Twitter Thread by Pete Wharmby



Pete Wharmby
@commaficionado

30 things you can do that might help #autistic people in your lives.

A thread. Please read and share widely, and add to it as you see fit.

#autism #autistic

1. Let us decompress in quiet areas when we need to. Our desire to be alone is not judgement on you, it's simple self preservation. #autism

2. If you need us to do something, give us very clear, unambiguous instruction. Don't feel like you're being rude doing this, but don't sound irritated or patronising! #autism

3. Do not expect us to react to things in a way you would expect. That way lies disappointment. We often show our emotions in very different ways to what you might expect. #autism

4. Don't assume we aren't capable of thought and feeling if we're non-verbal. Don't assume we're incapable of communicating in other ways either. #autism

5. Don't expect #autistic children to 'grow out of' being autistic. They just won't. That doesn't happen.

6. Don't force us to wear particular clothing if we have a visceral negative reaction to it - it's texture or fit might be causing *significant* discomfort and unhappiness. #autism

7. Don't be upset if we don't wish to socialise with you, as we often have considerable limits in our capacity. However do ask as generally it's nice to get the opportunity. #autism

8. Check in on #autistic people from time to time. Don't be upset if they don't respond quickly - all socialising is stressful and many of us are very forgetful and disorganised!

9. Don't use banter or negative insulting humour to autistic people, unless you know they're OK with it from you specifically. There are maybe four people on earth I can be jokingly insulted by without panicking that they mean it. #autism

10. Remember all autistic people have a very different experience of autism - it's a huge, varied grab bag of traits so any list like this has to be taken carefully. #autism

11. Don't force us to make phone calls. Phone phobia is common for many #autistic people and it can be *very* serious. If there's an alternative let us use if without judgement.

12. Don't force eye contact. Many #autistic people find eye contact way too intimate and emotionally draining so they're not gonna want to do it with their boss or a stranger. We are still listening.

13. Let us stim! These movements, sounds of activities are great for regulating our stress levels and are absolutely vital. Unless we're hurting ourselves or others, let us be. #autism

14. Talk to us and listen to us about our special interests. It may be a bit of an info dump but believe me, be a safe listener and we'll appreciate it so so much. #autism

15. Let #autistic people play with their toys however they want.

16. If an #autistic person forgets something, don't be too harsh on us please. It's hard to remember stuff when just surviving is tricky.

17. Remember that many #autistic people have comorbid conditions - from depression to intellectual disabilities. Be sensitive and assume nothing.

18. Don't infantalise #autistic people - we're not big kids or babies, we are adults with agency and minds of our own.

19. Don't spread misinformation about autism and call it out when you see it - eg #autistic people having no empathy and so on.

20. Pay attention to our pronouns and language. Many, many #autistic people are in some ways non-binary, trans, queer or asexual, or more. Again, assume nothing and *listen*.

21. Don't assume we're 'high functioning'. That language can go in the bin. We may well be good at some stuff but behind the scenes you don't know how difficult we find life.

22. Don't treat 'autism' or 'autistic' as if it's a dirty word, avoiding it with euphemism. It's really fucking annoying.

23. Give opportunities to #autistic people, if you're in the position to. We're frequently in the creative arts thanks to our brains, and being given chances can change everything.

24. If you want #autistic people to do stuff for you, pay us as you would non-autistic people.

25. Don't force an #autistic person into a situation they're uncomfortable with unless you know they'd rather you help push them. You have no idea how scared we may be.

26. Let #autistic people follow their routine as much as you possibly can. It helps lots of us immeasurably most of the time and doesn't usually cost anything.

27. If an #autistic person has a meltdown or shutdown, give them space and don't judge them. Be kind. Let them rest afterwards.

28. Don't tell anyone who identifies as #autistic that they're not autistic. First, you have no idea, second, your objection is probably based on incorrect stereotypes. Third, it's rude.

29. Give us processing time to answer when you ask us things. Even if it seems an easy question.

30. Above all, follow loads of #autistic accounts on here, Facebook, YouTube etc and see what they have to say.

Thanks, I hope that was useful. I'm putting this here as I'm trying to support myself by writing about autism.

https://t.co/qonxXX3C91

(Please note this is based on my own experiences and understanding, and I do not speak somehow for all autistic people)