

The Big A

Me, Myself & Autism



Looking at Part of What
Makes Me Me



What's It All about?

- ❑ The purpose of this booklet is to give a very basic idea about autism and what it can mean to young people who have had a recent diagnosis and who are asking questions about it.
- ❑ The target group for the booklet is young people who have relatively good understanding of language (in view of them having autism), but who need things explaining very clearly and concretely. However, it is intended that the booklet will be adapted to suit the needs of individual students in whatever way is required.
- ❑ The booklet format has been used so that students can have a copy they can take away with them (*excluding this page*), to look at in their own time.
- ❑ The text and pictures should be adapted and changed to suit each individual (this can be done by saving a copy under another name to adapt).
- ❑ Although students should have a copy of the booklet to read by themselves, they also have a space where they can write the questions they want to ask about autism, which can then be expanded upon.
- ❑ Questions raised by students can be discussed with familiar adults in a 1:1 session or a written response could be provided (some students may find it uncomfortable to talk face to face about their feelings around a diagnosis).
- ❑ Emailing is often a good way to discuss emotive issues as it offers a safe way of having a dialogue without the need to be face to face (however, this should always be done with the knowledge of other staff/parents to ensure that it is a planned and agreed method of communicating with a young person).

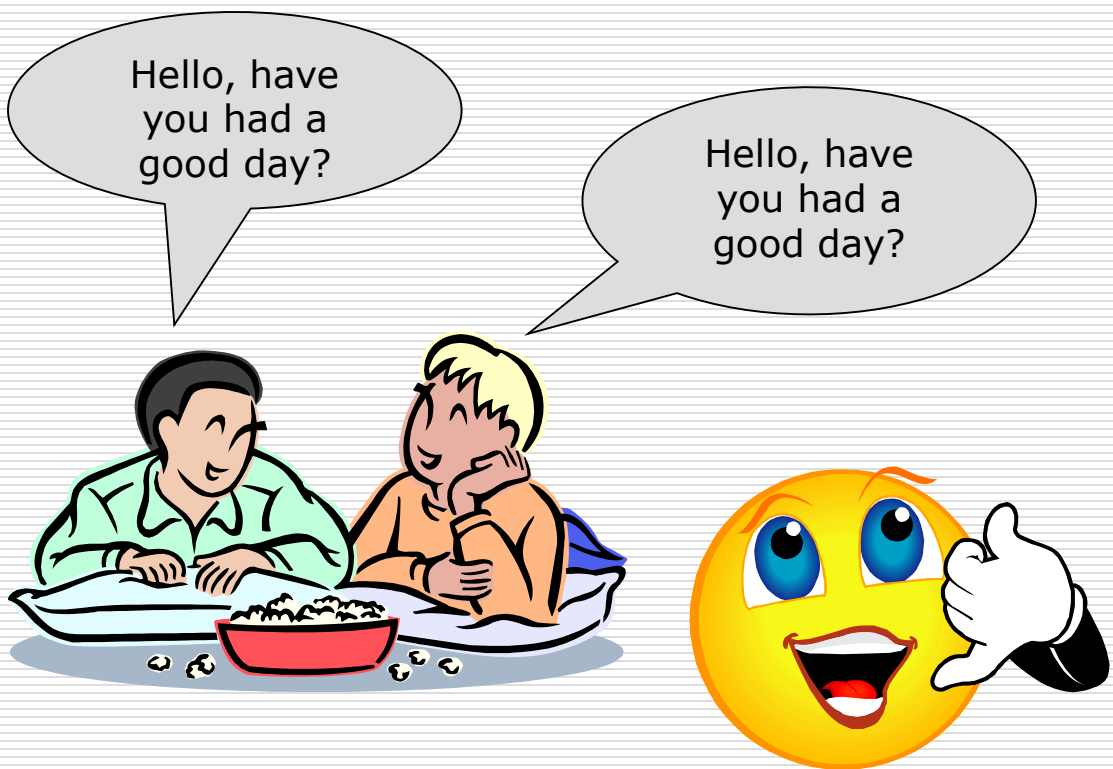
- ❑ This booklet can be used in conjunction with the other 'Big A' materials.



