



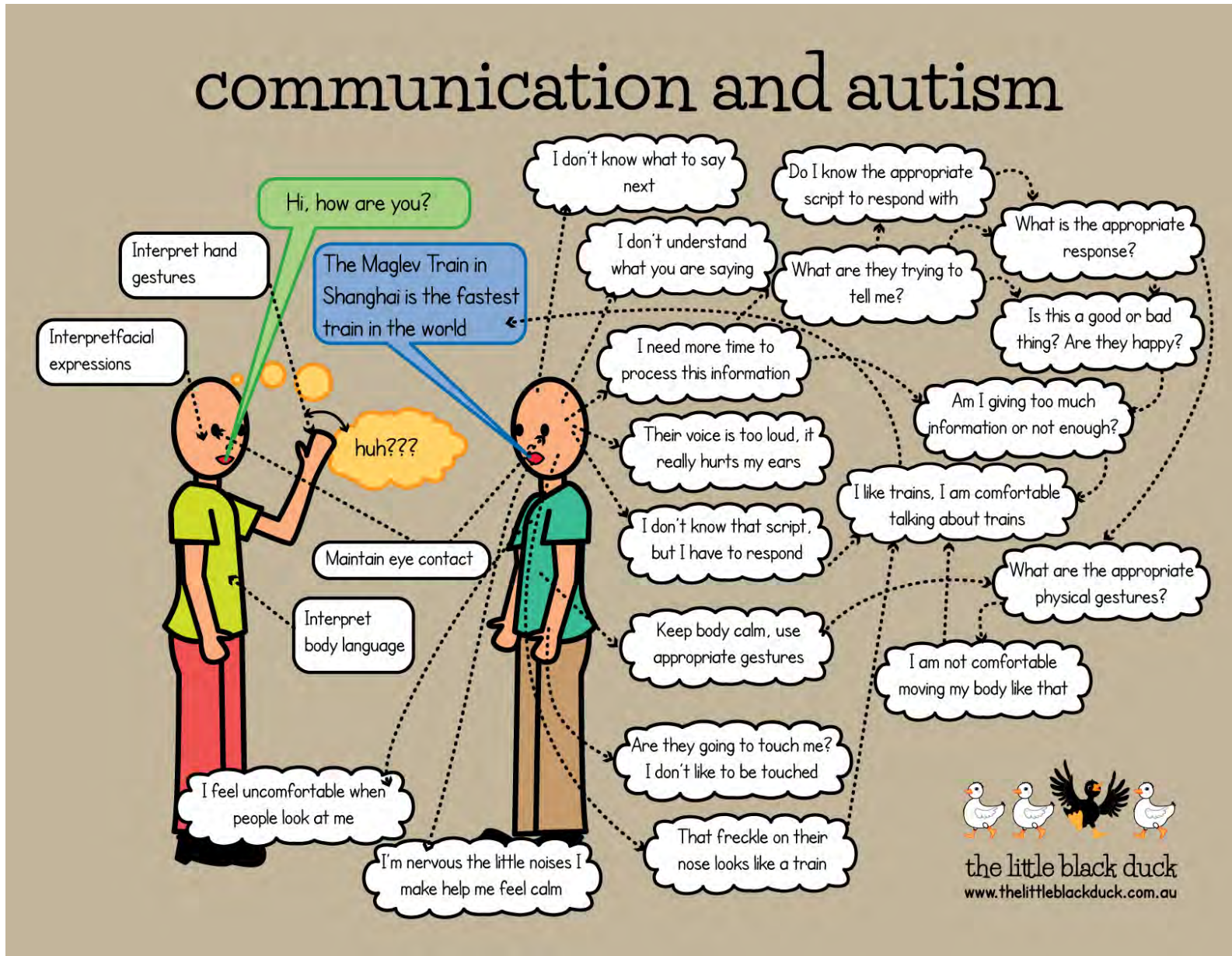
MindSenseAbility

Communication

Understanding Other People

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Autistic Communication



Autistic Language and Communication

Based on honouring Autistic Communication from <https://www.divergentperspectives.co.uk/>

