

Autism Awareness

Learning objectives

- What the key characteristics of autism are
- What the common sensory differences experienced by people who have autism can be
- What common co-occurring conditions can accompany autism
- Why diagnosis can be so complex
- What the prevalence of autism is in the general population

MYTHS



Don't have emotions

Don't make eye contact

Is caused by vaccinations

Are geniuses

Are all male

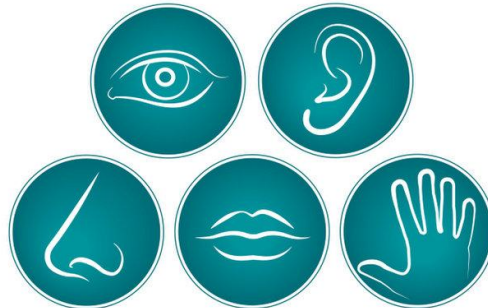
Can be cured

What is Autism?

- ▶ Life-long

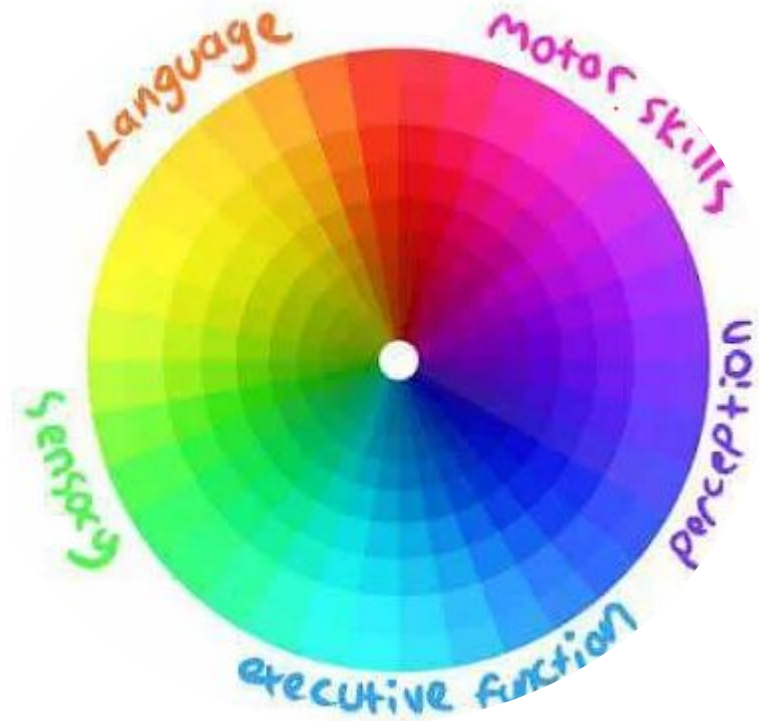


- ▶ Senses and perceptions



What is Autism?

- ▶ Spectrum Condition
- ▶ Not medical



How common is Autism?



