

HOT TOPICS – APRIL 2021

WORLD AUTISM WEEK

Did you know ...?

World Autism Week runs from 29 March to 4 April 2021

The **National Autistic Society** is the UK's leading charity for supporting people who are on the autism spectrum, as well as their families.

What is autism?

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects people in different ways. Below are some of the ways in which this manifests itself:

Social communication – autistic people have difficulties interpreting verbal and non-verbal language and gestures or voice tone. They may have very good language skills but may not understand sarcasm. They may take things literally, need extra time to process information and repeat what others say

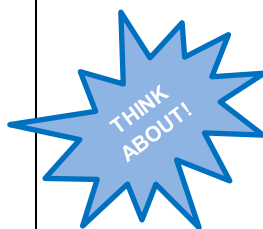
Social interaction – autistic people may have difficulty 'reading' other people's emotions, feelings and intentions as well as expressing their own emotions. They may seem to be insensitive, find it hard to form relationships, not seek comfort from others and appear to behave strangely or in a way that is considered to be socially inappropriate

Routines – autistic people often prefer to have routines so that they know what is going to happen – this may include wanting to take the same route to and from school or work, wearing the same clothes or eating the same food for breakfast. They will often repeat movements such as opening and closing a door

Anxiety is a challenge for many autistic adults, especially in social situations. When everything becomes too much they can go into meltdown or shutdown. A meltdown happens when someone becomes overwhelmed by their situation and temporarily lose control. This can involve shouting, screaming, kicking, biting and lashing out. Shutdown on the other hand may appear more passive, such as going quiet or switching off.

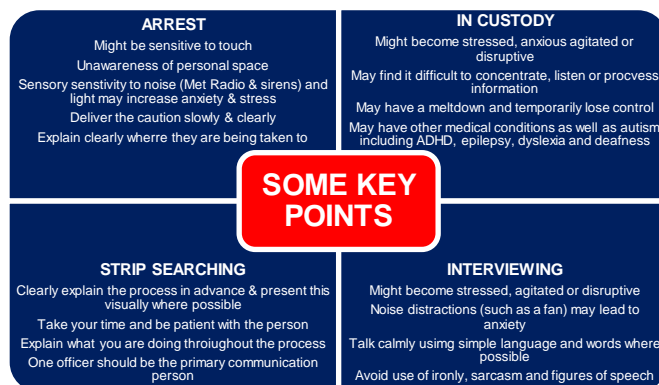


1. We often need extra time to process information, like questions or instructions
2. We can feel intense anxiety in social situations
3. We sometimes feel anxious about unexpected changes, like delays and cancellations
4. Many of us find noise, smells and bright lights distressing
5. All of these can lead to us becoming overwhelmed and having a 'meltdown' or 'shutdown'. This can be physically and emotionally debilitating



What might you need to consider when: -

- ✓ Arresting an autistic person?
- ✓ Dealing with an autistic person in custody?
- ✓ Strip searching an autistic person?
- ✓ Interviewing an autistic person?



DID YOU KNOW ...?

There is a **National Police Autism Association** (NPAA). It is a privately run group of UK police officers and staff that support colleagues with autism (including Asperger Syndrome) and other neurodivergent conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD

The **National Autistic Society** have issued a guide for police officers, which can be found here: [NAS Police Guide 2020 17092020.pdf \(thirdlight.com\)](https://www.thirdlight.com/nas-police-guide-2020-17092020.pdf)

DISCUSSION POINTS



Which of the British Values could be relevant to autism?

What could you do to reassure an autistic person when you interact with them? Think of other encounters, such as stop & search, you may have with an autistic person and what you can do to reduce their anxiety

I would like to know more!!

[National Police Autism Association \(NPAA\)](https://www.npaa.org.uk)
[National Autistic Society \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk)
[Home | Autism Speaks](#)
[Autism - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
[NAS Police Guide 2020 17092020.pdf \(babcockgroup.co.uk\)](https://www.babcockgroup.co.uk/nas-police-guide-2020-17092020.pdf)