Something I want to find out...

If you have autism you might like to talk, but it might be hard to think of the right words to use.

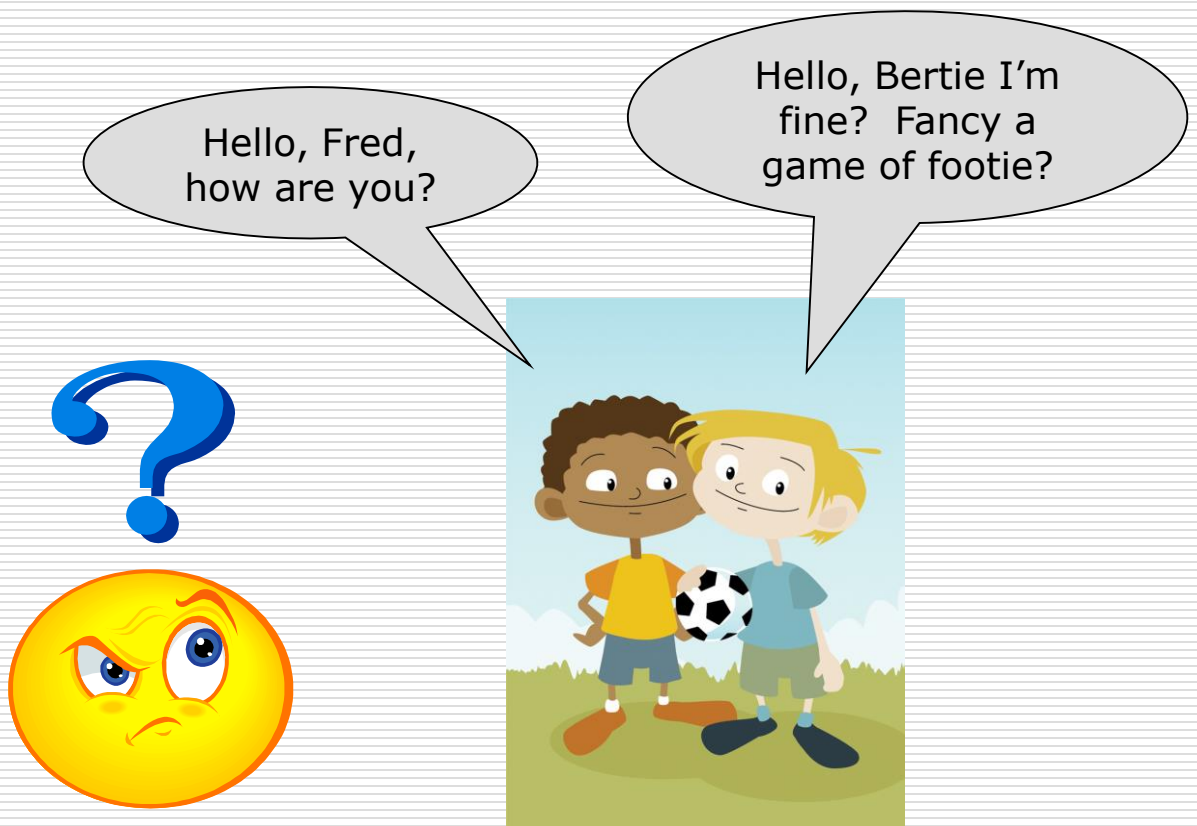
Sometimes you might repeat things that people have just said to you, or what they said before. You might also talk too much, especially about the thing that interests you.



Something I want to find out...

Everyone is different from each other but people who haven't got autism can be even more different from you than you might expect.

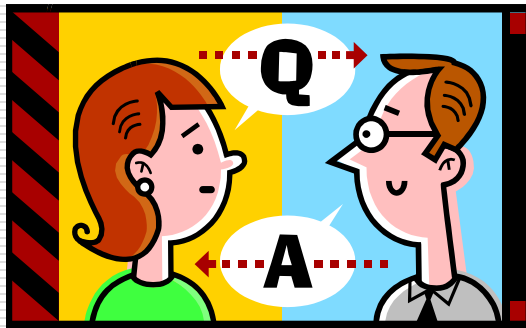
Other people seem to know how to talk to each other but it can be confusing for you, if you have autism.