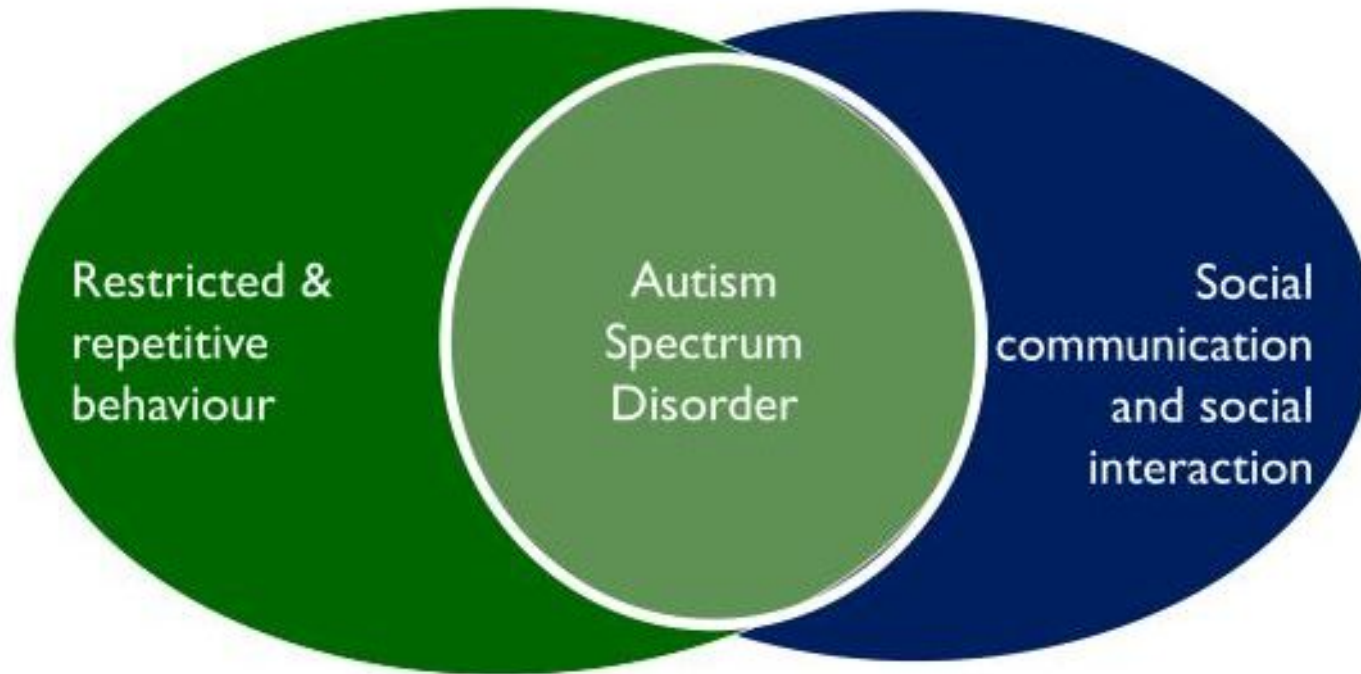
- ▶ Over 1 in 100 people have Autism
- ▶ There are over 700,000 people in the UK who have Autism
- ▶ This means you will, and most likely already have, met someone with autism

Autism Act 2009



Autism Act 2009

What are the characteristics of Autism?



