

THE NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMATIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

**The Adult Autism
Practice**

Thriving Autistic



AdultAutism.ie



WWW.ADULTAUTISM.IE
WWW.THRIVINGAUTISTIC.ORG

Use each Autistic individual's personal preference first. Otherwise, here a list of general phrases/terms to use and not use.

TO USE / TO DO



TO AVOID / NOT TO DO

Identity First language
(Autistic Person/Child/Adult/Autistic
Experience/Autistic Neurology)

Disabled person / --- is disabled

Difference / Differences

Talk about the individual's strengths and needs that account for different internal and external factors such as time, context, energy, mood, environment etc.

Talk about the individual's strengths and needs that account for different internal and external factors such as time, context, energy, mood, environment etc.

NonSpeaking/ at times NonSpeaking

Speech and language differences

Co-occurring conditions

Person first language (Person with Autism)
/ (Person on the spectrum/Your Autism)

Person with a disability / --- has a disability

Disorder / Disease / Illness

High functioning/ Low functioning

Mild / Severe

Non-verbal / limited speech

Speech and language difficulties

Co-morbidities / Co-morbid Conditions
/ Disorders

**Talk
about Autistic People
without judgement**

TO USE / TO DO



TO AVOID / NOT TO DO

is Autistic

Suffers from / has autism

Characteristics

Symptoms/ impairments

Communication differences

Social impairments / Lacks Social Skills

Communication
/ Communicating Distress

Challenging / Problematic
/ Disruptive behaviour

Double empathy
/ Different communication style

Lacks Theory of mind

Stimming /
Self-expression body language

Self stimulatory behaviour
/ Repetitive movements

Support / Adaptions /
Accommodations

Treat / Treatment

Needs/challenges
accompanying autism

Difficulties attributed to being Autistic

Description of the autism spectrum as non-linear and non-binary with a multitude of ways of being autistic. Each Autistic person is different and has their own unique context and time-dependant neutralities, strengths, and needs constantly changing and never fixed. Their ability to adapt to this world changes from situation to situation depending on many internal and external factors.

Description of the autism spectrum as linear and binary

TO USE / TO DO



TO AVOID / NOT TO DO

Attention to detail

Lacking central coherence

Thrives with predictability
and structure

Deficit / lacks Cognitive Flexibility /
rigidity of thought

Hyperfocussed

Deficits in task switching

Energetic

Restless / Hyperactive

Value Autistic ways of Being

Odd / Unusual / Peculiar / Aloof

Talkative

Talks too much

Use full words
(Autism, Executive functioning,
Disability Allowance)

Abbreviations
AS, ASD, EF, DA, DCD)

For full title use
Autism

Do not use
Autism Spectrum Disorder or Condition

Embrace Autism / Accept Autism,
Be Neurodiverse affirmative. Focus on the quality of
life and Internal Wellbeing

Cure Autism / Fix Autism / Treat Autism

**Reports should be
should be strengths
based and respectful of
the client and
neurodiversity**



TO USE / TO DO



TO AVOID / NOT TO DO

Discourage masking, passing for non-autistic and social skills training, Be aware of the harmful psychological effects of masking to authentic development.

You either are
or are not Autistic
but there are many ways of being autistic

Different / Autistic pattern/Neurotypical
pattern/Common pattern

Passions / Areas of Expertise
/ Strengths

Autism

Autistic Sensory Perception/Sensory Processing
Differences / Sensory
Differences / Perceptual differences

Autistic Developmental Trajectory

Autism is a neurotype and a
neurodivergency. All humans are
neurodiverse.

Encouraging masking and
social skills training

Everyone is a little bit Autistic

(Ab)normal pattern

Special interests / Restrictive interests /
obsessions

ASD/ ASC / AS / Aspergers

Sensory Processing Disorder / Sensory
Atypicalities / Sensory Abnormalities

Developmental Delay / Developmental
Difficulties / Problematic Development

Autism is a neurodiversity. Neurotypical
people are not neurodivergent.

**Identity first language
should be used unless
the person has
expressed a desire for
Person First Language**