Twitter Thread by Pete Wharmby



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Autistic behaviours that are generally discriminated against, despite being harmless and just how we are.

A thread■

1. Stimming - repetitive physical movement to help regulate our stress levels. They feel nice and are really helpful but people seem to hate to see it. #autism

2. No eye contact. We generally find this too intimate and intense, and will avoid. It can even cause pain if forced. But people don't trust us even though we inform them we're autistic. #autism

3. Sitting in 'odd' positions. We're often very bendable - remember Ehlers-Danlos syndrome is a common comorbidity - and loads of feel more comfortable in slightly contorted positions. People always comment 'you can't be comfy like that'.

Yes. Yes I can. #autism

4. Stammering when excited. We can get so passionate about some subjects that we struggle to get the words out as they all get caught in the annoying bottleneck of actually having to leave our mouths. But it irritates people, makes them assume we're somehow lesser. #autism

5. Facial movements and stretches. Part of stimming really, as its generally a comfort or stress release mechanism, but can be viewed derogatively as 'twitching' and often a source of mockery. But it's just a natural, harmless action. #autism

6. Meltdown. There's nothing abnormal about having a meltdown - all humans can. It's just #autistic stress levels are so high they tend to happen more frequently. But they're seen as a failing of us, rather than a failing of our surroundings, which is more accurate. #autism

7. Rigid routine. Many of us like this as it removes possible stressors from the day, keeping things nice and calm. But some people seem to view it as weird and bad, for some reason, even though its a perfectly sound way of managing our stress. #autism

8. Organising/lining up/collecting things. It's really only because autistic folk seem capable of being interested in collecting *anything* that there's an issue. As if it's normal to collect football shirts but somehow bizarre and evil to collect pink socks. #autism

9. Flat affect. Some autistic people show very little emotion on their faces, despite still feeling them internally. This is generally taken tremendously badly by neurotypical people around them, even though its a well documented and perfectly natural trait. #autism

10. Missing cues to speak in a conversation. A natural and very common part of what autism actually is and yet even folk who know autistic people can be highly offended when we mess up and interrupt or take too long to speak.

As you can see from this short list, when you're actively vilified for simply living out your existence, because your behaviours don't properly confirm, it can be so unpleasant and miserable. This is why we need to raise understanding that these behaviours are OK.

If we don't, autistic people will continue to feel aliens and unfairly condemned for things outside of their control. And as you can see, none of these things actually cause any harm. Live and let live, please. Is it too much to ask?

Leaving this here just in case you'd like to support... https://t.co/qonxXX3C91