Something I want to find out...

People who don't know about autism might speak in ways that are hard for you to understand.

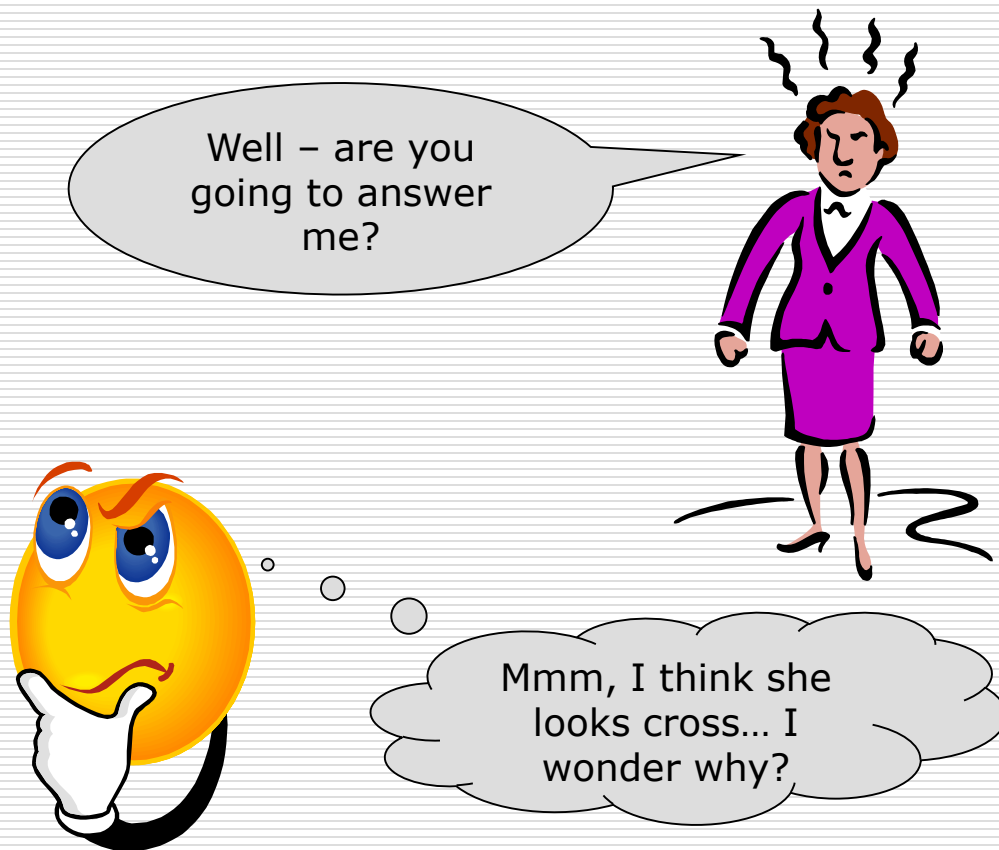
They also seem to know when to start and stop talking, which may be difficult if you have autism.



Something I want to find out...

When you have autism you might have to think really carefully before you can answer someone who's talking to you and they might think you don't want to talk or even that you won't talk on purpose.

It might be especially hard to understand what people mean when they are talking about emotions and feelings.



Something I want to find out...

It helps to understand what people mean when they are talking by looking at their faces and hands, or to listen to how their voices change.

