



S P E C T R U M

AFFIRMING SOCIAL SKILLS

(That we could actually benefit from)



S

Self-determination & advocacy

Teaching self-determination and self-advocacy is important, as it empowers us to navigate a world that wasn't built with us in mind. It allows us to make choices about our lives, including education, employment, and personal goals. Self-advocacy equips us with the skills to express our needs, preferences, and boundaries, promoting self-confidence and ensuring that choice and control are respected.

P

Perspective taking

The ability to understand and appreciate different perspectives is an important skill for all people. It paves the way for effective communication and respectful relationships, allowing us to see the world from various viewpoints. This, in turn, promotes tolerance and acceptance of diverse experiences, which can bridge communication gaps and reduce misunderstandings. Key skills include curiosity, self-reflection and patience.

E

Exploring social preferences

Discovering social preferences is crucial for self-awareness and creating accommodating environments. Tailoring experiences to fit unique preferences ensures comfort and enjoyment, while self-reflection helps manage anxiety and sensory sensitivities. Finding like-minded individuals leads to genuine friendships, empowering us to embrace our true selves.
Remember: If play isn't fun, it's not play!

C

Communication Styles

Understanding different communication styles, whether autistic or non-autistic, is crucial for authentic connection. The Double Empathy Problem highlights the need to appreciate diversity and create an inclusive society where everyone's voice is valued. Mutual understanding fosters appreciation of neurodiversity. Learning about each other's communication styles leads to getting along and meeting in the middle - no one is right or wrong, we are all simply different.

T

Typical social cues & why people do what they do

It's valuable for autistic individuals to explore and understand neurotypical social cues and behaviours, not as a means to conform or replicate them; but as a tool for navigating a neurodiverse world. By learning about these cues and why people sometimes behave in ways that might seem confusing, we are empowered to actively participate knowledgeably rather than passively. It's not about changing/masking who we are but adding to our repertoire of skills.

R

Resolving problems

Learning how to effectively respond to problems and address communication breakdowns is a crucial life skill for everyone. It empowers us to navigate conflicts and misunderstandings in a constructive manner, fostering healthier relationships and reducing stress. Essential skills include reflection, adaptability, and negotiation. These skills not only address immediate awkwardness but also larger issues.

U

Unpacking safety and setting boundaries

Social safety is vital for personal well-being. Learning to recognise trusted individuals and warning signs helps navigate complex interactions. Setting boundaries empowers communication and protects personal space and emotions. Important skills include identifying trusted individuals and recognising warning signs. By learning these skills, individuals can express boundaries assertively without feeling pressured to conform.

M

Masking & why it occurs

Autistic camouflaging, often referred to as masking, involves concealing autistic traits (e.g. stimming) and trying to fit into neurotypical social norms. Constantly suppressing one's true self can lead to anxiety, depression, and a sense of alienation. Knowing when masking happens is vital for self-awareness and can help us to make conscious informed choices about when we want to apply it, and when we don't.

