

Creative
Counselling
Ideas
For Autistic
People

By Lisa Cromar

Emotion Regulation

The Emotion Thermometer on the next page is to help autistic people to learn the cues which the body gives before reaching meltdown/outburst point.

Autistic people sometimes have difficulty recognising these bodily sensations. Emotion regulation can help an individual learn to spot these subtle and rapid changes, before it's too late.

These gradual changes can be incredibly useful to learn and can help keep the individual safe and in control.

These feelings escalate incrementally, from calm right up to angry/explosion, this could also result in an implosion. Some autistic people experience a meltdown internally which can be just as destructive to the self as an explosion.

Examples of physical cues inside the body include:

Head aching

Losing control of socially expected behaviours, i.e. eye contact

Stimming

Parts of the body may start sweating, i.e. hands

May feel irritated by others

Lose concentration

May start to ruminate negatively

Chest may tighten

Fists may clench

Feel a strong emotion, i.e. sad/angry

Outburst (explosion or implosion)

Work with the individual to identify the subtle signs in their own body by giving a few of these as examples. They can then have some interventions in place which they can call upon to regulate themselves back down to calm again. Help them to identify how others around them can help. It might be that in one of the early stages, they would appreciate someone talking to them calmly, but by the final stage (angry/explosion), they may need to be left alone. In a school or college environment, once this is complete, it would be useful to encourage the individual to share this with teachers and support staff. They may agree to have a card system to alert the teacher that they need to leave the room and should not be challenged for doing so for example. There may need to be some negotiation as to where they should go at these times. Or in the case of adults, it might be that it can be shared with other family members/partners. If at home alone, implosion could mean resorting to self-harm, so an alternative could be suggested here, i.e. a safety box.

For instructions on how to put a safety box together, please click here for a demonstration by Masha Bennett: <https://youtu.be/086vadactDU>

The emotion thermometer can be difficult for clients to complete as they may need to work really hard to recognise the bodily sensations and will need to tap into previous experiences where they have felt their absolute worst and most out of control, they also may feel some shame talking about how they react in certain situations. As always, safe holding, UPR and empathy will be really important to convey to the individual completing this. They sometimes take a long time to do, so take it at their pace, it may take two or three sessions to complete. Always leave a gap before the end of the session to move back away from this task.

Emotions Thermometer

Angry/Overwhelmed
Explode/Implode

How does it feel?
How do I look?
What happens?
What can I do?
What can others do?

Agitated

How does it feel?
How do I look?
What happens?
What can I do?
What can others do?

Tensing up

How does it feel?
How do I look?
What happens?
What can I do?
What can others do?

Calm

How does it feel?
How do I look?
What happens?
What can I do?
What can others do?

Feelings Jenga

Autistic people benefit from more self-disclosure from the counsellor, they can have issues with 'reading between the lines,' and forming a relationship with others can take longer. The feelings Jenga can help build trust in the therapeutic relationship. However, only do this if you are comfortable with some level of self-disclosure. You can obviously choose what examples from your own life you are prepared to divulge.

1. Buy a Jenga set (often available from charity shops)
2. Create on word the emotive questions, such as, 'name a time you last felt sad' or 'if you were a superhero, what would your special powers be?' There are many sites online which have a good selection of questions to create a game like this.
3. Ask if the client would like to have a game.
4. Take it in turns to answer the questions, when the client answers, give reflections in a person-centred way.

This task allows the client to access inner experiences and feelings in a non-threatening way, keeping the direction coming from them.

What is the one thing that can always make you laugh?
What are your biggest strengths?
If you could travel in a time machine, where would you go?
What do you do to cope when you get worried or sad?
What is something you're good at?
What is one thing you wish more people knew about you?
What is something you have learnt in the last week?
Describe a time when you felt angry.
Describe a time when you felt frustrated.
Describe a time when you felt disappointed.
Describe a time when you felt guilty.
Describe a time when you felt sad.
Describe a time when you felt determined.
Describe a time when you felt shy.
Describe a time when you felt embarrassed.

When did you last cry or feel like crying?
If you could have one superpower, what would you choose?
If you were stuck on an island, what is the one thing you would want to take?
What is the one thing you wish you will never have to do again?
What would you do if you won the lottery?
Who would you choose if you had to be stuck in a lift with somebody?
Who would you least like to be stuck in a lift with?
If you were to be famous, what would you be famous for?
Something that scares me is...
In my free time I like to...
A gift I would really like to get is...
The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was...
The worst thing that ever happened to me was...
A gift I would really like to get is...
My favourite place in the world is...

