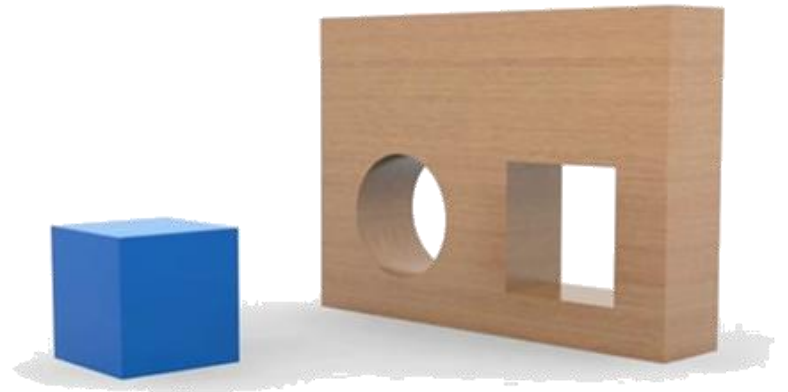




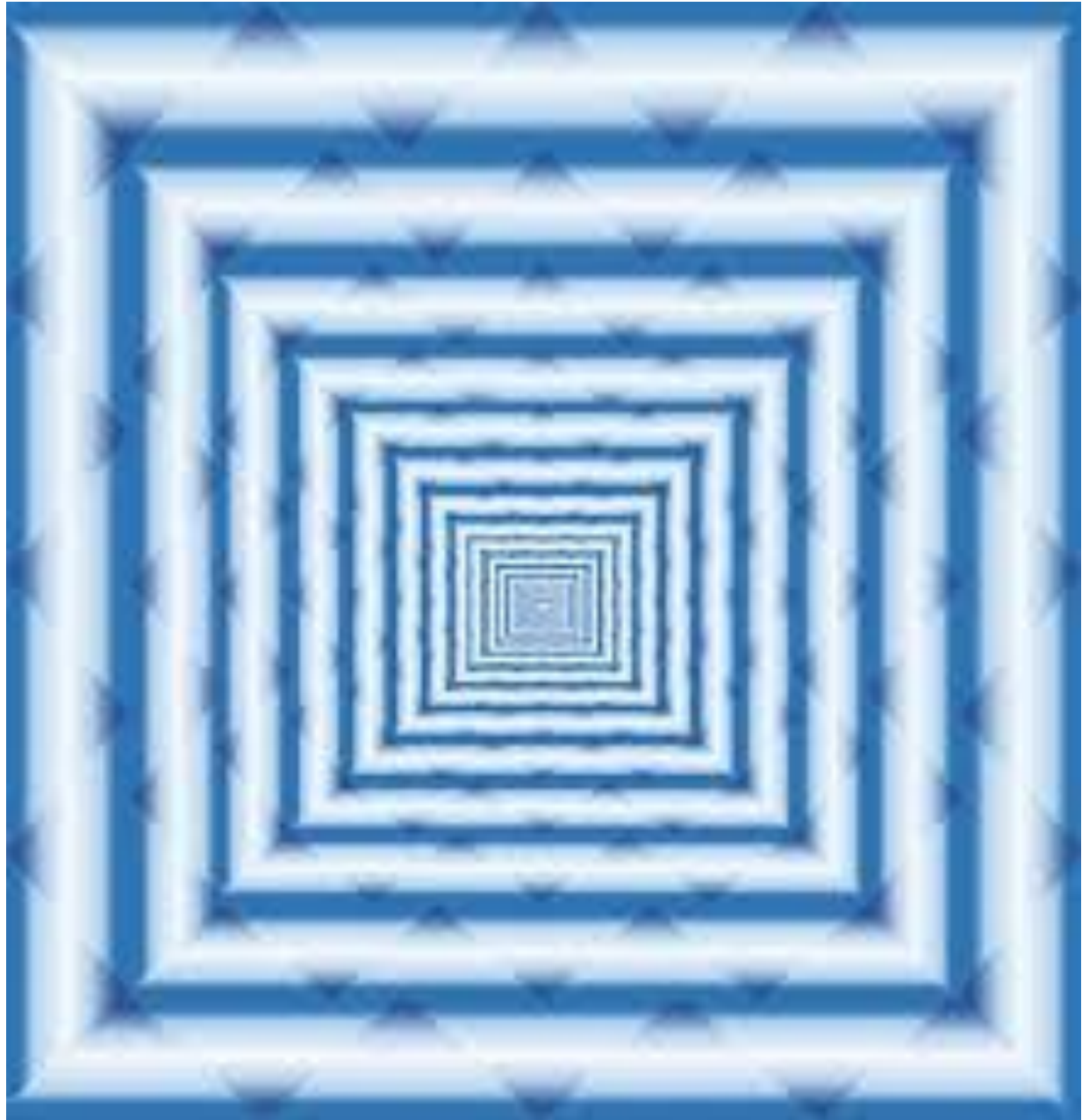
**Autism**  
Hampshire

# Neurodiversity-Being Autistic

Dave Serpell-Stevens



# Perception





## **Pathology**

Paradigm that assumes that any neurology not considered 'normal' requires 'cure' or therapy.

**'Disorder', 'Deficit', 'Impairment'**

# Paradigms