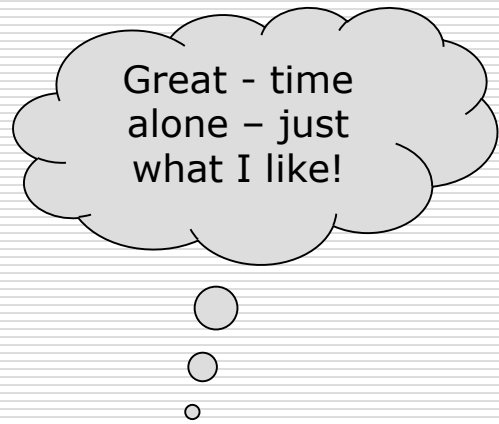
This can be a difficult thing to do if you've got autism, so you have to try to look and listen really carefully to figure out what people mean, or you could ask them to explain what they mean.



Something I want to find out...

If you have autism you might prefer your own company (which means that you like it better on your own).

Other people might prefer to spend time with their friends, or don't like staying on their own for too long, but it might not bother you if you have autism.



Something I want to find out...

Having autism might mean that it's hard to feel comfortable when you are in a group of people.

It might be hard to know how to take turns in conversations, or to understand what people mean when they are talking. For example when they say things like, 'get stuffed' (which doesn't mean you are a cushion that needs more filling!).



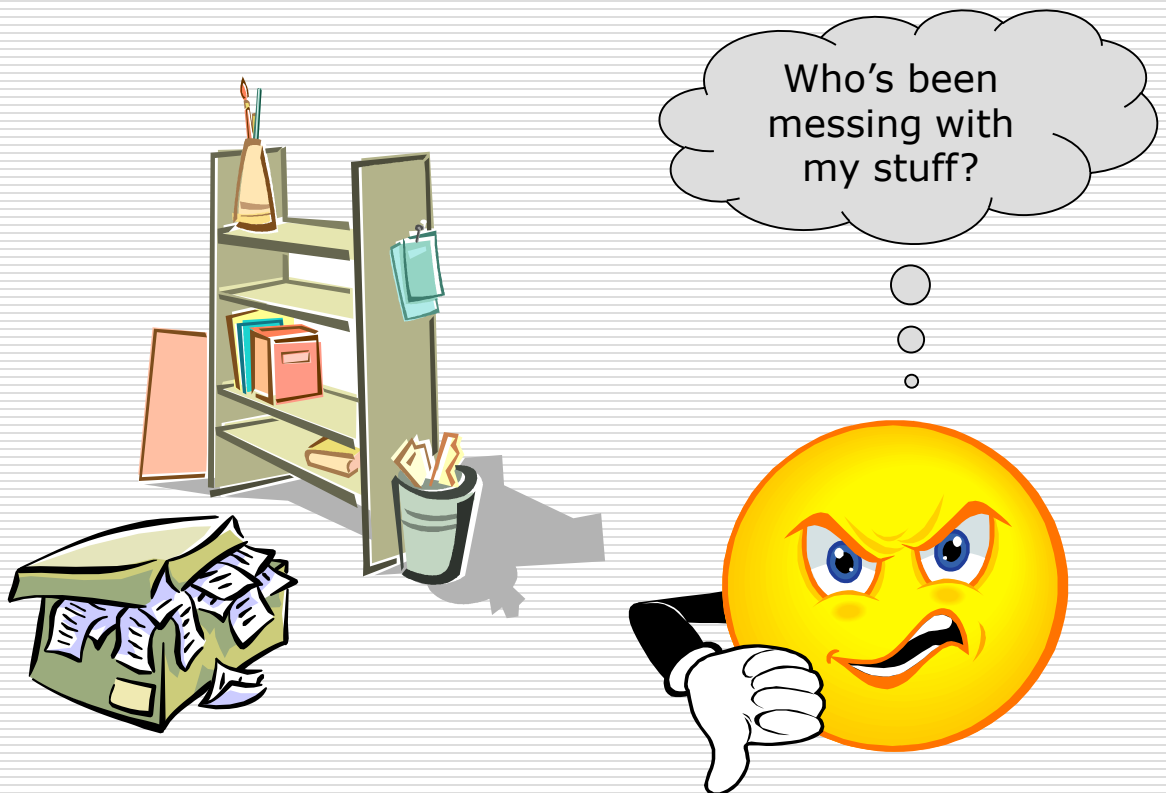
Oh no, a crowd... what do I do now?



