

## Advice for non-autistic people in autistic spaces (online or in person):

- **Don't speak over us.** This includes “playing devil’s advocate” or insisting that we use “person-first” language to refer to ourselves. You don’t get to tell us how to feel or what language to use when describing our reality.
- **Don't ask questions and demand emotional labor for things you could easily find the answers for through Google or by scrolling through our online platforms.** Genuine, complex questions are welcome and we enjoy educating you, but please don’t ask questions about very basic things that people have already explained multiple times (for example, please don’t ask “What’s AAC?” or “What’s ABA?”)
- **Understand that autistic people all have different life experiences, needs, and opinions on various topics.** We’re not a monolith, so if you really want to learn from us you should be following multiple people and pages.
- Under no circumstances should you DM us or comment something along the lines of, “have you tried this essential oil?” or “have you tried this supplement?” to help “reduce” our autistic traits. **Snakeoil salesmen will be blocked.**
- **Don't assume that just because an autistic person is typing online, they have low support needs.** There are a ton of autistic people with high support needs who blog and write about their experiences. There’s no way to tell what specific diagnosis a person carries just by reading their writing.
- Similarly, don’t assume that just because an autistic person has lower support needs than your child, that they never had high support needs or that they don’t understand many of the struggles and experiences your child faces.
- **Know that support needs don't always correlate with speaking ability, measurable intelligence, or independence in the ways you might expect.** Someone with high support needs may be able to speak eloquently and write very well, but need a significant amount of help bathing, getting dressed, and grocery shopping. So again, never assume things about an autistic person just based on the side of themselves they present online or in certain professional settings.
- **Don't dismiss our experiences** by saying things like “Everyone is a little autistic!” or refusing to believe that our sensory experiences are different than yours. When we talk about our unique experiences as autistic people, don’t make it about you, and don’t assume that the way you perceive the world is the only possible way to perceive things.
- **Understand that the way we phrase things when trying to educate you might be blunt at times. Don't take it personally.** Many of the topics we discuss with you, like ABA for example, are extremely touchy subjects for us. Continuing with the ABA

example, recognize that many of us have gone through ABA or ABA-style parenting and have been traumatized by it. So when we discuss it, we often end up reliving our trauma. Many of us already have difficulty regulating our conversational tone, which becomes even more difficult when we're emotionally overwhelmed.

- **When we tell you that you should stop doing or saying certain things, be open to feedback instead of getting defensive.** Certain things like the use of puzzle pieces are all-pervasive, and we don't blame you for not already knowing the history behind certain attitudes and symbols. But we do expect you to listen and change your behavior when we explain the history and tell you the ways these things continue to harm us in the present.
- **Don't forget that we're autistic when you interact with us.** We might be very eloquent and "put together," but we still face challenges communicating and regulating emotions. Please don't bombard us with demands, dig your heels in and continue arguing when it's clear that we're getting overwhelmed, or insist that we continue talking to you even when we've set a boundary and told you that we need to take a break.

Many of these things are applicable when in the online or in-person spaces of any marginalized group, but there are quite a few autism-specific things to keep in mind. Hopefully this helps y'all understand better ways to be an ally.

~Eden 🐸