## **Neurodiversity**

Understands and accepts that neurological variation is a natural and necessary part of human diversity.

**'Difference',**

# Difference or Disability?

## **Answer:**

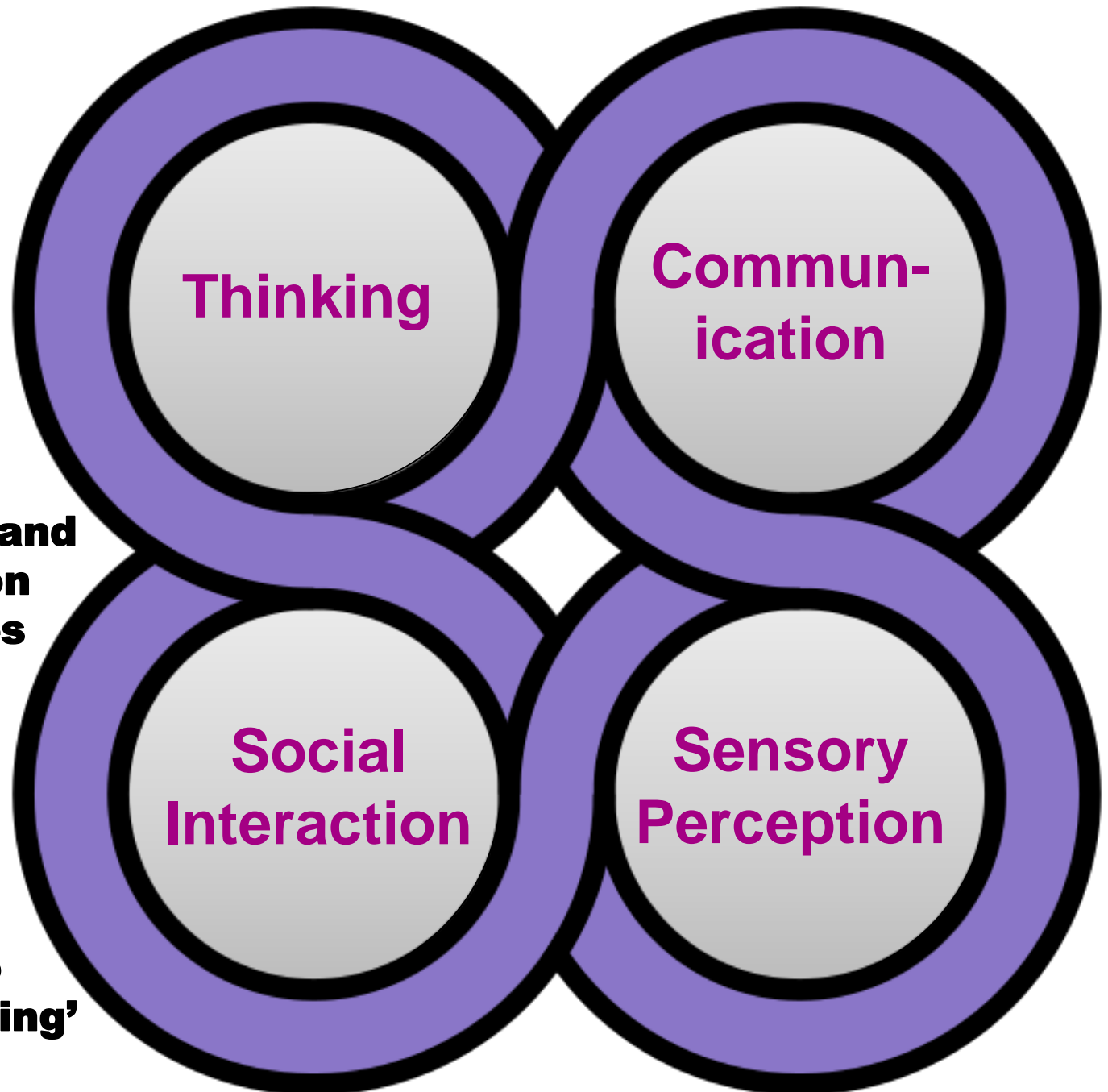
Both, but the disability is often caused by the person's surroundings and not an inevitable part of being autistic.

