

There are four main areas of difficulty which [[client name]] faces:

- Misophonia
- Sensory hypersensitivity due to autism
- Cognitive effects of autism
- & Early childhood trauma

Some of the language in this document might be quite technical and confusing.

If there are any words or phrases in this document which are difficult to understand, please ask [[staff name]] or [[staff name]] to explain them to you.

Misophonia

[[client name]] has a condition called **misophonia** which causes **feelings of panic when hearing certain specific sounds**.

The sounds that cause [[client name]]'s misophonia are called **trigger sounds**.

When [[client name]] hears a trigger sound, he feels **panic and disgust**. It is a similar feeling to sitting on a public toilet with pee on the seat.

This is a list of some common sounds that trigger [[client name]]'s misophonia. This is not every trigger sound, just the most common ones:

- Shoe steps upstairs
- The hissing sound when the kitchen tap is left on for a long time
- Talking or laughter very close to the top of the stairs
- Any TV show above 30 volume
- Especially loud TV shows (e.g. shouting, explosions) above 20-25 volume

One way to help with this is to not wear shoes between 5 am and 8 am in the morning. That is because [[client name]] does not have headphones on at this time (because he's sleeping) and the sounds of shoe steps can wake him up and cause him distress.

Sensory hypersensitivity due to autism

Because of [[client name]]'s autism, **his brain reads smells and tastes differently to most brains**. Some smells or tastes which are pleasant or invisible to most people, are very distressing for [[client name]].

Smelling or tasting one of those things causes [[client name]] to **feel physical pain inside the very back of his nose and mouth**. It's a similar place to where you would feel the swab during one of those Covid swab tests.

The types of smells that most often cause [[client name]] pain, are smells from artificial products. This is not every triggering type of product, just the most common ones:

- Deodorant

- Cologne
- Perfume
- Cleaning products
- Shampoo
- Hair spray
- Hand creams
- Anything similar to those

This is why it's important to follow the instructions given for cleaning [[client name]]'s room, especially:

- Leaving the windows open afterwards
- Closing the inside door afterwards
- Not wearing any perfume/cologne/etc. on the day you have a cleaning shift in [[client name]]'s room
- Only do the tasks listed on the instructions, don't do anything extra, because the less time spent in [[client name]]'s room, the less risk of triggering smells building up
- **Only using the cleaning products listed on the instructions**

There are many types of tastes that can cause [[client name]] pain. Often it will be an ingredient that others might not notice (e.g. preservatives, sauces, seasoning, etc.).

This is why it's important to follow the meal plan and shopping list exactly.

One brand of the same meal may trigger [[client name]], when a different brand is ok. So it's important to buy and use the exact right brand.

