

WHAT ARE THEY TELLING YOU?

A GUIDE FOR JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS ON INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

WHAT YOU SEE/HEAR	WHAT YOU THINK	WHAT THEY ARE TELLING YOU
Little to no eye contact	Something to hide	Eye contact makes me anxious and is difficult for me. I cannot look at you if you want me to hear and understand you.
Aloof, inappropriate comments	No remorse, rude	I do not understand the social implications of how I am speaking to you. I tell it like it is.
Mimicking what you are saying	He is mocking me or not taking me seriously	I have to repeat what you say to try to comprehend it and sometimes repeating things helps me calm down.
Strange facial expressions and body language	Drugs, Intellectual Disability	Autism causes my body to behave and react differently. I am trying to listen to you and do what you ask but sometimes my body won't let me. It is more difficult for me to communicate using "typical" facial expressions and body language.
Ignoring your questions, taking too long to answer	Not Listening	I heard you but I need extra processing time. Please slow down, do not ask me more than once, and allow me some extra time to answer.
Plugging their ears, closing their eyes	Noncompliance	It is too bright and loud in here, my senses are overloaded and my flight or fight re-sponse is in overdrive. Please give me some time to calm down.
Does not want to be touched	Hiding Something	Even the lightest touch hurts me. Please warn me if you are going to touch me.
Refusing to comply	Deceptive, Uncooperative	My world is very chaotic. Routine helps make the world calmer. When my routine is disrupted I become very agitated and anxious.
Very agreeable, admits to anything	Guilty	Making friends is hard. I have learned that doing what others want makes having friends easier. Sometimes I agree or admit to things because I have been told that that is the way to get along with other people.
The need to repeat the same directions numerous times	Not Listening	I learn better by seeing. Can you please show me what you want me to do?