Literal, concrete interpretation

Gestalt thinking can mean that **it takes longer and more effort to work out the meaning of what is said.**

Language processing

Processing language and communication can be very costly for autistic people, for reasons talked about under literal, concrete interpretation

Direct Communication

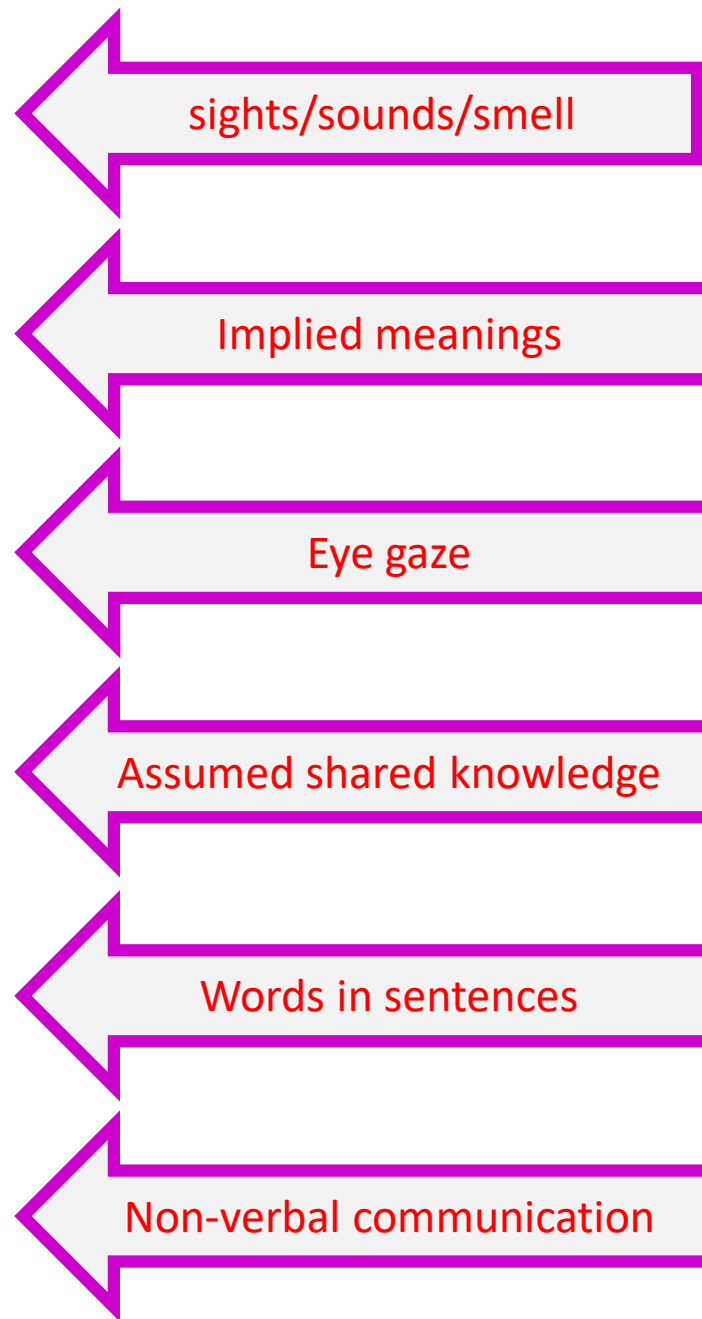
Trying to express ideas in “fluffy” or diplomatic language can require a lot of thinking and processing capacity. This can be a huge drain on social energy.

