

What is autism?

So in simple terms, autism is a difference in brain wiring or what medical professionals might call neurology. Autistic people's brains are wired in a way that's different from most of the rest of the population. This difference is something that autistic people are born with, and it will stay the same for the rest of their lives. But the difference doesn't mean that autistic people are defective or broken or need fixing, or that autism needs curing.

You meet one person with autism, you only meet one person with autism. So when I can talk about how I'm affected, it doesn't mean in any way that the person next to me is affected the same way. And actually you're more likely to find more differences amongst ourselves than what we would call neurotypical people. Me, I have difficulty with sarcasm, routine, facial expressions. Whereas autism to someone else could be affecting just simple parts of the day. So for example, not having the right breakfast cereal. It affects us on a communicational basis. It can also affect us. The main aspect is social skills, it can also affect us on a sensory process.

Here are some of the notable things that autistic brain wiring affects. So there's communication. We think differently so we communicate differently. And this can lead to misunderstandings. We misunderstand other people and other people can misunderstand us. It also affects how we respond to sensory information such as sight, sound, smells, taste, textures, and also things like movements and pain, hunger and emotions. It also affects how we pay attention to things. So on the one hand, we may seem distracted from what we're supposed to be paying attention to. And on the other hand, we can pay intense attention to something for a long period of time if it really interests us.

Hobbies and interests are really important to us. They can bring us a lot of joy, and they can be often very therapeutic. If we're feeling stressed. Thinking differently means that the world can be quite a confusing and stressful place for us. So this is why predictability and knowing what to expect is really important. It helps us to feel safe. So autistic people very often appreciate things like routines and, being told in advance what to expect. And if routines don't go to plan and plans change, it can make us feel very stressed.

So when we're well understood and we're well supported, it's totally possible for autistic people to live, successful, happy lives, fulfilled lives, with, you know, fulfilled relationships, work life, everything. But we need to be well understood, and we need to understand ourselves well. We need our needs to be met for that to happen.