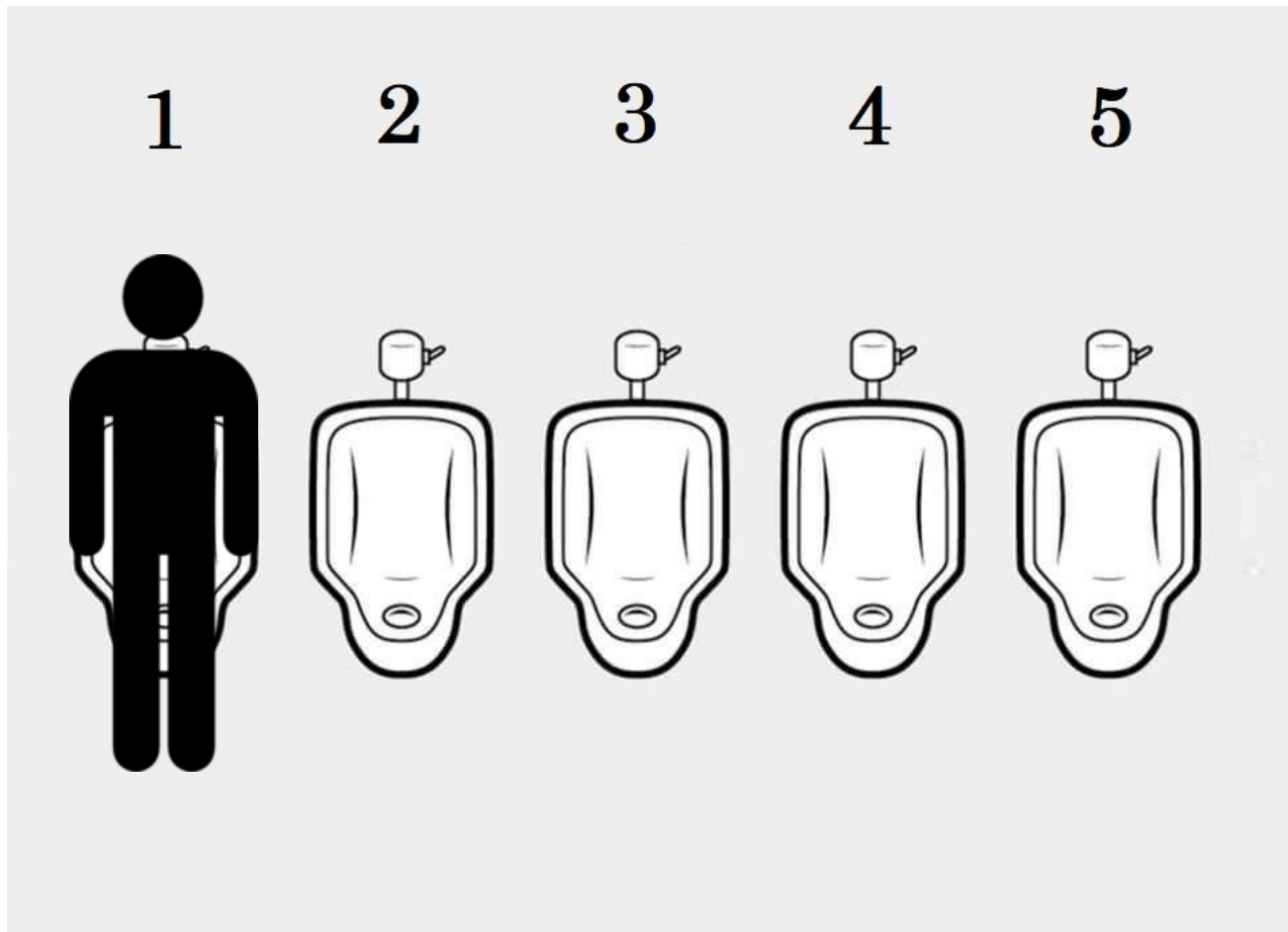
Communication and Interaction

- ▶ Body Language
- ▶ Facial Expressions
- ▶ Tone of voice
- ▶ Intonation
- ▶ Social Cues



