

### What is it



A natural variation in brain development and function.

Autism is experienced in different ways and commonly includes differences in:

- Communication
- Social Interaction
- Sensory Processing



1% worldwide

Of the population are autistic and this number is increasing.

(World Health Organisation, 2022)

### Social Communication

Autistic and non-autistic children and young people (CYP) often express, interpret and experience verbal and non-verbal communication quite differently. This can sometimes lead to significant breakdowns in communication. Better understanding, accommodation and appreciation of each other's communication and interaction style will help to reduce this breakdown.

### Stimming & Sensory Behaviours

Autistic people often share a love of repetitive words, actions and sounds, known as stimming and this is an important part of autistic life. Autistic people can often process information from their senses in different ways. This can be difficult to deal with, sometimes impacting on other areas of life.

### Social Interaction

Autistic and non-autistic people experience the world and interact with each other in different ways. Autistic CYP are often very sensitive to other people's emotions, but their communication of empathy and concern can often be mis-understood.

### How can you help?

Get to know and understand an autistic CYP's communication/ interaction style and behaviours.



Adapt the environment and your communication/ interaction styles.



Talking can be tricky - consider other ways of communicating, e.g. pictures and text.



### Early Support is vital



The right, early support can change lives!

Produced in partnership: Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

### Everyone is different

Autism is known as a spectrum as each of the characteristics listed above will have an impact on every individual slightly differently.

Characteristics will also change throughout life as the CYP develops and adapts to the social world around them. Every person will also function differently depending on their situation, and physical environment.