People who have physical differences also experience this if their differences are not understood and accommodated.

Perception  
in these  
areas is  
**different**  
**not wrong**

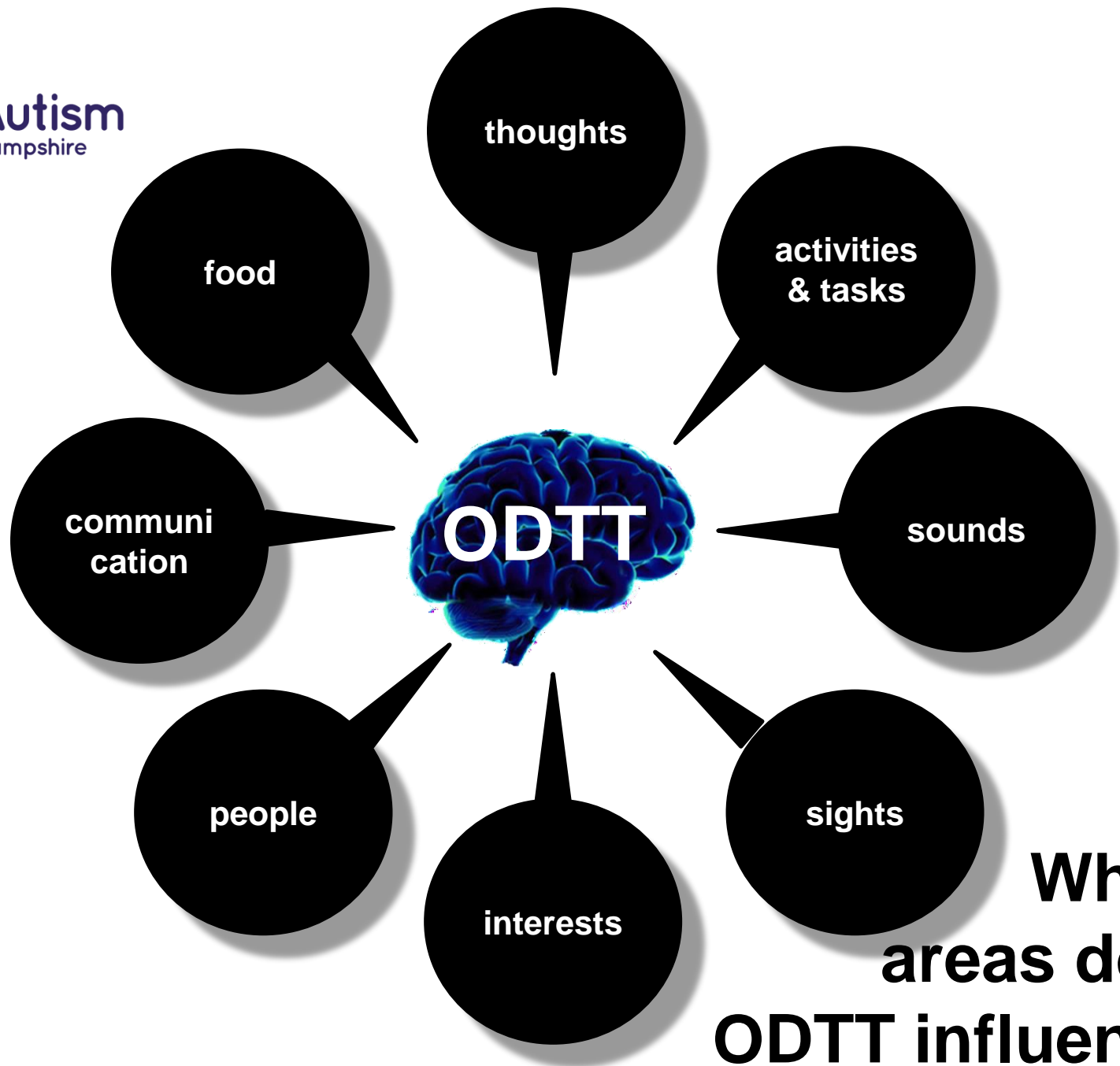
**Acceptance and  
acomodation  
of differences**  
helps reduce  
the degree  
of disability

