

Dear XXX,

It is important to me for you and XXX Medical Clinic to understand my autism. My last visit was traumatic for me. Unfortunately, traumatic experiences do not go away or diminish. They just build. I still suffer from childhood traumatic experiences. Some have become PTSD panic level anxieties.

First, a primer on autism:

(Important note: autism is not a disease. It is not something that can be caught or caused by anything after conception. It is genetic.)

Autism is primarily a perception difference from the majority of the population. How a person perceives their world is their basis of understanding and their framework for their scope of imagination and their reality. How you perceive anything is dictated by the physical neural framework of your mind. You have probably heard the expression that we are a product of our environment – the product of all the variables that molded our existence. Likewise, our mentality is a product of our perception. The perception difference of autistic's is labeled as a disorder. However, I believe "disorder" is a misnomer. Indeed, autism inflicts suffering and difficulties, however, those sufferings are the difficulties of interfacing with the non-autistic or **NeuroTypical (NT)** world. For example; a fish in a human environment cannot survive. That does not mean the fish is "wrong" or has a disorder. The fish is simply in a different and incompatible environment. That is how autistic's feel when having to interface with the NT world.

Sensitivities:

If one sees someone experiencing something or behaving somehow different from another person's perception, then the perception of the experience or behavior is mentally edited to fit their mental framework. It seems that a true understanding is near impossible. For example, autistic sensitivities are never experienced by NT people. Thus, it is essentially impossible for them to comprehend what that sensitivity is like. It can be explained in explicit detail, but since they have never experienced anything like that, they are not able to imagine it. They have nothing to relate it to. Like trying to describe to a person that is totally blind from birth what the color blue looks like.

Everyone, regardless of their neural framework, is blind to certain things in the universe. The difference is that NT's has built society to fit the neurological framework to match the NT majority. That world, ignoring everything that NT's are blind to, is very hard for the autistic, that sees what the NT's do not and is blind to many things that

NT's perceive; is very distressing. Makes the autistic feel like they were born into a foreign world; like they do not belong here. If things were reversed, where autistics were the majority, the world would be a very different place. In that world, NT's would likewise feel very out of place and very distressed with high levels of anxiety.

If an autistic child is seen hunched over in a corner with his/her hands pressed tightly against their ears and banging their head against the wall; it is thought that the child suffers a deep mental illness (or disorder) with very limited intelligence and comprehension. In reality; probably not. The reality is that the observer of the child has no idea nor neural framework to imagine why the child is doing that. That is because they have never experienced, thus can imagine the level or nature of the torture the child is suffering from the sounds, lights, etc. that they are experiencing. An NT person never experiences anything like that so they cannot understand or imagine it. You can say it is like this or like that, but none of those examples helps because none of the examples accurately conveys what the child is experiencing to someone who has never experienced anything like it. The NT person does not have any of those sensitivities to invoke such torture. The same sounds, lighting, etc. is completely benign, if even noticeable, to the NT person. Note that astronomical science has discovered the existence of dark energy and dark matter. Neither of these can be seen or directly detected thus understood. The existence is only acknowledged by the effects seen on visible, detectable matter and energy. Like the autistic child hunched over in a corner with his/her hands pressed tightly against their ears and banging their head against the wall, an observing mental health professional might understand there is something going on there, but can't understand the actual internal feelings of the child. It should be understood that not understanding does not mean it is invalid. It should never be assumed that they suffer from a disorder to be corrected. It is not a disorder for an NT person to experience the same sort of sensory torture if their toes were being pounded with a sledge hammer. Yes, that experience is physically real, but so is the experience of the autistic's torture of whatever their sensitivity is. The brain is a physical organ. Excess anxiety can cause permanent, traumatic damage. The difference, however, between ones toes and ones brain is that the brain is much closer to home.

If you are suffering the pain of being burned by a hot poker, the proper action is not to find a treatment to reduce the pain; the proper action is to remove the hot poker. This is why I feel it is cruel to dismiss autistic anxieties as a disorder because it is different from the NT's view of normal.

Autistic differences of perception can also be a benefit. It is believed that autism is a genetically natural occurrence in a percentage of the population of human, and likely other, species. It helps to broaden the species perception of the universe; beyond what can be understood by the simple majority. For example, many of our famous inventors and scientists are autistic, including Albert Einstein, Issac Newton, Michelangelo, Carl Sagan, Charles Darwin, Barbara McClintock, Elon Musk plus many, many more. Autism was a major benefit in my career as an electronics design engineer. I was unable to attend college due to my crippling social anxiety, but due to my obsession with electronics self-study, my designs were considered appealingly innovative. The innovations were simply from that different, autistic perspective. It was my autistic obsessions and “innovations” that advanced my career in spite of not having a college degree.

My sensitivities affected by physical exams at a doctor’s office: (Please see **Sensitivities** above.)

- Being touched. It takes a lot of effort to not jerk away or show my feeling of panic when being touched.
- Any tests that are affected by anxiety; such as blood pressure. Seeing a blood-pressure cuff induces a feeling of chills-up-the-spine, panic pumping massive adrenaline. My normal blood-pressure, cannot and has never been, recorded in any medical office.
- Being examined makes me feel like I am a specimen of livestock; as if I am not the owner of myself. I feel I am being tested to find fault – to expose my deficiencies and failings for judgment at the most personal level.
- I am very thin-skinned, both emotionally and physically. Feeling stereotyped is traumatically painful. Examples include the assumption that since I am a type-1 diabetic then I must have hyperglycemia, thus I must have diabetic neuropathy, etc. The eager and extensive testing efforts to “prove” these stereotypes are very insulting and hurtful. Makes me feel that I am not trusted to control my metabolism to non-diabetic normal levels – even as my blood-work indicates I do. Makes me feel that I am not trusted to be able to care for myself or that my personal health interest should not be up to me – that my health does not belong to me.

I understand that these feelings and perceptions are probably not the medical professional’s intent. However, understanding that does not reduce the pain and trauma by any measure.

Some Other Common Autistic Traits that cause misunderstandings:

Expressions, tone and mannerisms are a major part of communications for NT's. In Autistic's; expressions, tone and mannerisms are neurologically disconnected causing internal feelings to not be reflected in facial expressions, tone or mannerisms. An NT reads the autistic's expressions, tone and mannerisms, which are not in sync with what they are saying or feeling. This results in frustrating misunderstandings. Most autistics eventually learn how to make facial expressions, tone and mannerisms that go with the particular situation. However, that is a blind, complex multitasking effort and is never perfectly executed. It is not automatic and requires exhausting effort. That is called masking. Likewise, autistic's are very poor at reading another persons emotions by their expressions and mannerisms. That is called face blindness. This makes an autistic person feel apprehension even before speaking because of the negative reactions they are so used to even with the most diligent masking efforts.

Autistic's have a very high mental "Noise Floor". On average, at rest, an autistic's brain is 41% more active than an NT. The activity is generally a mix of current senses and thoughts mixed with past senses and experiences. Everything is in the foreground making it hard to separate past experiences with current ones.

This letter only covers a minuscule fraction of the subject of autism. My intent is to convey enough understanding as to make you aware of my sensitivities so as to lessen the trauma of my visits.

Best Regards,

Ken Thomas