

Peer Support Handout: Masking & Mental Health

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Masking



Masking consists of **learned and practiced behaviours** that hide autistic traits, or assimilate to neurotypical social expectations.

Produced by:



**Mental Health
Equity Project**

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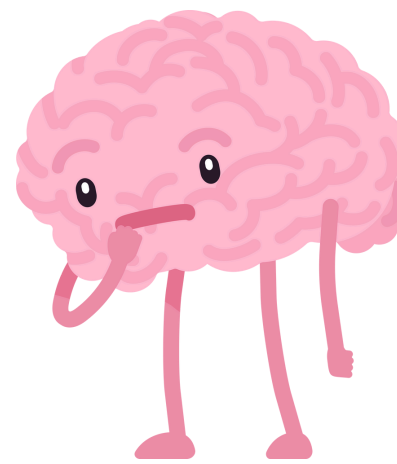
Assimilation



Assimilation is a form of masking that tends to consist of performing a persona. E.g. learning topics of interest to others in order to engage on their terms.

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Impact on Mental Health



Masking can impact autistic people's mental wellbeing:

- Autistic burnout
- Anxiety and low mood
- Fatigue and unmet needs

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Compensation



Compensation is another form of masking that will tend to involve mirroring neurotypical behaviours e.g. maintaining eye contact, or limiting tangents.

Unmasking



Taking time to unmasking and engage in special interests, explaining your needs and stimming can make a major difference to mental wellbeing and help to avoid burnout.



Signposting and Additional Resources

A number of resources are available to learn more about masking, or support in unmasking, including:

- **Cat-Q Camouflaging Self-Assessment:** <https://embrace-autism.com/cat-q/>
- **Masking Resource List:** <https://theautisticadvocate.com/autistic-masking/>
- **Autistic MASKING: how do we do it and should we stop? - Yo Sandy Sam**