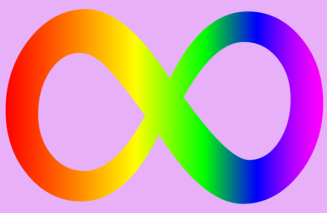
Actually Autistic Advice



Q & A with Kieran Rose, The Autistic Advocate, and Senior Advisor to Therapist Neurodiversity Collective

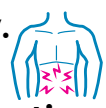
Question: Kieran, you were diagnosed Autistic as a young adult. How would you explain Autism to a newly diagnosed young adult?

The Autistic brain really likes things that catch its attention, but it also sucks in lots of extra information. So, it has to work harder to find the important bits.

Because there's so much information and we're working so much harder, it's simpler for us to think logically and be direct in our communication. It also means we're often good at finding connections and patterns in all sorts of things, because they are kind of like a map that makes it easier for us to find the way things work, and how to move forward.

All that extra information can sometimes get stuck when it moves to the brain, a bit like when a game lags and sometimes that can make us crash, which is when we melt down or shut down.

The extra information can also make us tired and make our bodies worried, so it can give us headaches or stomach aches. It can also fill up our heads, so it can make it hard to speak at all, to know what to say, or even speak when we can and do know what to say.



Thinking about all that information can change the way we move too. Moving can help us sort through it, but sometimes people think we move too much, or that because we don't move like them that there is something wrong, so they try to make us stop.

Lots of people have been confused for many years about what it means to be Autistic and that's caused professionals, us and our parents to not understand it very well.

Some of the confused people think that being Autistic means you are behaving badly, or that you don't care about people; that its bad in some way.

But, being Autistic isn't bad, but it's also not special. Just like being non-Autistic isn't special or bad. We're all just different and you are fine the way you are.

Because of the extra information and all that confusion of other people, it can be hard to be an Autistic person. Sometimes we can find that difficult to deal with, and it can mean that we try to do things, or others try to get us to do things in a way that non-Autistic people do them.

People who aren't Autistic can struggle to understand why we are the way we are; and they can try to change us.

We don't want to be like anyone else, really, and it's okay to not do things the way people expect you to, or to find a way or a workaround that works for you.

When those people try to change us, it means that those other people are thinking about how to make their lives easier, instead of supporting you.

There isn't anything wrong with you, or with being Autistic.

Everyone is unhappy with who they are sometimes, that's just being human, but your challenges are real and valid; which makes it vital that you try to remember the things that make you feel good and have people around you that make you feel good as much as you are able.

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