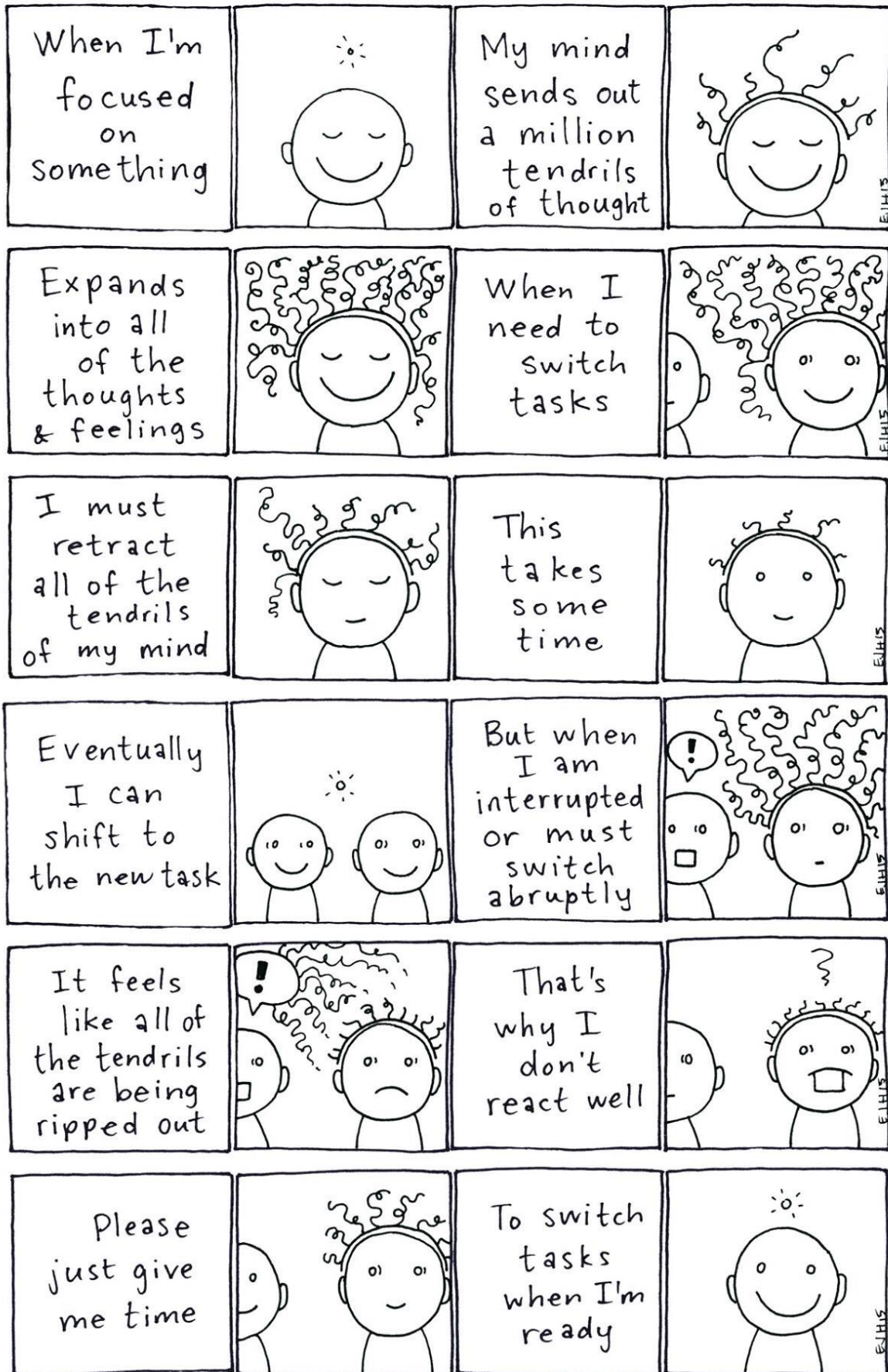
Cognitive effects of autism

Because of [[client name]]'s autism, **he finds it distressing to switch between focusing on one thing, and focusing on another thing, too quickly.**

The below comic shows how this works using a visual example:

Why it's hard to switch tasks

(Let's call it Tendril Theory)



Ways to reduce this distress include:

- Don't knock on the door or give [[client name]] a phone call, instead of that, text him
- Only text [[client name]] during the allowed times - because during these times, [[client name]] knows to be ready to receive texts, and won't be in the middle of something else

Early childhood trauma

When [[client name]] was young (ages 4 to 9), **he often got punished for things he couldn't control (eg. autistic behaviours)**. Because of this **[[client name]] has a lot of trouble trusting people**.

[[client name]] worries about what people think of him. Because of this, [[client name]] might not tell the staff when there is a problem, and will instead email [[staff name]]. This is for 2 reasons:

1. [[client name]] knows [[staff name]] well and has already built trust with her
2. With an email, [[client name]] has a long time to think about how to say things, he doesn't get the same amount of time to reply by text

One way to make this easier for [[client name]] is to **ask him for feedback**, because then he will feel safer to tell you when there is a problem.

For example, when giving [[client name]] a meal, you could text [[client name]] and say "please tell me if anything in this meal triggers your taste sensitivity".

Another example, after cleaning [[client name]]'s room, you could text [[client name]] and say "I have finished cleaning the downstairs area. Please let me know if there were any sensory problems caused by the cleaning."

Another way to help [[client name]] is to **reassure him after he gives you feedback**. Here are some examples:

- If [[client name]] texts you and says he couldn't eat lunch because of his taste sensitivity, and he needs you to make something else for him, then you could reply with something like "that is no problem, I'm happy to do that for you"
- If [[client name]] texts you about noises upstairs and asks you to talk further away from the stairs, you could reply with something like "no worries, we will move to the kitchen and talk there, let us know if you hear anything else"

Because [[client name]] is scared to ask for help from people he doesn't know well yet, he has been emailing [[staff name]] about every problem, instead of texting the on-duty staff.

If you ask [[client name]] for feedback often and reassure him after he gives you feedback, then that should help [[client name]] to ask the staff for help more often, and ask [[staff name]] less often.