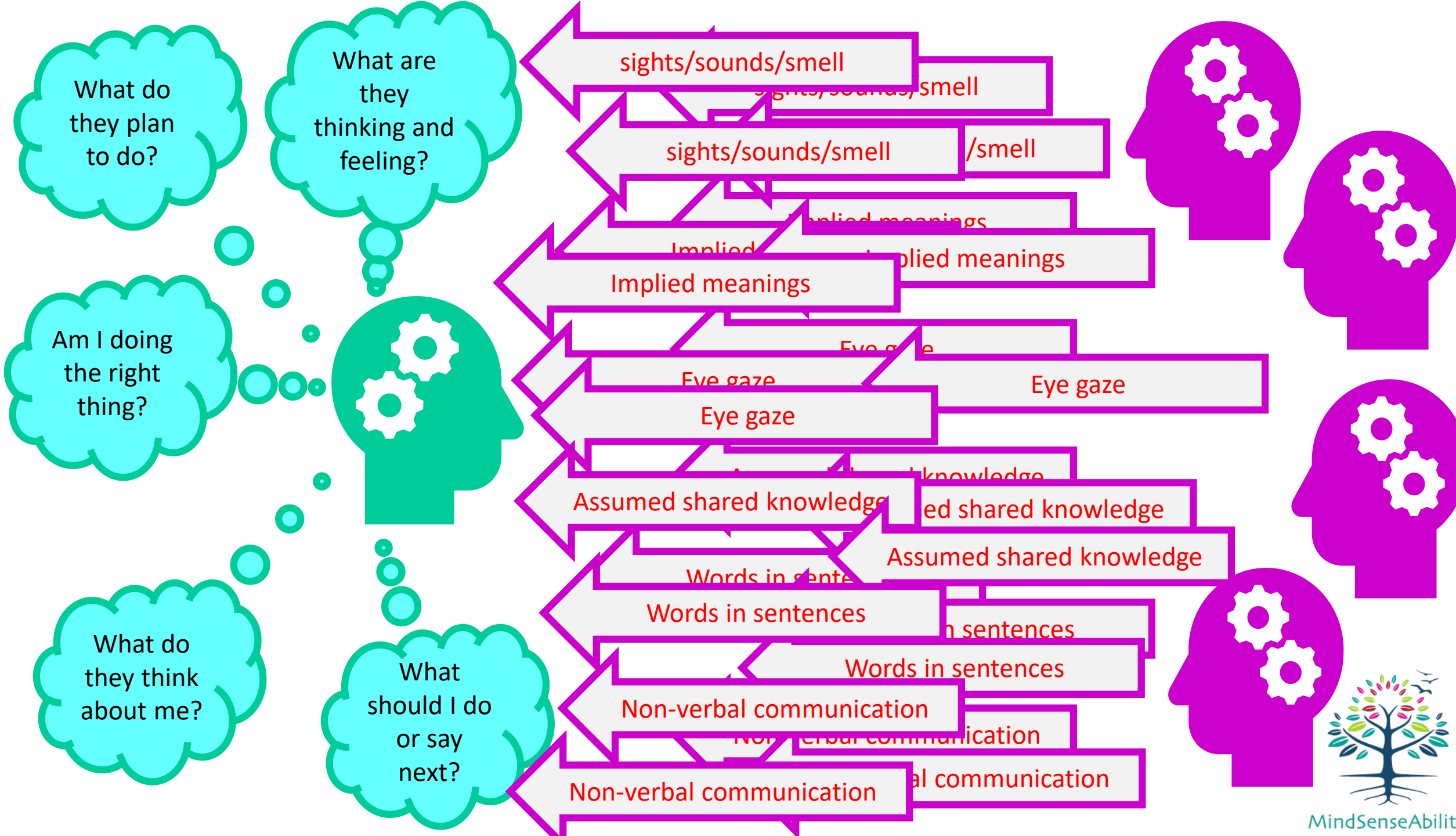
Eye-Contact

Eye-contact can feel uncomfortable, overwhelming or distressing for many autistic people.

Longer Conversational Turns

Autistic people’s monotropic (single channel) attention and slow information processing mean that having **long turns in a prolonged conversation about a topic is easier for them** and reduces how draining the conversation is.





Can there be too much pressure to contribute when just one person.



