

TERMS AND GLOSSARY

ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis): Behavioral engineering/training therapy. Highly controversial in the autistic community for its focus on encouraging autistic people to “mask” their autistic behaviors.

Ableism/Ableist: Discriminating in favor of able-bodied and/or neurotypical people. In the context of autism, looking at autistic people as needing to be “fixed” to make them “normal” or to suppress their autistic behaviors.

Allistic: Not Autistic.

Autistic Burnout: Exhaustion from extended social interaction

Autistic Shutdown: Withdrawing, selective mutism, disassociating

Echolalia: Repetitive language, often used as a self-soothing method.

IEP (Individualized Education Program): A plan used for students in grades pre-k-12 that lays out the special education instruction, support, and services a student needs to thrive in school.

Masking: Intentionally modifying or hiding autistic behaviors

Meltdown: Overstimulation causes sensory overload/implosion (not the same as a “tantrum,” which is when a child acts out in order to get something.)

Neurodivergent = Single Person

Neurodiverse = A group of neurodivergent people

Neurodiversity = Meant to include different neurotypes

Person-First/Identity-First Language: People who “have autism”/People who “are autistic.” Identity-first language is mostly preferred, but several autistic people use person-first language.

Scripting: Using pre-scripted language to get by in everyday situations

Sensory Friendly: An environment built to not overstimulate the senses

Sensory Overload: One of your senses is overstimulated to the point of causing burnout/shutdown

Stimming: Self-soothing and stimulating behavior autistic people use to regulate their reactions to stimulations

SPD: Sensory Processing Disorder, overstimulation from certain senses. Not always connected to autism.