**People on  
the autism  
spectrum do  
not need 'fixing'**



## **ODTT – One Damn Thing at a Time**

‘In a monotropic mind, fewer interests tend to be aroused at any time, and they attract more of our processing resources making it harder to deal with things outside of our current attention tunnel’.



**Which  
areas does  
ODTT influence?**

# 'Top down' Thinking

Many Typically developed people think like this



```
graph TD; A[Create and store concepts] --> B[Process limited detail]; B --> C[Match detail to stored concept];
```

**Create and store concepts**

**Process limited detail**

**Match detail to stored  
concept**





```
graph BT; A[Process and store many details] --> B[Create links with other details]; B --> C[Create spontaneous concept];
```

Create spontaneous concept

Create links with other details

Process and store many details

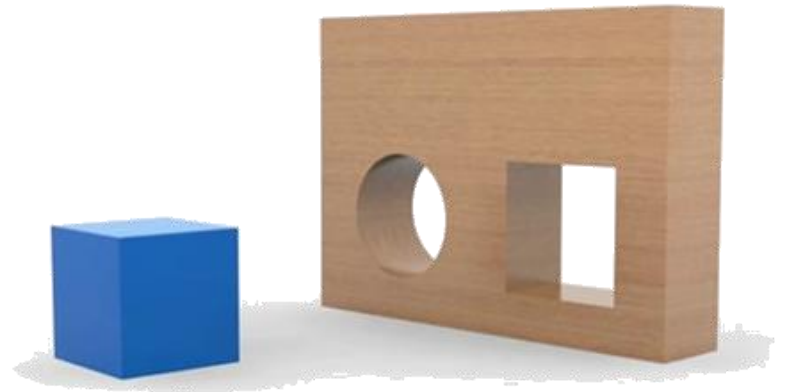
# Autistic 'Bottom up' Thinking

- Difficulty Generalising
- *Comes to each situation with fresh ideas*
- Needs constant detailed explanation
- *Takes nothing at face value*
- Gets bogged down
- *Keen attention to detail*
- Goes off at a tangent
- *Creates links that others miss*



**Autism**  
Hampshire

## Tips



# Create Structure

The immediate pressures of work, school, college and shopping may have been temporarily suspended but without structure life may feel like this.....



# Give The Day a Shape

**Collaborate don't dictate.** For kids, start with a list under headings- 'What I want to do', 'what has to be done', 'what can't be done at the moment' and give explanations.

**Create a schedule together.** Avoid exact timings if possible and use drawings, images, photos, writing etc. but make it a list not a mosaic ODTT!

**Prioritise.** Start with things that must be done at a fixed time then encourage the person to fill in the gaps with the rest.

**Be realistic.** This is a strange and anxious time. Prioritise activities that will absorb and divert the person.

# Communicate effectively

Autistic people at any level struggle with lengthy 'strings of blah' (Donna Williams) so.....

**Go visual.** Use written or picture explanations

**Be less direct.** Leave the person to process information without pressure

**Reduce processing complexity.** Keep the information 'pure' by using email, text, notes under the door etc. This way they don't have to process body language, tone of voice, overpowering deodorant (or lack of it!), or feel pressured into an instant response. Can also reduce conflict.

**Use bullet point or numbered format.** Don't just replace 'strings of blah' with indigestible lumps of text. Bite size chunks! (ODTT)

# Social balance

"If someone insists on being around more than is comfortable, it is the same as keeping someone up past their bedtime, or overworking a child on homework, or any of the other things that 'nice' people would never think of doing. But they seem to think it is okay to pursue us to exhaustion just because they want a lot of our company at one time. Just because having someone around doesn't exhaust them and make them want to cry or scream, they truly believe the experience can't be having that effect on us."

Patty Clark quoted by Jane Meyerding

<http://www.planetautism.com/jane/unf.html>

# Social balance

**Respect the need for solitude.** Be fair in how much social interaction you expect. Even with the present restrictions autistic people living with others must have somewhere to rest and recover whenever they need to.