Someone I admire is...
Something that I have done that I am proud of is...
One of my favourite outdoor activities is...
One of my favourite indoor activities is...
My favourite part of the day is...
My least favourite part of the day is...
One of the nicest things I have ever done for someone is...
If I could be an animal for a day, I would be...
If I were to write a book, it would be about...
My favourite time of year is...
My least favourite time of year is...
One of the hardest decisions I have ever made was...
I would like to learn how to...
My most treasured possession is...
Something that really annoys me is....
My favourite kind of music is...
My favourite sport is...
The last great book I read was...

These will print out the exact size for the Jenga pieces.

Feeling Words Jenga

The Feeling's Jenga is useful for learning to identify and come up with coping strategies for different feelings.

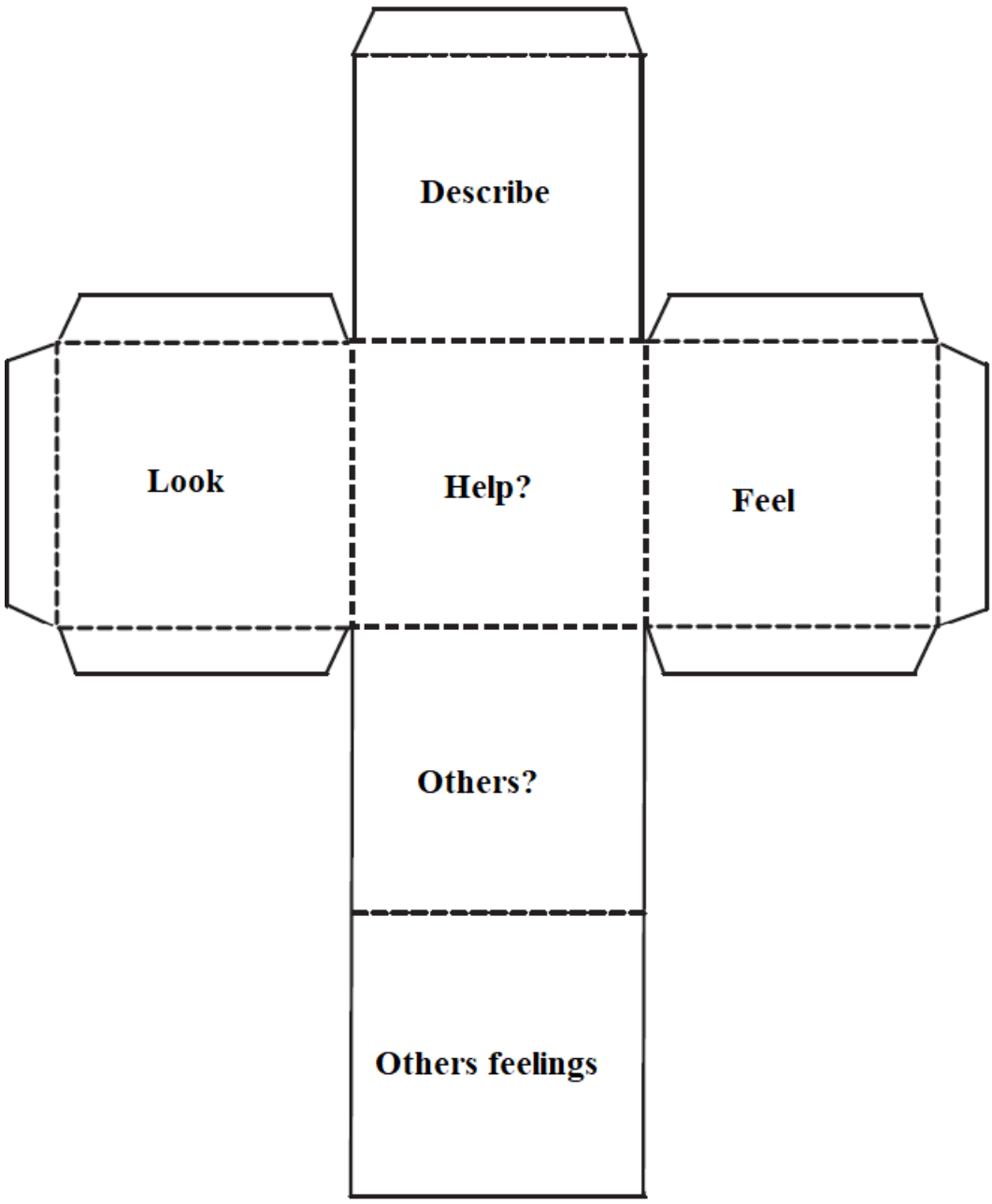
Players throw the dice, then choose a feelings Jenga piece. Depending on what the dice lands on:

Describe: Describe the last time you felt this way

Grouchy	Feel: What does it feel like within your body? i.e. sweaty palms
Guilty	Look: What do you think you look like when you feel this way? i.e. red faced
Surprised	Help: What can you/do you do to help yourself when you feel this way?
Grateful	Others: What can others do to help when you feel this way?
Blessed	Others' feelings?: How do you feel when another feels this way?
Calm	
Annoyed	
Brave	
Confident	
Confused	
Unmotivated	
Encouraged	
Strong	
Weak	
Vulnerable	

Hopeless
Conflicted
Regret
Hopeful
Stressed
Unsafe
Alone
Happy
Excited
Sad
Grief
Frustrated
Unsafe
Nervous
Embarrassed

Lonely
Angry
Disappointed
Hurt
Ashamed
Proud
Anxious
Rejected
Abandoned
Loved
Wanted
Safe
Invisible
Scared
Concerned
Stubborn
Important
Ignored



Journal prompts

Autistic people tend to be visual thinkers. Visual aids in therapy can be very useful.

1. Either provide a journal to the client or ask them to bring one in.
2. Create two sets of journal prompts, one set which you cut up and put into a jar as a 'lucky dip,' and one set which is printed out on a4 sheets.
3. To remain non-directive, ask the client to decide if they would like to take a lucky dip or choose themselves from the list. Sometimes when anxious, it can be difficult for autistic people to make decisions (poor executive functioning), the lucky dip can take the pressure off. Others will want to be in control of what they look into.
4. As the client creates their drawing/writing from the prompt, use 'contact reflections' to give reflections what they are doing/creating.

This task allows the client to access inner experiences and feelings in a non-threatening way, keeping the direction coming from them.

Write about a difficult time in your life that you overcame

Describe how you want your life to look in 5, 10 and 20 years

What are the three things that scare you the most and why?

Name five moments when you were ecstatically happy

What are three things you can do to help your mental health?

When times get tough, I want to remember that _____

My greatest qualities are _____

10 things I feel thankful for are _____

Right now my greatest challenge is _____

This week I am looking forward to these three things _____

On a scale of 1-10 my mental health is at a _____ because

If I could meet anyone in the world I would like to meet _____ because

Describe a situation where everything worked out for you

Who has been your biggest supporter? Write that person a thank you letter

Today my victories were:

What was your biggest learning moment this week?

Write a thank you letter to your body

If you could go anywhere in the world where would you go and why?

Describe your biggest accomplishment and why it means so much to you

No matter how terrible my day is these ten things can always make me feel better:

The biggest lessons I've learned from anxiety are:

If I didn't have depression I would have never learned _____

If I didn't have any fear I would _____

What was your biggest failure and what did you learn from it?

What do you wish most people knew about you and why?

What was your most embarrassing moment and why?

A fear I would like to overcome is _____. I can do these things to start overcoming it:

If you could change anything about yourself what would it be and why?

Describe your happiest and saddest childhood memories

If I could have any career, I would be a _____ because:

What was the last thing that made you feel deeply frustrated?

How do you want to be remembered?

Describe a time when you had to make a really hard choice

What would your life be like if you didn't have (depression, anxiety, etc)?

What is a trait that you admire most in others? In what ways do you see that trait in yourself

Name ten things you can start doing to take care of yourself?

What are your ten worst habits and how do they impact your life?

Describe a time when you sabotaged a good situation for yourself. Explore why you did that

What would unconditional love look like for you? What would it feel like?

If you had to pick one day to relive over and over for the rest of your life what would it be and why?

Describe your perfect relationship

How would you describe yourself to a stranger?

What are your ten best talents?

What was the best compliment you ever received?

What is the most unique thing about you? Do you like to hide it or let it show?

If you knew this was your last day on earth what would you do?

Name ten songs that make you feel pumped

If you could achieve anything in your lifetime what would it be?

What friendship that you've had was the most meaningful?

Figure work/sand tray

When in charity shops, build up a collection of different figurines. Autistic clients can use these to describe who they are, and who others around them are, or to re-enact situations, or a whole host of other ways, the client directs where this goes.

The characters from inside out are useful to purchase as they give a great visual representation of feelings.

If you buy a sand tray, buy one that either already has a blue bottom or paint it blue.

Russian dolls can be a useful prompt to describe different feelings/people within the same person. Possibly useful to autistic clients who describe living with a 'mask.'

