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What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or autism?

- ASD is a **neurodevelopmental condition** and involves **different cognitive ways** to perceive, process and regulate social and sensorial information from the environment. According to the DSM-5¹ autism is a persistent deficit in social communication and interactions, as well as restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests.
- About **1%-1.7% of people are on the spectrum**
- “Spectrum” means that characteristics of ASD depends on every autistic person. **Autism can be invisible to others.**

Being autistic is also:

- Having **strong topics of interest** and passions (like Wikipedia!) 
 - Having rituals, **routines**
 - Having hypo and/or **hypersensitivities**
 - Stimming (making repetitive moves) to relax and calm down
 - Having meltdowns and shutdowns
- **Being tired/stressed by social contacts & activities** and/or avoiding them
 - Not being very good at identifying non-verbal signs of communication
 - Having **stress and anxiety** & needing a lot of anticipation for many things in life.

➔ **Joining social events for autistic people can be a pleasure but is also stressful and exhausting.**

How to make your IRL Wikimedian events (more) autistic-friendly

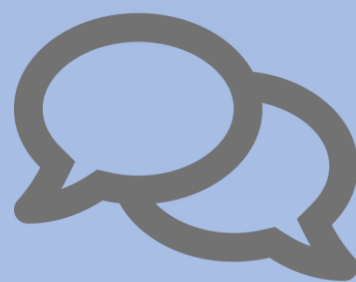
For organizers:



Before the event:

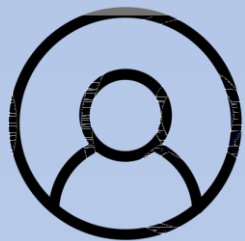
- ✓ Communication and anticipation: send clear information (access, planning, plans...) long **before** your event
- ✓ Ask if people have **specific needs** (about food, noise, accommodations...)
- ✓ Adapt your activities (see below) and also plan alternative activities which are less social and noisy

During the event :



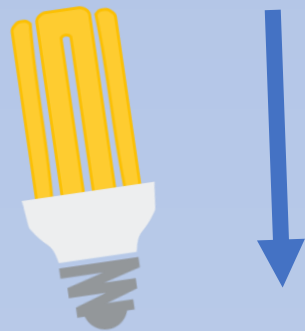
- ✓ **Have at least one permanent quiet space** available all the time. This room is only used to take a moment alone, for relaxing in silence and calm down, but not for chatting or working. Put some comfortable pillows and chairs, earplugs, soft lights...
 - ✓ **Have a contact person** reachable on the spot or by writing, and trained about autism and can help in case of distress or **meltdown**
- ✓ Don't force anybody to socialize even during activities; **let people know that a social moment is happening** and provide alternative ways to ask questions and interact than orally and loudly speaking in front of people (written questions...)
 - ✓ **Reduce useless stimulus for a sensory-friendly environment:** decrease the global sound level, avoid background noise, too many visual details, harsh light and specific perfume

For attendees:



Do:

- ✓ Ask before touching or interacting
- ✓ Be nice but not invasive & pay attention no to be insistent specially at the end of the day when we are tired
- ✓ Respect sometimes we rather listen than speak and be extrovert
- ✓ Respect our specific needs if we have some



Don't:

- ✗ Touch somebody and/or their personal objects
- ✗ Force people to publicly talk or being social
- ✗ Out an autistic person if they didn't make their condition public. This is a personal and private information and the risk of stigma is real.

Thank you!

Want more tips and info? See: *How to make your wikimedian events more autistic-friendly*
by AnneJea on Wikimedia Commons (<https://w.wiki/6Kd>)