**Be creative with limited space.** Pop up or improvised tents using a sheet draped over a table can be useful if you do not have a garden. If you have headphones or ear buds they can use once in there, this will also help create a feeling of solitude.

If you do have space outside, consider creating an extra room by putting up the family tent (as long as this is not a traditional cause of major family strife!).



# Social balance

**Recognise ‘enough’.** If the person asks to be excused from a social situation, go with it. Many autistic people, however, may not recognise the beginnings of overload themselves so look for signs such as:

- Talking to self or making odd squeaks, woofs etc.
- Wringing or rubbing hands
- Picking or gnawing fingers or nails
- Rocking
- Pinching self, bending own fingers back
- Clenching fists between thighs etc.

**Make your excuses and leave or suggest the person take a break using visual prompts if necessary.**

# Social etiquette

Don't assume bad intentions when person says or does something unexpected.

Accept that autistic people will often get straight to the point, say it how it is, and avoid what they see as hypocrisy.

Explain rather than constantly reprimand the person.

Always seek their perspective

Logically explain others' viewpoints they may be missing.

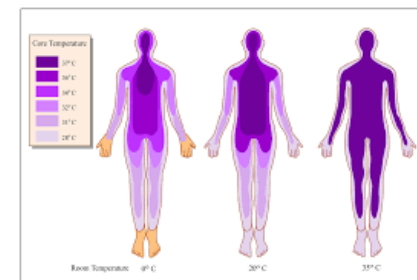
# Uncommon senses

There are 8 senses that we know of, the 5 familiar plus.....

**Vestibular**  
Sense of balance.

**Proprioception**  
Spatial awareness.

**Interoception**  
Helps identify physical sensations in the body, register their intensity, and decide what action is needed.



# Uncommon senses

People with unusual sensory processing will be acutely sensitive in some areas and become easily overloaded and distressed,....



# Uncommon senses

....but have low sensitivity in other areas needing regular and intense sensory experiences in order to function properly.



# Uncommon sense

**Stimming** is something everyone does naturally to self-stimulate, calm down, or express joy and excitement. The difference is that autistic stimming might be a lot.....

**BIGGER**

**and obvious.**

Simply put, we are more often bored to tears, have loads more to feel anxious about, are really, really, really enthusiastic about certain things and don't always worry so much about what others may think.

# Uncommon sense

The golden rule is that you don't need to worry about stimming unless it is

- Dangerous to the person or others
- Causes major disruption
- Unhygienic
- Illegal

**Don't just ban it.**

Even in these cases try to offer something that gives the same sensory feedback (calming or stimulating) but is safe.

# Autistic Strengths

When not constantly interrupted, distracted, pressured or stressed.

- **Hyperfocus** –amazing powers of concentration, application and mindfulness
- **Specialization and Expertise** – constant search for more information and greater authenticity.
- **Skills in observation/attention to detail.**
- **Systematic approach**



# Autistic Strengths

- **Loyalty** - Especially to those who understand, accept and accommodate.
- **Empathy** - Differently expressed and only when not having to cope with own stress.
- **Creativity and originality**
- **Funny** - If you can keep up
- **Wisdom** – unique perspective and insight

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## **Exploration of different aspects of being autistic authored by actual autistic people**

<https://hellomichelleswan.com/>

'Aspergers from the Inside'

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FpBZR7DbpvNj5UrFN8qUA>

Amethyst Schaber

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Bk0GbW8xgvTgQIheNG5uw>

## **Sensory Perception-**

tips from renowned expert, Olga Bogdashina:

<https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/top-5-tips-autism-professionals-dr-olga-bogdashina-sensory-difficulties>

## **Advice and discussion of autistic parenting:**

[https://www.facebook.com/respectfullyconnected/?hc\\_ref=ARSbIT-XIUz-GUfklxyG-](https://www.facebook.com/respectfullyconnected/?hc_ref=ARSbIT-XIUz-GUfklxyG-)

[PAoNqVus6uTikDPkAKIRvA84AdjJU2V060IBhhhZUGSL6c&fref=nf&\\_tn\\_=kC-R](https://www.facebook.com/respectfullyconnected/?hc_ref=ARSbIT-XIUz-GUfklxyG-PAoNqVus6uTikDPkAKIRvA84AdjJU2V060IBhhhZUGSL6c&fref=nf&_tn_=kC-R)