Buttons

Alexithymia (Greek translation meaning no words for feelings), can cause autistic people to struggle to find words to describe how they are feeling. This task helps the autistic client to find the words to express how they're feeling.

1. Draw a timeline for the client.
2. Ask the client to start from the beginning of their lives and stop at both good and bad times (good at the top of the line, bad at the bottom).
3. Focus in on each time they highlight, asking them to select the words on the buttons which best describe how they felt during that time. When they have finished talking about that time, if it feels relevant, get the client to ask the following questions of themselves: -
 - a. Where was I courageous and resilient
 - b. What effect did others have on me
 - c. How do I take care of myself?

The task can be done without the above questions and still be therapeutic. It might just give the client the key to accessing the feelings they were previously struggling to describe and accept.

Either come up with your own feeling words to write on the buttons or use the words detailed in the Feeling Word's Jenga above. Link to purchase the buttons:-

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B07MJ4MCPN/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o06_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Credit to Lynda Thorley Counselling for sharing the buttons task with me:

<https://lyndathorleycounselling.co.uk/>

Autism Diagnosis Acceptance

Whirlpool of Acceptance

Many people who have received an autism diagnosis, including the author, especially in adulthood have expressed that they go through a change process with several stages. Many people who have lived with autism all of their lives without knowing, would have known they were different, and not knowing why, would have become masters at masking their difference, in an attempt to 'fit in.' This in itself would have created problems with low self-esteem and low self-worth, with a high degree of failure due to feelings of 'wrongness' and being out of step, their whole lives. However, this will have become the person's identity, they may have feelings of pride at having some degree of success at fitting in and appearing 'normal.' They likely expended a great deal of effort at keeping their true identity well hidden. The mask has served its purpose. Removing this mask, letting go of the façade and revealing one's true self could feel hugely challenging and overwhelming.

Upon diagnosis, as the mask is removed this identity can no longer live. The real identity is revealed, this can leave the person feeling highly vulnerable, open to stigma, rejection and fear of the unknown, who is the 'real-self?' it's been hidden so long, this may take time to discover. A new way of being needs to be achieved, it takes a huge amount of courage.

Following the diagnosis, no matter how prepared a person may have felt going into the assessment, they will possibly experience some degree of shock. We are all individuals, and this certainly might not be the case for everyone, however as so many describe the diagnostic experience this way, it is hoped that this will be useful to many going through this significant life change/experience.

Whirlpool of Acceptance

River of Life

Sailing along the river of life, within comfort zones, accustomed to this life, this is an individual's everyday lived experience, no matter whether it's good or bad, it's all that has ever been known.

The Edge/The Precipice

A diagnosis has been received, the individual can experience a mix of emotions, relief, excitement, perhaps panic, terror, fear of the unknown and loss of control, what is it going to be like when I go over the edge? Who will I be then? Will I be rejected? Can I possibly be accepted?

Waterfall of Change

The news starts to become real, perhaps the individual starts sharing the diagnosis with others. This can feel like plunging over the edge into the unknown. Feelings of shock, numbness, denial, dissociation, again this can be mixed with positive feelings too and can seem like an emotional rollercoaster.

Whirlpool of Change

Feelings of being tossed around, experiencing the loss of the mask that is all the individual has known and worked so hard to build and be protected by, feelings of emotional disorganisation and falling apart. Feelings of disorientation, fear, being overwhelmed, sucked into the depths, an inability to stop what is happening, going round in circles, revisiting emotions/ruminating (going over a thought or problem without resolving).

On the Rocks

Bashed against the rocks, experiencing pain and physical symptoms, perhaps headaches, problems sleeping, or stomach problems/IBS. No matter what the mix of emotions being experienced, this is likely to be exhausting and an autistic person is likely to be getting very low on spoons (See Spoon Theory - https://autisticmama.com/what-is-spoon-theory/?fbclid=IwAR1Mk9_xUTA-DUQ17wPdu_8MwgvN6hxzk1AT4omHQQ-rGieU7WXoH6Lagh4)

Sandbank/Sanctuary

This is where the individual may experience severe disorganisation, breakdown or, may feel washed up at times on the sandbank, the mind needs a rest, they may just need to take a break from thinking about the diagnosis. They may need to use this sanctuary to restore energy/restore spoons.

Towards Acceptance

Moving away from the old mask/old way of being becomes more acceptable and real. Coming to terms with leaving behind the mask and feeling more accepting of the reality of its absence. Questioning the purpose of the mask and if it's something they need anymore.

Reorganisation

Becoming more comfortable with the new reality, real self and the new life which lays ahead. Perhaps with less fear and more excitement.