Double Empathy Problem



Different communication expectations

The differences between autistic people and “allistic” (non-autistic) people when talking about a problem often relate to communication style, emotional expression, and expectations.

- Focus on facts/logic/solutions **V** Focus on emotional validation or social harmony
- Direct, literal communication **V** Indirect nuanced language
- Empathy expressed internally or subtly **V** Expectations reciprocal emotional cues
- Explaining or solving the problem **V** feeling heard or validated

Greater understanding of these differences can reduce frustration and build stronger relationships.

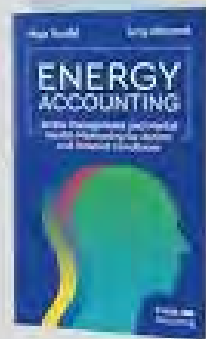
Masking



The Masking Regulator

[illegible]



Explains the **Energy Accounting** method for stress management, tailored for, but not exclusive to, autistic readers



Develop Self Advocacy

- Self awareness and Active Listening are key first steps
- Knowing their rights
- Knowing what they need and how to create it
- Opportunities for choice and expressing views
- Being listened to so they can see themselves as an effective communicator
- Valuing however the student expresses themselves
- Information adapted to make it accessible
- Active participation in goal setting and reviews at all levels (Person Centred Planning)

[/https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/self_advocacy_toolkit_for_autistic_young_people.pdf](https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/self_advocacy_toolkit_for_autistic_young_people.pdf)



What is self-advocacy?

Self-advocacy is being able to communicate your needs and desires. Self-advocacy skills are important because they provide a person with the tools to help them to feel empowered to ask for what they need in any situation.

There are many different ways to self-advocate, and this is going to be unique to you: your ambitions, goals, strengths and differences are yours. Just as no two people are alike, this is also applicable in this case. In no particular order, below are some general points to consider when thinking about advocating for yourself. These points are applicable to all the sections in the toolkit and referring to these general guidelines as you work through each section is a method to effectively self-advocate:



Friendships

Autism & Friendship

Differences, Misconceptions and
my Experience



Autism - sketches

There's an assumption that autistic people do not have the desire to have friends: that is untrue and based on misconceptions!

- Autistic people have the same desire for **connection** as others
- Friendships for autistics are **different** than the **neurotypical standard**
- Autistic people might face **more difficulties** initiating, developing and maintaining friendships



Autism - sketches



MindSenseAbility

Difficulties might include:

- difficulties navigating friendships and social circles due to **overwhelming** and **complex social rules**
 - experience of **social anxiety**
- difficulties **processing** social informations
 - Social circle complexities increase in teenage years and adulthood

If not addressed this can result in isolation and loneliness



Autism - sketches

Social connection is a powerful predictor of long term **physical and mental health!**

Finding an **autistic support group** and having other neurodivergent friends can be vital for an autistic persons well-being

Autistic people might prefer to have a **few, close and intense friendships** rather than larger groups



Autism - sketches



What qualities make up a positive friendship?
Circle the "ingredients" you'd include in your recipe:

integrity
trustworthiness
honesty
dependability
loyalty
caring
empathy
acceptance
good listening skills
supportiveness
friendliness
self-confidence

fun
humor
respect
kindness
love/compassion
forgiveness
generosity
thoughtfulness
reciprocation
deep connection
no guilt/pressure
happiness/optimism

helpfulness
humility
manners
patience
encouragement
good sport
team player
silliness
adventurousness
playfulness
common interests
individuality

Experiences of Friendships for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum: A Scoping Review