Something I want to find out...

Having autism might mean that you like to do the same things every day and might like to keep things in the same place.

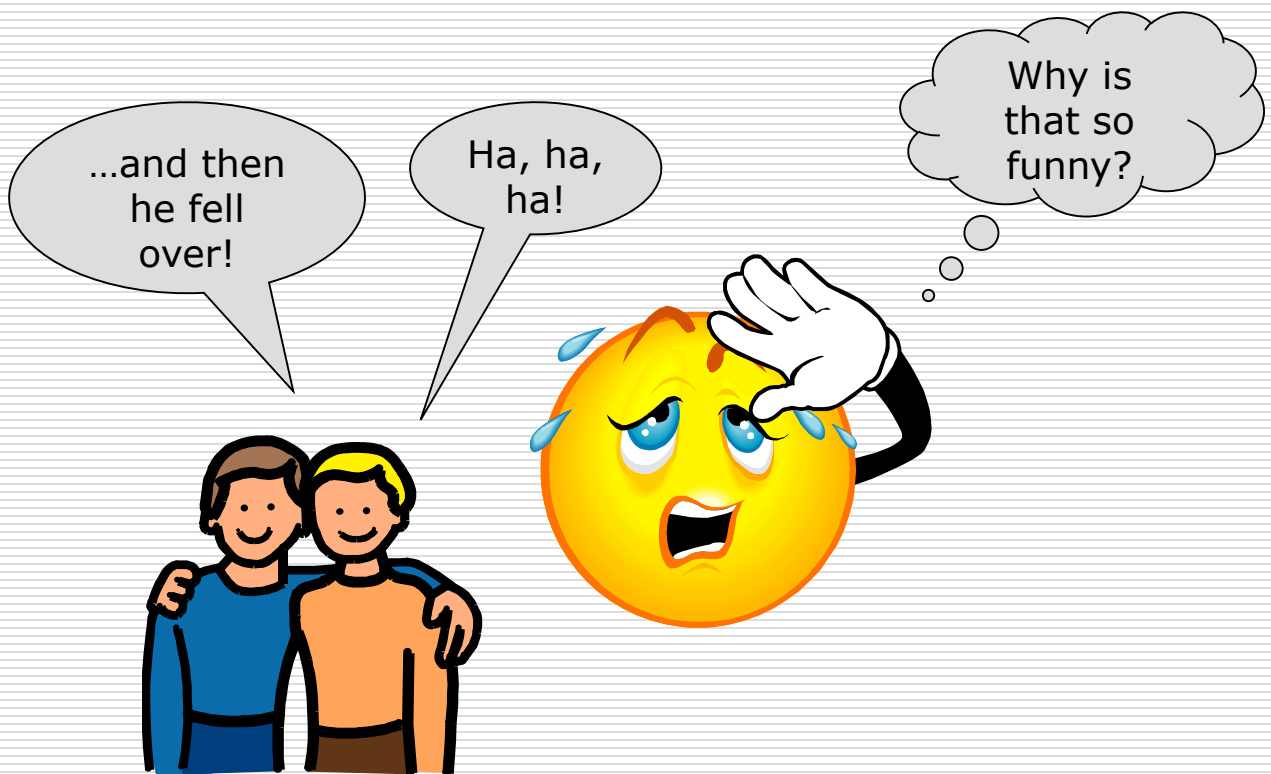
It might upset you if your things are moved and you might get really cross if everyone else doesn't keep things as tidy as you do.



Something I want to find out...

People who don't have autism often like to do lots of different things and they might enjoy making things up and telling jokes to each other.

This might be hard for you if you've got autism, but you can learn about how to tell and understand jokes with practice.



Something I want to find out...

People who don't have autism don't usually mind if things happen that are different.

