get off at or which house number does your friend live at
- ▶ The unexpected plan that comes either very last minute OR someone can’t make it, then the evening or outing is cancelled.

Diagnostic crisis

- ▶ Diagnosis can be positive!
- ▶ Lack of post-diagnosis support



Employment

- ▶ Just 16% of autistic people are in full-time employment, although 77% want to work⁵
- ▶ AGCAS: Just 31% of autistic graduates are in full-time employment after six months, the least of all disability groups and half the proportion of non-disabled graduates⁶
- ▶ Getting a job - learning how to navigate your way from finishing university to finding a job
- ▶ Keeping a job - learning the 'rules' of work e.g. punctuality, dress code, how to treat your colleagues and boss

Why we like being autistic



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Any questions?

References

1. Hull et al. *'Putting on My Best Normal': Social Camouflaging in Adults with Autism Spectrum Conditions* (2017) *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 47(8), 2519-2534
2. Ambitious about Autism, *Know Your Normal* (2017): www.knowyournormal.co.uk
3. Crane et al. *'Something needs to change': Mental health experiences of young autistic adults in England* (2018) *Autism* 1-17
4. Cassidy et al. *Risk markers for suicidality in autistic adults* (2018) *Molecular Autism* 9:42
5. National Autistic Society, *The autism employment gap: Too Much Information in the workplace* (2016): <https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/employment.aspx>
6. Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, *What Happens Next? - A Report on the First Destinations of Disabled Graduates* (2018): <https://www.agcas.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/7991a7d5-84a0-4fe1-bbdc-5313d9039486>