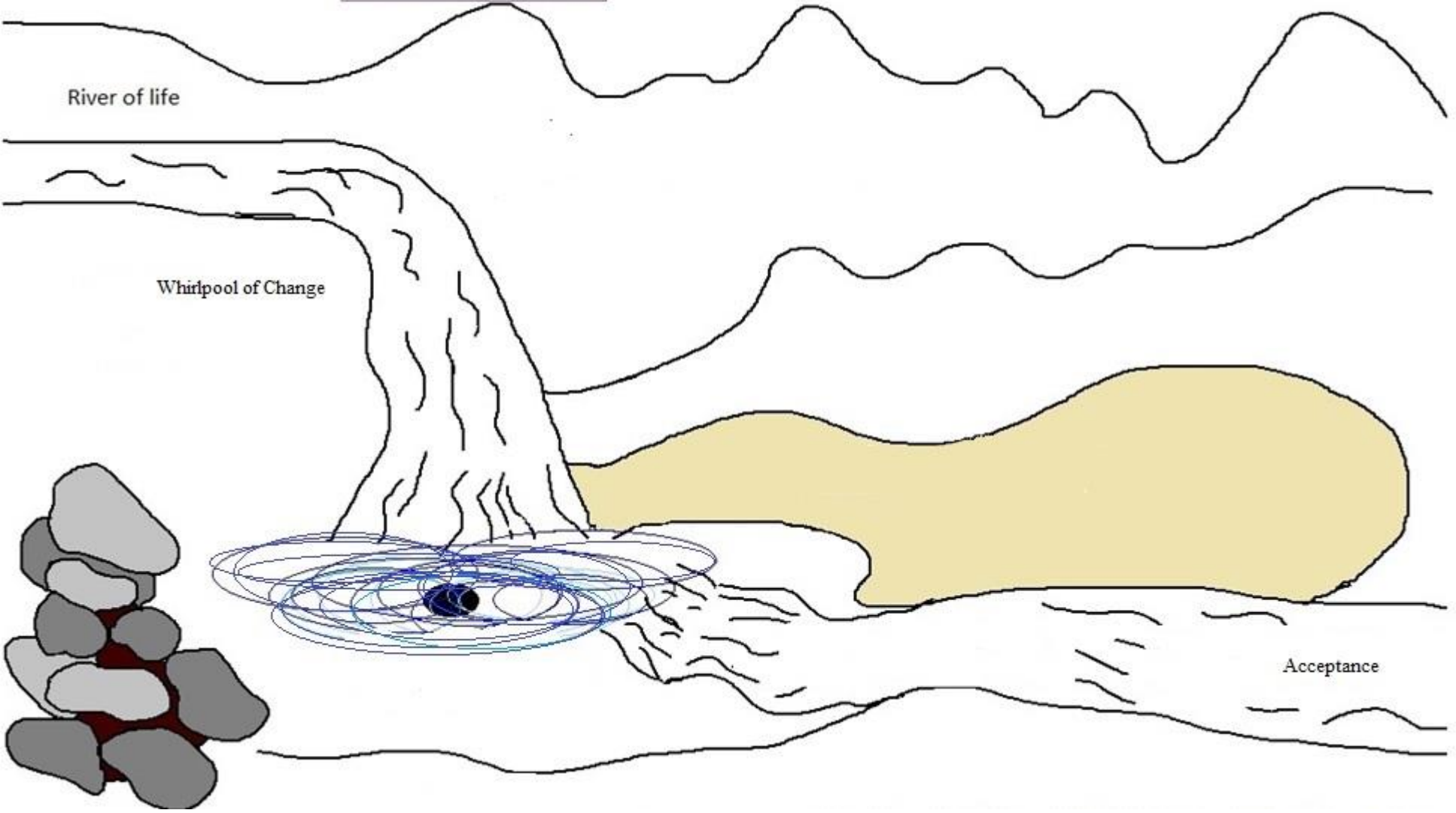


Whirlpool of Acceptance

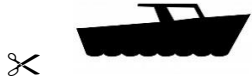
River of life

Whirlpool of Change

Acceptance



Adapted from the "Whirlpool of Grief" by Dr Richard Wilson by Lisa Cromar



The diagram has been left deliberately blank so that the client can as much as possible direct themselves through this journey, the counsellor can offer some guidance from the suggestions above. It is also recommended that if the client struggles to find words to describe their feelings (Alexithymia), that feeling words are visually provided (please see the Buttons Task); these buttons can be used to describe how the client is feeling at each stage within the process. Check in with the client how they feel about working with metaphor and adjust the use of this appropriately.