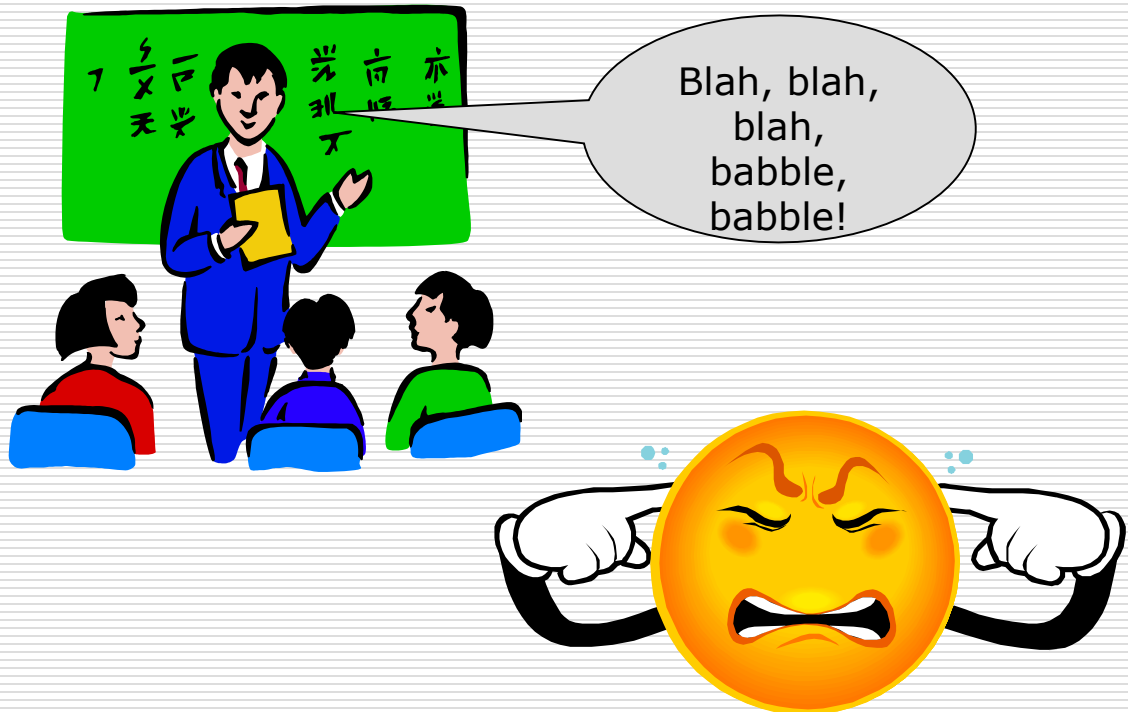
If you have autism you might like to have everything the same all the time and you might get cross if things change or don't go as planned, like people being late.



Something I want to find out...

If you have autism it might be hard to learn new things so you might need extra help or more time.

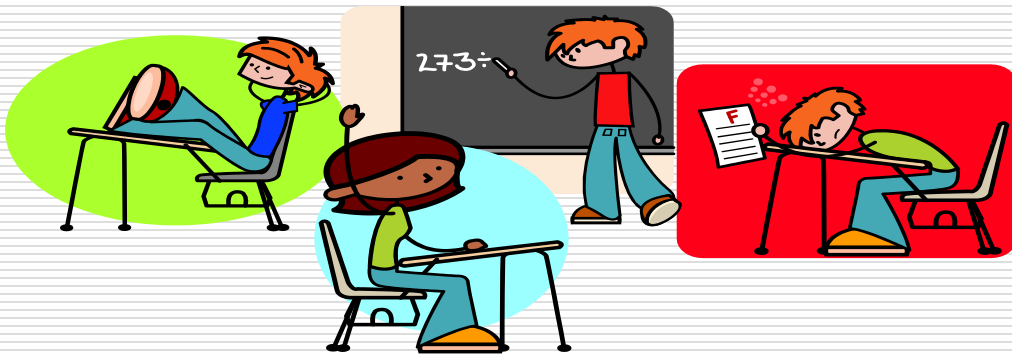
It might be hard to understand what people mean if they don't use the words you are used to and this might make you stop listening or get cross.



Something I want to find out...

Having autism might mean that it's difficult to concentrate if too much noise or moving about is going on.

