

## Helpful sentences for autistic folks

**I feel a bit dysregulated or I feel off, but I'm not sure why.**

What are your rumbling signs of a storm? For me, I go very quiet, I make even less eye contact than usual, I jiggle my legs more, I might visually zone in on one small thing nearby like a button or zip, I feel as if there's something I want to say but I can't say it. I feel tense. My thoughts are snagged on something, and can't move forwards.

The sooner you notice the rumbings, and you say this sentence, the better! Bottling up that feeling makes it grow and grow. While your brain tries to work out the cause / solution, it can get stuck and your confusion, frustration or distress can get much worse.

This sentence means that the person you're with can 'meet you' at the snag instead of going forwards without you, making things even more overwhelming and tricky. It is also like removing the lid to a bottle: once you've said this first sentence, the rest will come much easier.

**My brain is soup.**

When you're frazzled and burned out and you can't think straight, say this one simple sentence to help others understand why you're not your usual self. They may even offer to help you out with tasks if they know you're feeling this way.

**Yes, please!**

This is what you say when someone offers help, instead of 'no, it's fine'. I know, I know. I don't like it either. It feels wrong. But my goodness, what a difference it can make. Try it next time!

**Let me get back to you or I need to check about that.**

Allow yourself more processing time so you don't jump in and agree to something terrible. Practise saying this over and over until you need it. I feel sick when I think of the countless times I've overcommitted myself or

got in to a horrible situation because I didn't have the thinking time I needed.

**I'm just making notes because my working memory isn't great and I want to get the details right.**

This is helpful if you're having an important conversation with a teacher, doctor or similar. When you say this sentence, the other person will nod or say "OK", and that will reassure you that they are fine with it. You will feel more relaxed and able to make these notes, rather than trying to remember everything off the top of your head. With notes to return to, you will understand the situation more clearly than the conversation being a blur in your memory.

**I feel upset about something. I don't want to fight, but can you help me make sense of it?**

This is good when there has been a conflict or misunderstanding involving someone else. Often we need details to clarify and process a decision, action or comment that has been made. However, some people may take the question "Why did you do X?" as starting an argument, and become defensive. This is a really helpful sentence in friendships and romantic relationships.

**Excuse me, please. I'm autistic and I'm feeling a little lost about X / overwhelmed by Y. Could you help me?**

This is a really good one for visiting a new place, when you're not sure how things work and you need someone to be patient and talk you through it.

**I'm sorry, I have a migraine. I need to leave.**

Personally, I often get a migraine before, during or after a meltdown, so this doesn't feel like a lie, but when most neurotypical people don't understand autistic meltdowns, it is a way to excuse yourself that they

can understand and relate to, without you having to get into complicated or distressing explanations.