Black et al: 2022: Review Journal of Autism and developmental Disorders

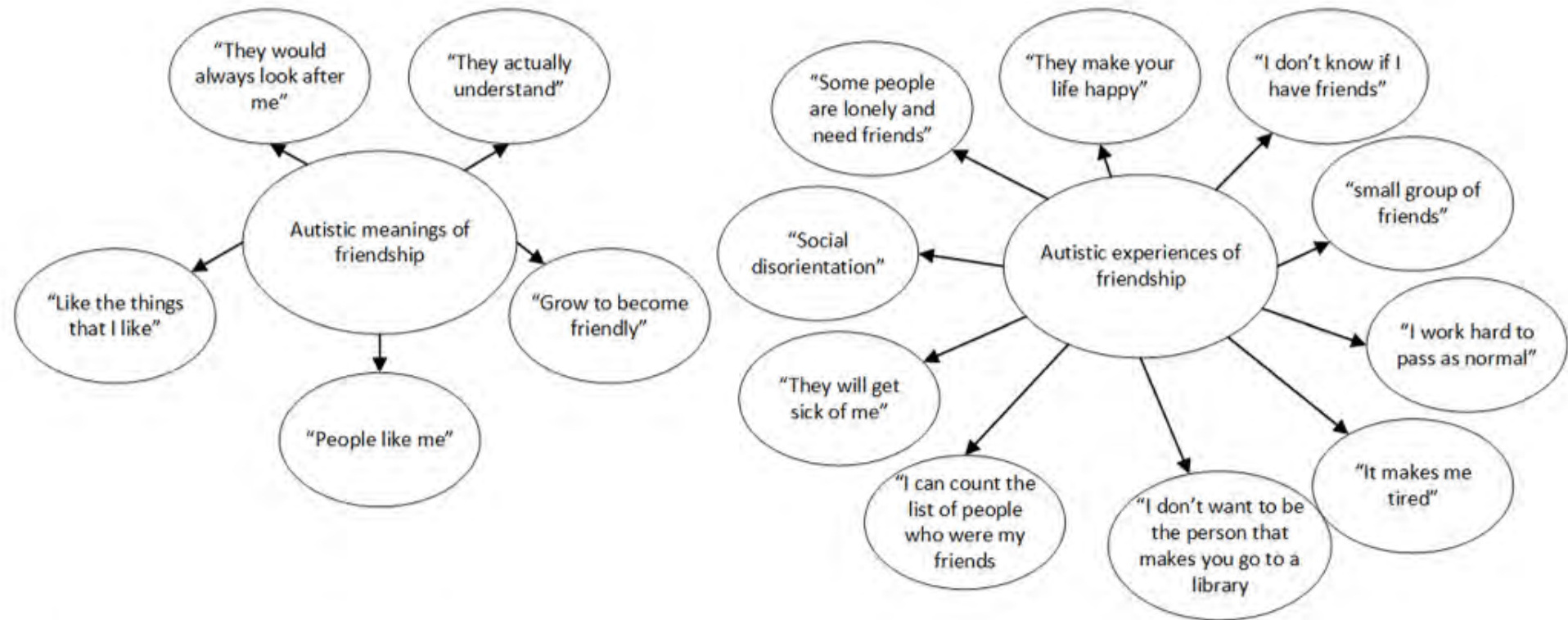


Fig. 2 Overview of meta-ethnographic results



Essentials in a friendship?

- Balance
- Trust
- Respect





Social Detective

Use your:

Eyes



Ears



Social Smarts



To make a smart guess about what people are:

- Thinking
- Feeling
- Planning to do

- Social smarts: The part of our brain that we use when we are around other people and thinking about them. We use information we can see and hear things we know about the person and the situation (context) to work things out.
- Smart guess: Using all the information we have to make a smart guess about the person.
- Wacky guess: making a guess without any information.

Activities:

- Why is communicating in social situations difficult (disc and flip chart)
- Conversation with changed communication (cards)
- Talk about autistic aspects of our child's communication (Handout)
- Social detective (hoops and balls, watch, foods in a box)



Why is communicating in social situations difficult?

Think about a challenging social situation.

What did you feel like?

What did you have to think about?

What information was coming from other people that you had to experience.

How is it to “keep people in mind”.



Change your communication:

- Talk for a few minutes with the person next to you about breakfast this morning.
- While you do this make the “change” to your communication.
- We will talk about how it felt afterwards.