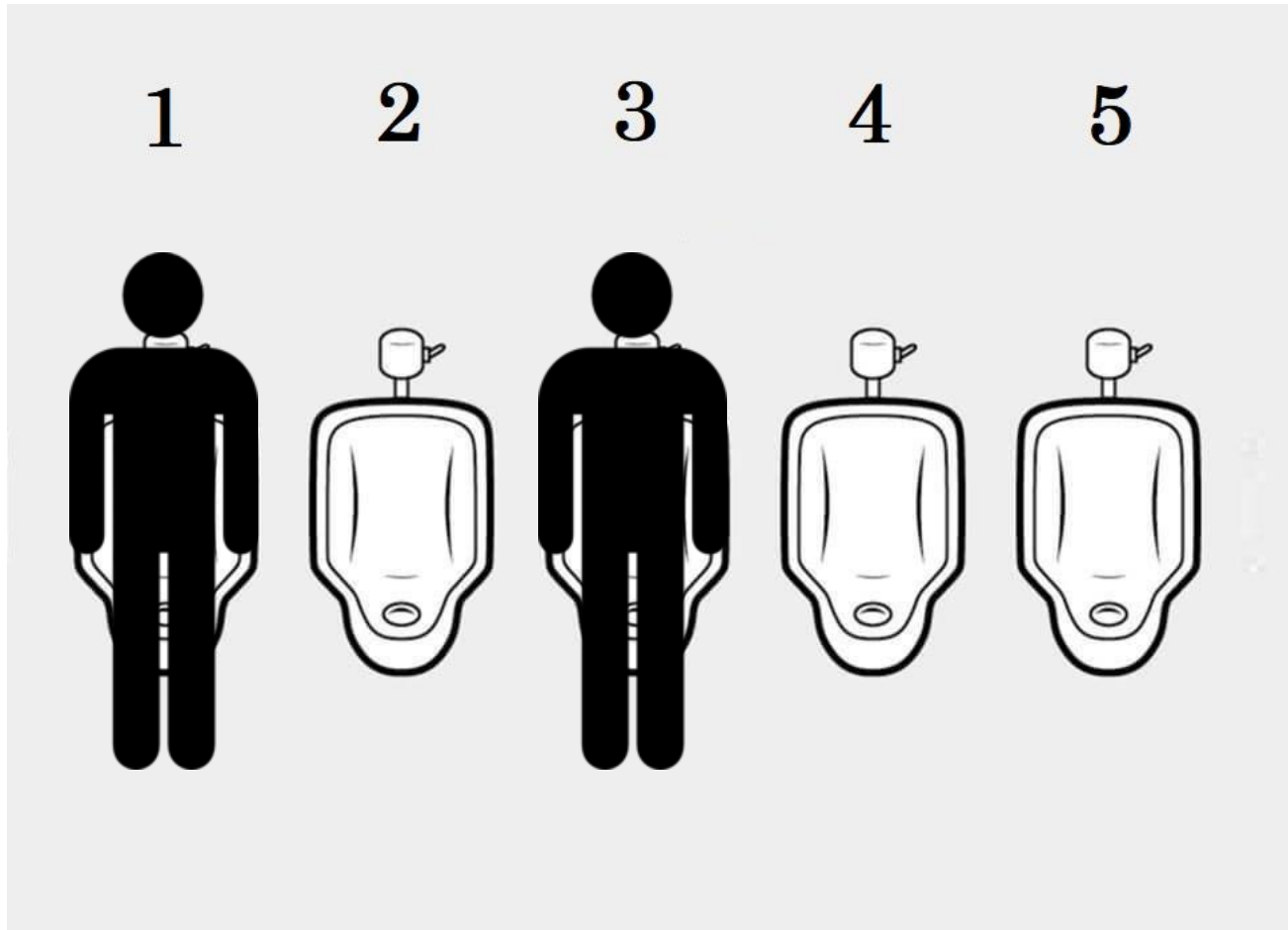
Communication and Interaction

Social Cues



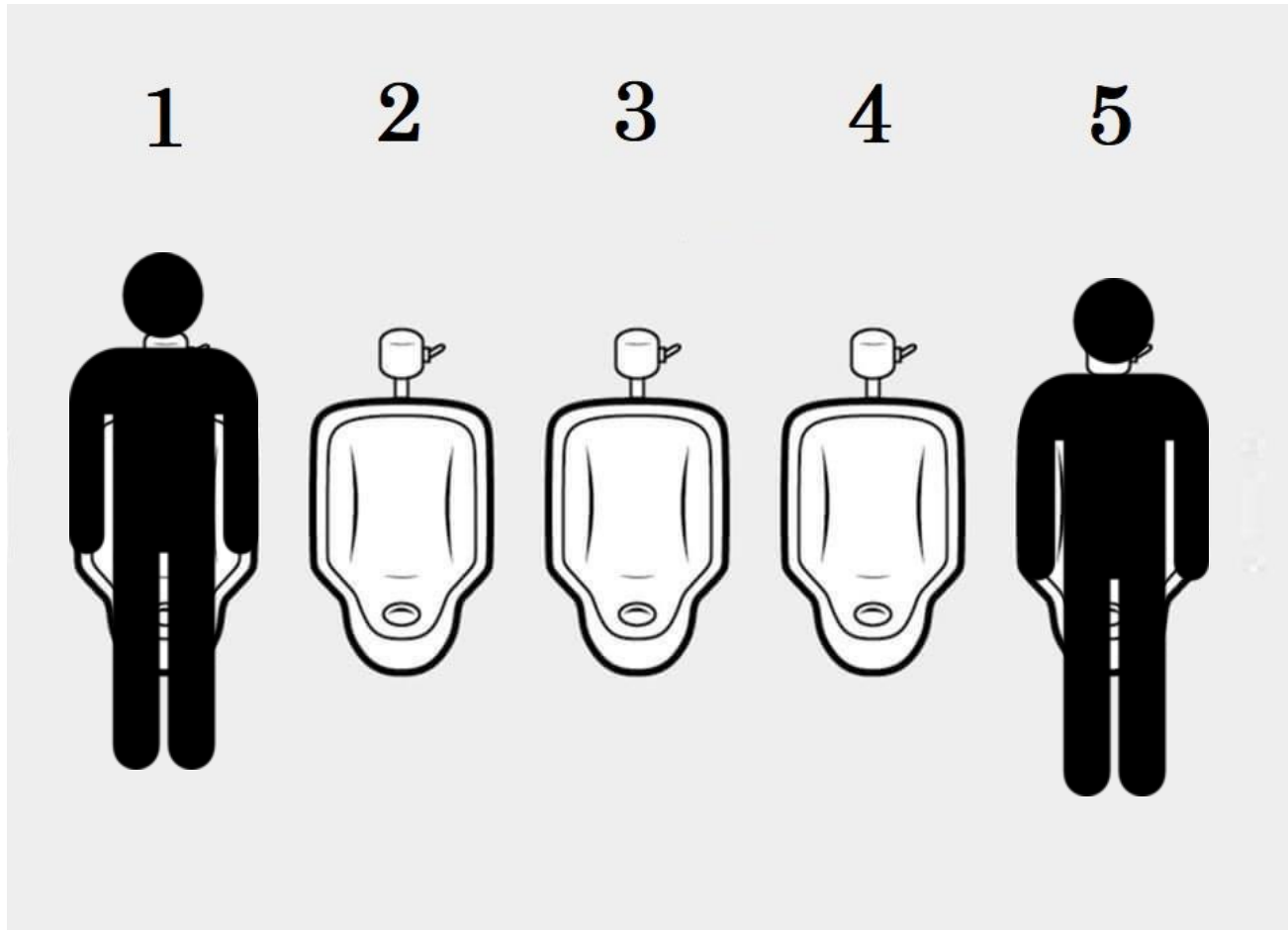
Communication and Interaction

Social Cues



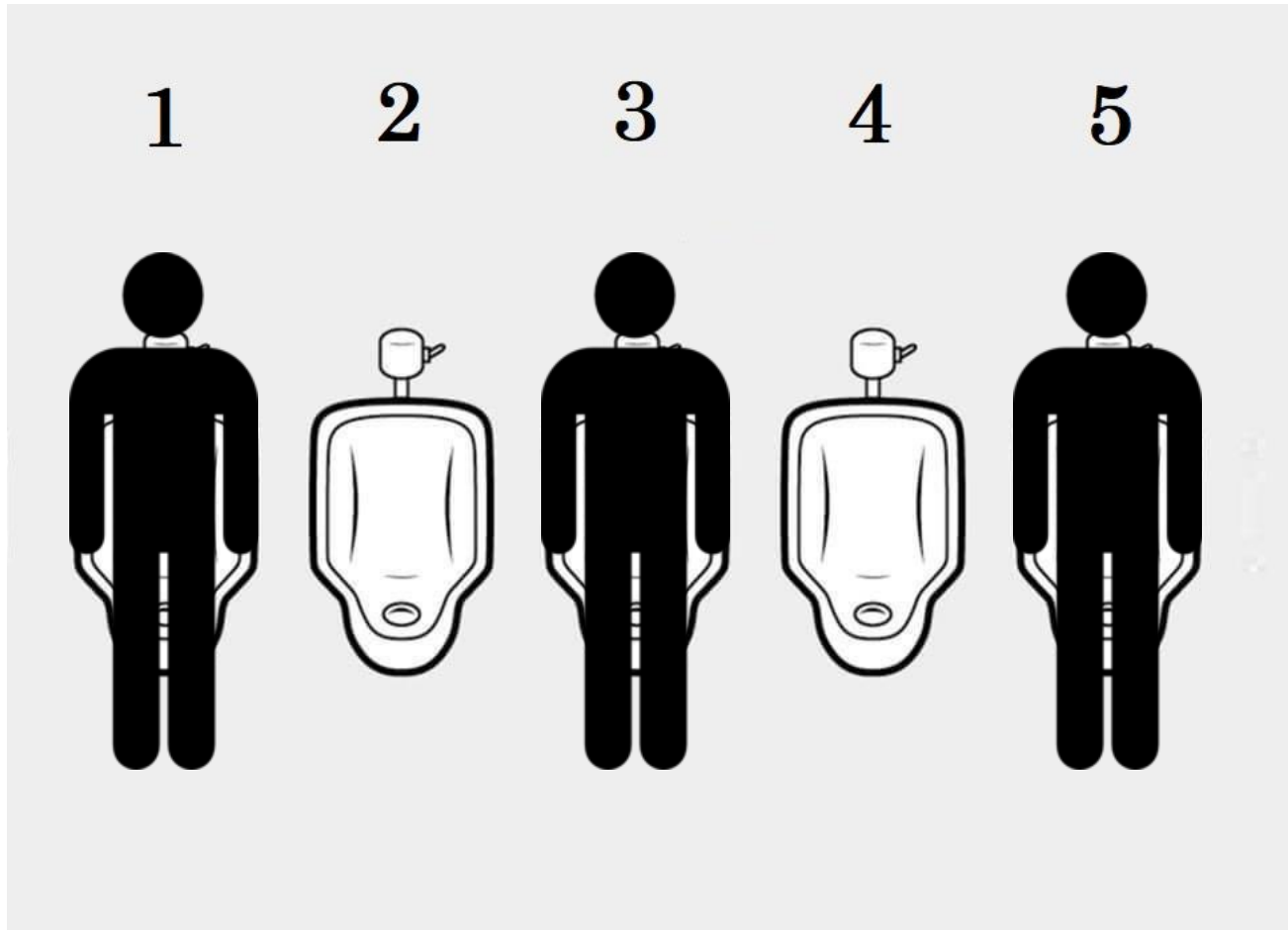
Communication and Interaction

Social Cues



Communication and Interaction

Social Cues



Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I *didn't* say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he *stole* my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Intonation

I didn't say he stole my money

Communication and Interaction

Body Language



Communication and Interaction

Common difficulties

- ▶ Inappropriate eye contact
- ▶ Confident use of language, but may not fully understand what their words imply
- ▶ Echolalia
- ▶ Making factual comments, often irrelevant to the social situation
- ▶ Difficulties with pitch, tone, volume and intonation
- ▶ Difficulties with understanding humour, idioms and sarcasm.



Communication and Interaction

Theory of Mind:

- ▶ Using experience to gain perspective
- ▶ Using ones own thoughts and intentions and attributing them to others



How to support communication:

- ▶ Gain the person's attention first
- ▶ Allow time for processing
- ▶ Be clear and specific
- ▶ Check the person has understood



How to support communication:

- ▶ Be consistent with language
- ▶ Tailor your language
- ▶ Use visual support
- ▶ Empathy



