



AUTISTIC BURNOUT

“is a state of physical and mental fatigue, heightened stress and diminished capacity to manage life skills, sensory input and social interactions, which comes from years of being severely overtaxed by the strain of trying to live up to demands that are out of sync with your needs” (J Endow)

SIGNS OF BURNOUT



Exhaustion, harder to regulate emotions, difficulty processing thoughts, changes in communication, heightened anxiety, sensory overload increases, increased sensory seeking, changes in self care, increased demand avoidance, meltdowns and shutdowns and social withdrawal.

MAIN CAUSES OF AUTISTIC BURNOUT

1. Stigma surrounding autism and being autistic - meaning social environments are not inclusive/adjusted/safe for autistic people
2. Masking (mostly subconscious fawning, adaptive morphing, camouflaging, “stigma management”)
3. Too many demands and expectations (internal & external)
4. Sensory overload
5. Challenges interpreting body’s signals (inc emotions and exhaustion, etc)
6. School trauma
7. Transitions such as puberty/ menopause
8. Physical conditions such as EDS, HSD etc



WHAT HELPS?

Lots of rest, significantly lowering demands and expectation.
Lots of flexibility- allowing space and time with interests.
More autonomy and time away from social situations.
Hibernation mode can look extreme but is the nervous system’s way of resetting & healing (this can look like the person being in their bedroom with curtains shut for many months)



PREVENTION

- Living at a pace that is in sync with your capacity.
- Learning about self advocacy and boundaries.
- Unmasking when it is **safe** to- usually with neurokin.
- Making plenty of time for monotropic flow states with your interests.
- Creating and being in safe, low demand environments whenever possible.
- Understanding your sensory needs.
- Plenty of rest and time to recharge, heal and reset.

WHAT DOES RECOVERY LOOK LIKE?

Recovery can be a very long journey and involves reducing demands (inc social demands), expectations and resting **lots**. Rest is physical, emotional, mental, creative, spiritual, social and sensory. There are no quick fixes. Recovery takes time. Spending time with passions and interests can be regulating and restorative. It’s not about getting back to normal gain but considering what led to burnout and living life at a pace and in a way that means the different needs of the autistic person are met.