



# Autism Education Trust

## Message from the Autistic Young Experts:

“Autism is a difference not a deficit. Differences are to be valued not ‘fixed’. My normal is different from your normal and the aim shouldn’t be conformity but wellbeing.”

## What is autism?

Autistic learners have differences in three areas of development. These are:



Social understanding and communication



Flexibility, information processing and understanding



Sensory processing and integration

We need to look at these differences in terms of both the strengths and challenges that might arise.

## The impact of differences in these three areas

Differences in these three areas mean that autistic learners may need more support:

- to engage appropriately in social interactions with others.
- to understand what is happening now and next.
- to process all the sensory information in their environment, resulting in discomfort and even distress.



Anger

Frustration

Anxiety

Autistic learners often experience the environment and other people as unpredictable and this can result in feelings of **anxiety**, **frustration** and **anger**.

## How you can help: Stop, Observe, Listen, Act

Monitor the physical and emotional well-being of autistic learners and recognise signals that the learner might be distressed, unwell, or in pain.



**Stop**

Put your assumptions to one side.



**Observe**

What is actually happening in the environment around the learner; use all your senses.



**Listen**

What is the learner trying to tell you? What are they anxious or distressed about?



**Act**

In a way that makes the learner feel safe.

## We are here to support and empower you

Do you work with autistic learners? We have a lot of **FREE resources** and an **award-winning professional development programme** for you. Whether you have 5 minutes or a few hours to learn, visit: [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk) and follow the **Autism Education Trust** on social media.



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