

# A Language Guide for Professionals when Talking about Autism



## Rationale for the guide

To encourage the use of neuro-affirming language to support the communication between autistic young people and professionals. Specifically, we sought to create a guide that reflects autistic young people's preferences.

## How we hope it will be used

The guide is not a script. The purpose of the guide is to provide recommendations and considerations of how to use language that aligns with the preferences of autistic young people, to prevent distress and stigmatisation. It is important to ask each young person you work with what language they would like to be used. Each person will have a different preference. The Language Guide aims to scaffold language.

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## The Invaluable Voices of Autistic Young People

This guide was lead by the passionate voices of the autistic young people at Tree of Life, Bramhall High School, and "Teen Space" at Hyde Little Theatre, and the passionate parent advocates with children on the diagnostic pathway.

It is thanks to them, their parents, and the staff, we were able to create this guide in a co-produced way that reflects their wants, feelings, and insights.

"During the day, I'm like a heart monitor – It's up and down all the time; it's not a straight line."  
(Girl, 15)



"What even is normal?  
Who is normal?"  
(Boy, aged 9)



"The word autistic is kind of ruined now because people use it as an insult or in a mean way"  
(11 year old)



"Symptoms sound like you caught a virus"  
(Boy, Age?)



"The words 'disorder' and 'condition' makes it feel like it's wrong to have, or that you have a problem"  
(Girl, 14).



"Language is one way in which ableism is perpetuated, when autistic people hear this a microtrauma can occur."  
(National Autism Training Programme, 2024)

# The Development of the Guide

