What is Masking?



Have you ever felt the need to hide your true self in a social setting?



Or adapt your behaviour to fit the “social rules?”



For many autistic people, this is a daily survival strategy called **social masking.**



Masking can help neurodivergent people navigate a world.

Being **neurodivergent** means that your brain processes information differently from what is considered typical.



Masking can come at a big personal cost.



Masking is sometimes called **Camouflaging** or **Compensating.**



Understanding and learning more about masking can help to spread awareness.



Masking is when a person hides their behaviours and struggles, sometime by copying people around them.



Neurodivergent people do not always realise when they are masking.



Masking is a way of coping. Neurodivergent people might do this because:

- They want to fit in and avoid bullying
- They need to find employment
- They need to feel safe in social situations.



Masking is usually only a temporary fix. It can have a big impact on a person's mental health.



What can masking look like?

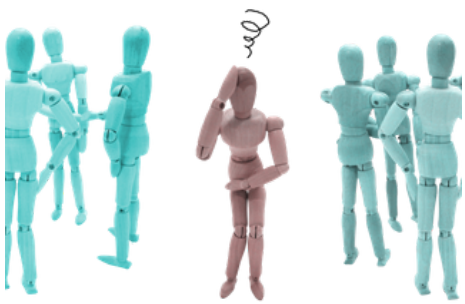
- **Forcing eye contact:** Actively forcing yourself to look people in the eye even if it's uncomfortable.



Rehearsing: Practicing conversations in advance, memorising jokes or copying things you've seen others do in person or on TV.



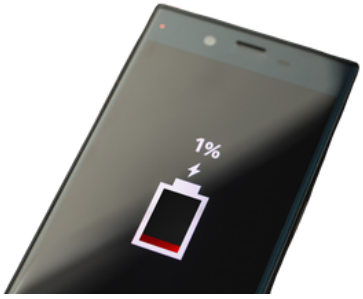
- **Suppressing stimming:** Hiding your natural stimming or tendencies such as hand-flapping, rocking or fidgeting by replacing it with less obvious habits.



- **Hiding struggles:** such as pretending to understand a complicated instruction or joke so you don't stand out.



- **Sensory overload:** Silently pushing through distress caused by bright lights, loud noises or crowds without complaint.



Long-term impacts include:

- Burnout
- Loss of identity
- Delays in support
- Mental health crises

How can we support safe “unmasking?”



Normalising stimming and natural communication styles could help create a safer environment.



Accessing to therapy and **reasonable adjustments** at work can help a person reclaim their identity.



Creating a safe space to “unmask” will look different for everyone.



safe ‘unmasking’ with need some self-advocacy to create an inclusive enviroment.



Need more help? Contact the us at

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