Please cut out this boat and the Whirlpool or guide the client to draw their own. Use the boat to move around the Whirlpool of Acceptance. Who does the client want in the boat with them? And who would they not want with them? This may change over time, it is not a linear process, so the individual may find themselves going backwards and forwards through the stages. Individuals should take their time, they have lived a certain way for a long time, changing and accepting their real self without the mask will take time and patience, remind them to be kind to themselves in this process. It's a battle within them, but also for acceptance by society where ignorance and stigma still exist, it's going to take energy and courage to fight for their true, real self. Recommend they find support wherever they can, autism forums and groups are very useful, a study by Cooper et al. (2017) has shown that developing a positive autism identity has a positive effect on self-esteem so it is worth fighting for.

References

Cooper, K., Smith, L., & Russell, A. (2017). Social identity, self-esteem, and mental health in autism. *European Journal Of Social Psychology*, 47(7), 844-854. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2297

Unmasking the Autistic Identity

Autistic people often learn to mask their autistic identity. Autistic masking can be defined as:

Hiding the autistic real self to appear more socially acceptable in order to be accepted by neurotypical peers and society.

This masking takes an incredible toll on the individuals mental health and can take an immense amount of energy to maintain. In this task, a counsellor can help a client identify autistic traits; learn how an autistic person could be masking these and the energy it is taking to do so; and reflect on the cost of masking and the importance of unmasking. A video demonstration of this task is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daKdadHryrQ&feature=youtu.be>

Part One

In preparation, cut out two copies of the picture cards below and laminate. If possible, ask the client to bring in a photo of them as a child, and a current photo of themselves. If this is not possible, drawings will be ok. Use a large piece of paper, at least A1 size. On the left-hand side of the paper, place the image of them as a child, and on the right-hand, their current self-image. Using the picture card prompts, and the breakdown of core autism traits, help the client to identify how autism affected them as a child, these are likely to still be the same now, but may be being masked, i.e. they are regularly hiding that they are finding something difficult from the people around them. So, an example, could be that they had a sensory processing issue around loud noises or busy environments, or they might say that they often felt misunderstood. Write each trait identified on the sheet and place a 'core autism trait' card next to it.

Part Two









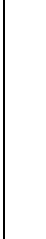

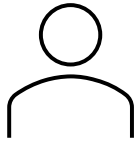









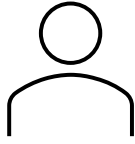









Move on to the side of the paper containing the image of the client now. Ask the client to run through a typical day, this can be done for various types of days/experiences depending on what the client is exploring. Ask them to think about social interactions where they might be masking or using social energy that day (using the traits identified from their childhood image). So, for example, they may nip into the shop on the way to work and interact with a shop keeper where they feel they are adhering to social expectations, i.e. maintaining eye contact, correct tone of voice, this might be due to the autism trait, 'challenges with social communication and interaction.'

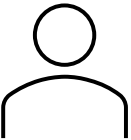









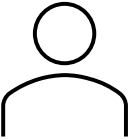









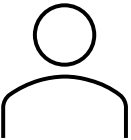









Many autistic people will use a part of energy to socially interact, something neurotypical people don't tend to experience. Each part of energy is represented by a spoon. Spoon Theory was developed by Christine Miserandino in 2003 and has been widely adopted by the autism community. An autistic person starts the day with perhaps 10 spoons, or 5 on a bad day. So, this interaction in the shop, where the client masked, would cost them one spoon. They may then have to go to a busy crowded place with bright lights where they may experience sensory overload, another autism trait, this might be harder so would be represented by 2 spoons. Choose the appropriate cards below to represent these challenges throughout their day. Discover how many spoons (how much energy) they are using throughout their typical day. They may find that they are using up more spoons (social energy) than they actually have.

Part Three

Once the day has been worked through, ask them to reflect on which spoons have been used. If they could have done anything differently. Were they around people they felt safe enough to remove the mask with, and to have been honest about how they were feeling? For example, they may be regularly agreeing to meet a good and trusted friend in a busy café where they are struggling with the loud environment and the concentration required to keep up conversation in such a place. Maybe they could find the courage to suggest meeting this friend somewhere that they feel more comfortable. Or, if they are masking who they really are around a certain person, not sharing important parts of themselves like their own interests for fear of ridicule for example, is this genuinely an unhealthy relationship or a fear which needs to be explored? If they feel it is genuinely unhealthy, should this person be in their lives. Do they have the choice to move away from this relationship? Is it toxic?