Behaviour and Interests

Rules and Routines

- ▶ Security and Safety

- ▶ Unpredictable world

- ▶ Inflexible and repetitive



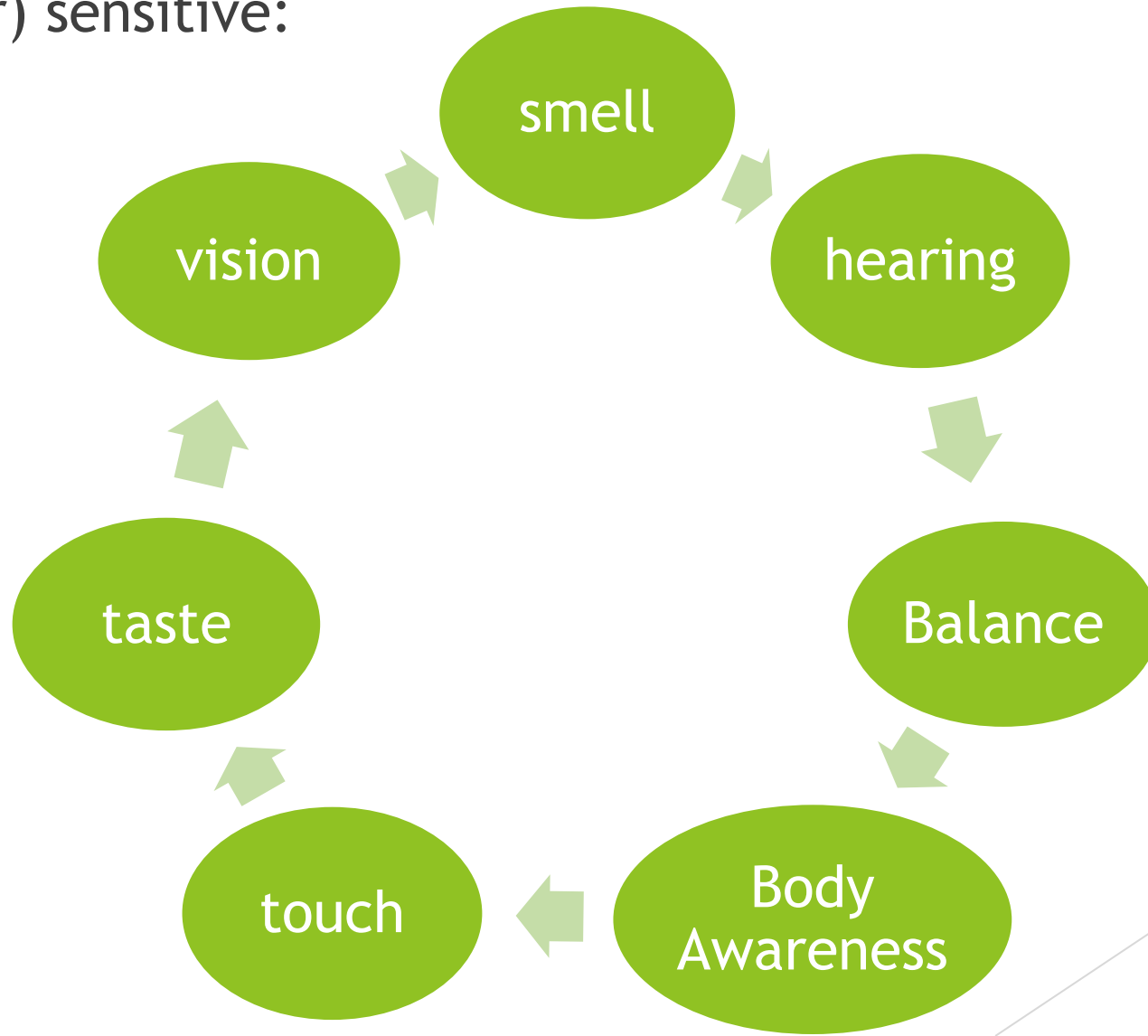
Behaviour and Interests

Special Interests



Sensory differences

- Responses to sensory experiences may be under (hypo) or over (hyper) sensitive:



How to support sensory needs:

The Environment

Environmental stimuli can have a profound affect on some people. Below are some examples of what can help or hinder within an environment:



- Tidy
- Quiet
- Few people



- Bright lights
- Loud music
- Background noise
- Loud patterns on wall or floor
- Strong smells such as air freshener or body odour

What are the potential sensory issues in
your room?

Co-occurrence / Co-morbidity

- ▶ Anxiety disorder
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ OCD



Co-occurrence / Co-morbidity



5 in 10

More than 5 in 10 autistic adults have had depression



79%

Mental health issues affect 79% of autistic adults, but many do not get the help and support they need



9 x

Autistic adults (without an intellectual disability) are over 9 times more likely to consider suicide than the general population

Not sure?

Ask the people who know them best

- ▶ Family
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Carers
- ▶ Support Workers
- ▶ Professionals



Celebrities diagnosed with Autism



Greta Thunberg



Anthony Hopkins



Susan Boyle



Darryl Hannah



Anne Hegerty



Jessica-Jane
Applegate

The Future's Bright

- ▶ Acts in Law
- ▶ Awareness at a younger age
- ▶ Increased presence
- ▶ Employers recognising strengths



Microsoft

Any questions?