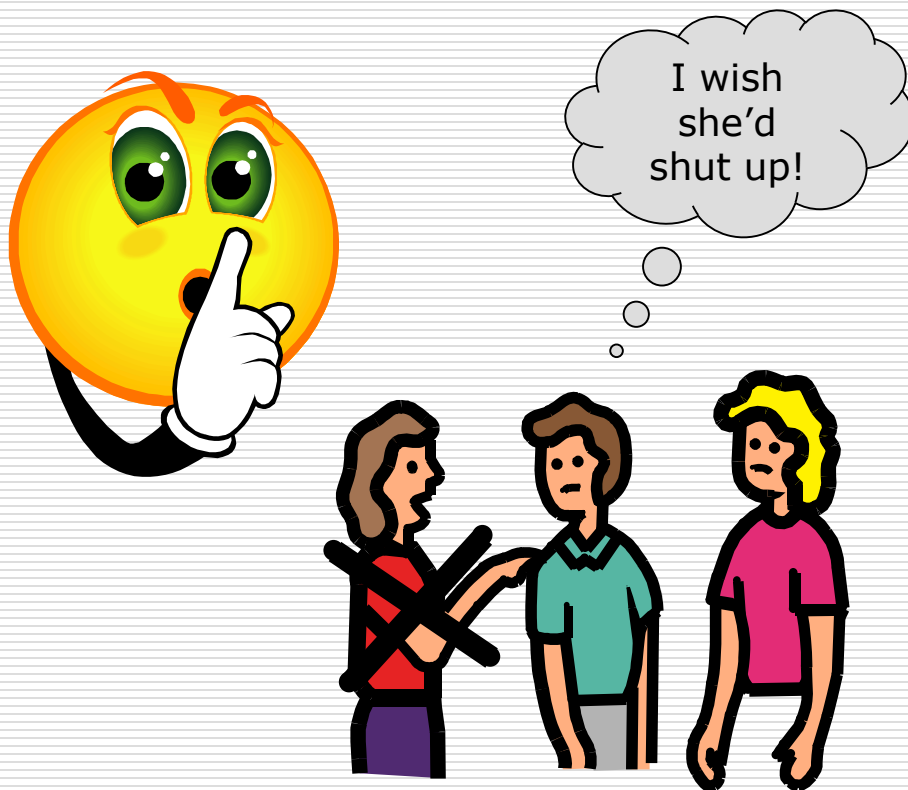
It might be better to work in a quieter area or have someone to remind you what you have been told.



Something I want to find out...

People who don't have autism don't seem to mind interruptions as much as someone who does have autism.

If you have autism it can be hard to concentrate when there are interruptions.



Something I want to find out...

Having autism might mean that you like to know what is going to happen before it actually happens.

You might get upset if you don't know about changes or if you have to do something different. It can be easier if other people prepare you for changes, but they don't always remember.



Something I want to find out...

If you have got autism you might be really good at some things, like having a great memory and being able to remember lots of details, especially about the things that interest you.

The trouble is not everyone will want to listen so you have to pick who to talk to carefully, or try to remember not to go on for too long about the same thing.



Ask me anything about my chosen subject...



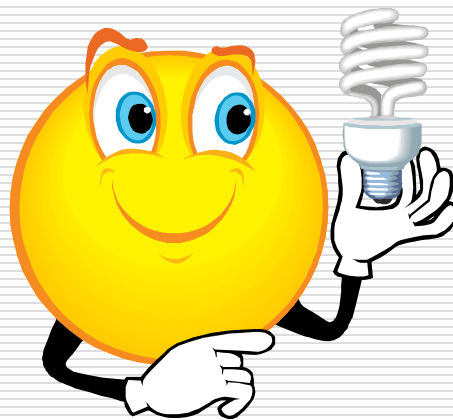
Something I want to find out...

People who don't have autism might think in a different way from you, but that's OK as everyone is individual and has their own way of looking at the world. People will benefit a lot from knowing you.

So remember...

Having autism means that you might have trouble with some things, but it also means that you have lots of strengths.

Get the idea?



Something I want to find out...