When autistic people embrace spoon theory, we tend to start to become more selective about who we give our spoons to, which can help us select healthier relationships, where we do feel safe to unmask, and to develop healthier boundaries.

									
	 Easy		 Hard	 Core Autism Trait	 Toxic	 Physical Demand	 Place	 Easy	
	 Easy		 Hard	 Core Autism Trait	 Toxic	 Physical Demand	 Place	 Easy	

	 Easy		 Hard	 Core Autism Trait	 Toxic	 Physical Demand	 Place	 Easy	
	 Easy		 Hard	 Core Autism Trait	 Toxic	 Physical Demand	 Place		 Hard
	 Easy		 Hard	 Core Autism Trait	 Toxic	 Physical Demand	 Place		 Hard

Core Autism Traits

<p>Social Communication and Social Interaction Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May struggle with verbal & non-verbal communication, not picking up on cues. • May have limited or repetitive speech (echolalia). • Good language skills, but struggle with nuances, like sarcasm. • Take things literally. • Needs extra time to process information. • Find it difficult to read others and others struggle to understand them (double empathy – Milton, 2012). • Been accused of being insensitive or socially inappropriate.
<p>Repetitive and Restrictive Behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May like to keep to the same routine every time, i.e. having the same thing or breakfast or walking to school/work the exact same way every day. May only listen to the same few songs, or have one song on repeat. • May self-regulate emotions with self-stimulating behaviours, AKA stimming. These are repetitive movements or actions, like spinning, flapping hands or can be skin picking, biting a lip for example. These can be used to alleviate stress or simply because they are enjoyable. • Change of routine can be very stressful, even big events like birthdays or Christmas can be unsettling, even when the person is very much looking forward to them.
<p>Sensory Sensitivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be either oversensitive or under sensitive to the sensory stimuli, i.e. sight, smell, hearing, touch, taste, temperatures or pain.
<p>Highly Focused or Interesting Hobbies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can hyper-focus on subjects of interest. • Able to look outside of the box, and often finds solutions to problems others have not thought of. • Will often have an encyclopaedic knowledge of subjects of interest.
<p>Extreme Anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1/3 of autistic people have mental health issues due to inadequate support in society. Anxiety is common due to trying to navigate a social world which is predominantly neurotypical, unpredictable and where the sensory overload is common.
<p>Meltdowns and Shutdowns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it all becomes all too much for an autistic person, they may lose behavioural control. In children especially, this meltdown behaviour can be screaming, running away, physically hurting peers or self. In some children and older teenagers and adults, this overload can result in a shutdown, this does not look as obvious to the outside world but is just as debilitating. This can result in zoning out, appearing quieter or more passive, and feel like being entirely drained of energy.

("What is autism", 2020)

References

Milton, D. (2012). On the ontological status of autism: the 'double empathy problem'. *Disability & Society*, 27(6), 883-887. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.710008>

Miserandino, C. (2003). *The Spoon Theory - But You Dont Look Sick?*. Support for those with invisible illness or chronic illness. Retrieved 20 September 2020, from <https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>.

What is autism. Autism.org.uk. (2020). Retrieved 17 September 2020, from <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>.

Recommended Resources

Books

The Neurodiversity Reader – Damian Milton

Thinking in Pictures – Temple Grandin

Temple Talks – Temple Grandin

The Autistic Brain – Temple Grandin

Neurotribes – Steve Silberman

Neurodiversity, The Birth of an Idea – Judy Singer

Asperger Syndrome & Psychotherapy – Paula Jacobsen

All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism – Lydia Brown, E. Ashkenazy and Morénike Giwa Onaiwu

The Guide to Good Mental Health on the Autism Spectrum – Jeanette Purkis (now Yenn Purkis), Emma Goodall and Jane Nugent

Person-Centred Practice at the Difficult Edge – Peter Pearce and Lisbeth Sommerbeck

Counselling for Asperger Couples – Barrie Thompson

Asperger's Syndrome – Tony Attwood

Counselling People on the Autism Spectrum – Katherine Paxton and Irene Estay

Asperger's Syndrome and Mindfulness – Chris Mitchell

A Guide to Mental Issues in Girls and Young Women on the Autism Spectrum – Judy Eaton

Living with PTSD on the Autism Spectrum – Lisa Morgan and Mary Donahue

Play-Based Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder – Robert Jason Grant

The Autistic Trans Guide to Life – Yenn Purkis and Wenn Lawson

Grrl Alex: A Personal Journey to a Transgender Identity – Alex Drummond

Camouflage: The Hidden Lives of Autistic Women – Sarah Bargiela

Free Literature

A Literature Review Exploring the Efficacy of Person-Centred Counselling - Lisa Cromar:

<https://derby.academia.edu/lisacromar>

Females with Asperger's Syndrome: An Unofficial List – Samantha Craft:

<https://the-art-of-autism.com/females-and-aspergers-a-checklist/>

Vloggers/Podcasts

Aspie World

Video discussing how to go about getting diagnosed (see other links in the bio):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jcK3EluGsE&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0oFQOI8rq3vunzL5B0IUanFRKEg0eDBzCoeujzhEztmA0nVcXQppPqmOU>

And here is the link recommended for doing an online (AQ) test as the start point for considering autism:

<https://www.additudemag.com/screener-autism-spectrum-disorder-symptoms-test-adults/>

Francesca Happé

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000m5lh>

Autistic Tyler (autism/burnout/Black autistic experience/late diagnosed)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGQ78cJiMcJhMbpKhjunAyg>

Venessa Bobb (Well-known Black autism advocate as mother to autistic children)

<https://theautismpodcast.podbean.com/e/the-autism-podcast-interview-with-venessa-bobb-on-the-topic-of-older-autistic-adults/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000dqfv>

Black Girls Lost Keys (Black ADHD advocate)

<https://www.facebook.com/blackgirllostkeys>

Willow Marsden (Autism/aspergers/sensory processing disorder)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WillowMarsden?fbclid=IwAR0qBo4SfSPU93pvppQk3pbQmOnu4N2WnShXN6WCzR5zX4Ru15pMYzJRnrY>

Paul Micallef (Aspergers perspective)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FpBZR7DbpvNj5UrFN8qUA?fbclid=IwAR32RqKBvLk0PdlzwRraXTztNdurZNDptJhmCAQM4-yRZwVYIWnj3-PkNPA>

Carly Fleismann (Non-verbal perspective)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeKKQIMB1NeOLN31_CSJFRQ?fbclid=IwAR3IFB-ZwPo6CGKOU57W-4-HE3yif8x1SQG8AfPLGpalipMa_zCwG6UdPmo

Purple Ella (autism/late diagnosed perspective)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/purplemumify>

Harry Thompson (Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) perspective)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUOrWY2IW8NL4vfYslkGgGg>

Lisa Cromar (autism/mum of autistic children/counselling experiences perspective)

<https://soundcloud.com/womensradiostation/all-things-autism-lisa-cromar-austim-and-counselling-03092019>

The Girl with the Curly Hair (young person perspective)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEqIcIypFG6uoI5gBoi7dVg>

Also see their website for webinars, videos and books: <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/>

Groups

Counsellors Working with Neurodivergence

Dedicated group for counsellors and psychotherapists for discussing neurodiversity/neurodivergence. Cofounded by Lisa Cromar, Karin Brauner, Sarah Williams and Heidi Brown – here is a blog about our mission: <https://kbrauncounselling.blog/2019/09/22/neurodiversityfbgroup/>

Link to the group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/counsellorsworkingwithneurodivergence/about>

Creative Counsellors Association

Loads of creative counselling ideas (not specifically autism related but can be used with autistic clients). Brilliant CPD and online community for counsellors interested in working creatively. Includes blog by Lisa Cromar: Creative Counselling for Autistic Clients.

<https://thecreativecounsellorsclub.com/2019/08/07/autistic-clients/>

Members (£10 monthly fee) Includes CPD by Lisa Cromar: Working Creatively to Support Autistic Clients

<https://www.theccchub.com/>

Autistic Not Weird

Large Facebook group, run by well-known autism advocate Chris Bonnelo, useful for anyone interested in learning more about autism.

<https://www.facebook.com/autisticnotweird>

Autism Discussion Page

Useful autism group particularly for professionals

<https://www.facebook.com/autismdiscussionpage>

A2nd Voice

Run many webinars for learning more about autism in the Black community.

<https://www.a2ndvoice.com/>

Chinese Autism Support

Promoting understanding in the Chinese autism community

<https://www.facebook.com/autismchinese/>

Apps

What's Up

Apple:

<https://apps.apple.com/.../whats-up-a-mental.../id968251160>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

The Autism Plan Hub:

iPhone:

<https://apps.apple.com/.../the-autism-plan-hub/id1472577729>

Android:

<https://apkpure.com/the.../uk.co.disciplemedia.autismplanhub>

Clear Fear:

iPhone:

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/clear-fear/id1437282350>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

Molehill Mountain:

iPhone:

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/molehill-mountain/id1407304564>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>