

Difficulties socialising – what stops me?

- Large crowds
- Loud noise, music, lights
- Anxiety – I am not a social person
- Not used to socialising
- Can't read people's body language
- Lack of space
- I don't necessarily like people
- I don't want to spend time with people who want to talk about things that don't interest me
- I think they are often talking about things they think they ought to be talking about (e.g. latest TV programmes) rather than talking about what really interests them
- I won't go into certain places (space, noise, colour)
- Not being able to predict what will/is going to happen
- Don't know how to break into a pair (small group) who are already talking together
- There are some people I just don't feel comfortable with ('in your face' – 'persistent' – pressing themselves upon me')
- Fear of how to end a conversation
- Tactic = to arrive in time and leave as soon as the interaction is finished so that I don't have to get involved with small talk
- My social energy is soon drained
- Fear/anxiety of not knowing what to say
- Knowing whether or not I have said the right thing
- Ok if based around an activity
- I can cope with about an hour
- I don't know what to say
- I just do feel anxious in a social situation
- Not always sure what is going on
- Not knowing how to make small talk
- I can't see the point of small talk
- Knowing (feeling?) that I have nothing in common with other people in the building/room
- I may well say something that mortally offends people
- They leave me and go off and talk to one another, but not to me
- People are in couples (small groups) and so are already involved with one another
- I am not interested in their [SUBJECT] – I am interested in [COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SUBJECT] and am sure this will not interest them
- They may well be showing off about their [HOLIDAYS – SHOPPING – PURCHASES] - I don't want to join in that game
- The pain of knowing that I may well not be number one on their list – I am not the prime person

My interests now and things I did as a child

- Video games
- Gameboys
- Warhammer
- Models
- Guitar
- Countryside and horse-riding
- Farming
- Weaving (loom)
- Baking
- Children
- Thomas the Tank Engine
- Sonic the Hedgehog
- Bjorn Borg
- Calvin Kline
- Adidas trainers
- Dinosaurs
- Spiders making webs
- The Beatles – facts and details
- Punk Rock – facts and details
- Action toys
- Drawing
- Comic books
- Reading – a form of escapism
- Puzzles – jigsaws, numbers, letters
- Video games → machine learning
- My cat Smudge
- Bouldering
- Board games
- My cat Mittens

## Tips for socialising

- Organise to meet up
- Activities
- Online NAS
- Activity – choir, golf, karaoke, sports
- Deadline
- Smaller group
- Shared interest – kids?
- Drop-in centre
- Practise set questions
- Autistic-friendly hairdressers
- Listen to other person's point of view
- Don't judge people
- Script for interaction
- Volunteering
- Practise out loud
- Join an interest group