

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK 2020

In celebration and to enhance our understanding as a community, one of our Year 12 students, David, offers some insight into what it's like to have autism.

"Everyone with autism is different."

"Autism covers loads of different areas; it is **literally a spectrum.**"

"The one thing all autistics have in common is neurodiversity; **our brain works differently.**"

Some autistic people will be extra loud while others may be quiet and shy, sometimes you may not even be able to tell. This can also depend on who they are with. Some people may not even know they are autistic.

Personally, I also have a mix of other disorders which is common among autistic people. Sometimes I'm loud and almost abrasive, while other times I'm shy and submissive - it all depends on who I'm with. Like many autistic people, I have had a mixed education; this comes from a mix of missing school and special schools, having a class with such a wide skill range. So, **we may be missing some obvious things.**"

David goes on to provide information about some interesting facets of autistic behaviour.

Stimming - This is a word often used in the autistic community and it basically means to stimulate; **there are loads of ways someone might stimulate.** They might just fiddle with a ruler, they might go upside down, cross their legs, listen to white noise, stare at lights, spin, feel their favourite texture or compress their body parts. I personally used to chew, so much all my old T-shirts had holes at the neck. **There are also loads of reasons we might stim;** to relieve stress or for fun.

Something a lot of autistic people do is **info dump.** This is when we seemingly dump a piece of unrelated information. Info-dumping sometimes comes from our brains working differently, **our brains make connections that to others don't always make sense.** This means our jokes don't always make sense.

We can also be very literal or specific. This also means we sometimes have strange political views; sometimes it's that we just don't understand people, or it can be our actual views.

I don't really know how I want to be treated but if I had to think of a general rule for how to interact with autistic people it would be this:

"Just ask how they want to be treated in a clear way and be patient."