

## Maintaining and strengthening friendships

I'm autistic and I struggle with social situations.

I think maybe I seem like I'm not interested in other people, but I genuinely like socialising... it's just difficult for me sometimes.

I like to talk about things that I'm into, like anime or plants.

But not everybody is as passionate about these things as me.

Sometimes I need to remind myself that just because somebody doesn't share my interests doesn't mean they don't like me.

My friends like to talk about other stuff, like what happened over the weekend or what's been going on in class.

I know I need to show interest in what other people have to say, so I try to listen and ask questions.

Sometimes it's actually interesting.

Some of my friends seem to find it so easy to talk to people they don't know. But I find it hard to make friends.

Sometimes I say the wrong thing and upset people.

But even if I don't know why what I said was wrong, I apologise for making them upset. And we move on.

I know that I like to talk about things that I'm passionate about, so asking people what they're interested in is a good way to get to know them.

Some people are into some seriously weird stuff.

People can be confusing! But if I don't get what's going on, I can just ask.

Not everyone appreciates the things I like, but that's okay.

I try not to overthink or worry when somebody disagrees with me.

Like, how can you not love plants? Plants literally turn CO<sub>2</sub> into oxygen and there are so many different types.

Just like me and my friends.