Social camouflaging is associated with mental health challenges. In qualitative research, autistic people consistently link their camouflaging to experiences of anxiety and depression (e.g. Bargiela et al., 2016). Several quantitative studies show associations between camouflaging and internalising problems: autistic people who camouflage also tend to report higher rates of anxiety and depression (e.g. Cage & Troxell-Whitman, 2019; Livingston, Colvert, et al., 2019). One study found that self-reported camouflaging is associated with higher rates of suicidality (Cassidy, Bradley, Shaw, & Baron-Cohen, 2018).

The double empathy problem (DEP) refers to a “disjuncture in reciprocity between two differently disposed social actors” who hold different norms and expectations of each other, such as is common in autistic to non-autistic social interactions (Milton 2012: 884). With different dispositional outlooks and personal conceptual understandings, interactions involving autistic and non-autistic people are susceptible to frequent misunderstandings. It is a “double problem” as both people experience it, and so it is not a singular problem located in any one person.

“Social camouflaging is associated with mental health challenges. In qualitative research, autistic people consistently link their camouflaging to experiences of anxiety and depression (e.g. Bargiela et al., 2016). Several quantitative studies show associations between camouflaging and internalising problems: autistic people who camouflage also tend to report higher rates of anxiety and depression (e.g. Cage & Troxell-Whitman, 2019; Livingston, Colvert, et al., 2019). One study found that self-reported camouflaging is associated with higher rates of suicidality (Cassidy, Bradley, Shaw, & Baron-Cohen, 2018).”

“The double empathy problem (DEP) refers to a “disjuncture in reciprocity between two differently disposed social actors” who hold different norms and expectations of each other, such as is common in autistic to non-autistic social interactions (Milton 2012: 884). With different dispositional outlooks and personal conceptual understandings, interactions involving autistic and non-autistic people are susceptible to frequent misunderstandings. It is a “double problem” as both people experience it, and so it is not a singular problem located in any one person.”

These results, however, are the first empirical evidence that suggest the difficulties in autistic communication are apparent only when interacting with non-autistic people, and are alleviated when interacting with autistic people. This is evidenced by our finding that autistic and non-autistic people do not significantly differ in how accurately they recall information from peers of the same neurotype but that selective difficulties occur when autistic and non-autistic people are sharing information.”