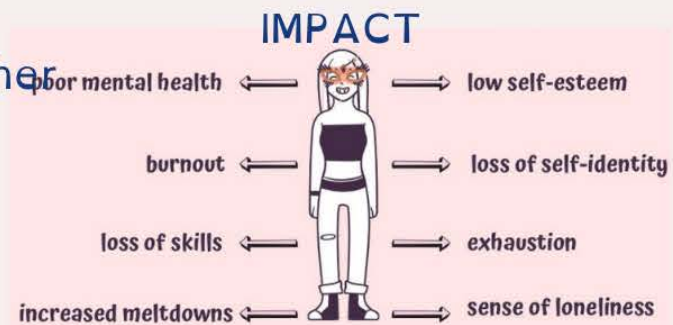


Masking

Masking is the act of hiding your true self, as a result of pressures from people or society, to be a certain way.

Masking is seen as a social survival strategy. It can include behaviours like these:

- forcing or faking eye contact
- imitating smiles and other facial expressions
- mimicking gestures
- hiding or minimising personal interests
- developing a repertoire of rehearsed responses to questions
- pushing through intense sensory discomfort including loud noises
- scripting conversations
- disguising stimming behaviours (e.g. hiding a jiggling foot)



HOW ALLISTIC* PEOPLE CAN HELP

*non-autistic

Persistent autistic masking can result in anxiety, depression, isolation, & burnout. Here are some ways to help:

- Don't make judgments about behavior or feelings.
I'm upset. You're too sensitive! I'm glad you told me. I want to talk about it?
- Be aware of sensory needs.
Is it too loud in here? We can study somewhere else.
- Allow for multiple methods of communication.
I don't know how to explain it. I've got paper if you'd like to sketch out your idea.
- Respect the need for personal space.
If she's in your group, why is she over there? Cause she wants to be?

by Kate of Girls Autistic Journey illustrated by @introvertdoodles

Autistic people will mask less when they feel safe and comfortable to be themselves.

How can you create a culture of accessibility, support and acceptance?

If you have a certain topic you would like tips on, email rebecca.duffus@cognus.org.uk