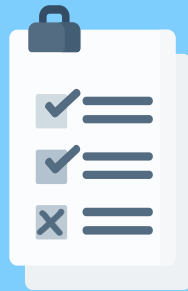




AUTISTIC STRENGTHS

Sarah C. Wayland, Ph.D.

RDI® Consultant
Special Needs Care Navigator
Parent Coach



CAVEAT

These are POSSIBLE strengths. Not every autistic person will have each of the characteristics described.

1. SENSORY

**Vision, Hearing, Smell, Taste, Touch, Proprioception,
Movement & Balance**

7

Sensory Gifts

 <p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice details • Recognize objects more easily. 	 <p>Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute pitch • Discriminate between sounds. • Track multiple sounds. 	 <p>Smell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking • Eating • Drinking • Environmental changes 	 <p>Taste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking • Eating • Drinking • Mineral identification
 <p>Touch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textures • Consistency 	 <p>Proprioception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How parts of your body are positioned. • How to move. 	 <p>Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion • Climbing • Heights 	

8

2. COGNITION

Memory, Associative Thinking, Attention, Analytical Thinking, Systematizing

9

Cognitive Strengths

Memory

Ability to remember detailed information in areas of interest.

- Dates
- Schedules
- Sports Statistics
- History
- etc.

Associative Thinking

Unexpected associations

- Creativity in art
- Explaining data in science

Attention

- Narrow & intense focus
- Much less distractible
- Ability to notice details

Analytical Thinking

- Methodical
- Logically consistent
- Unconstrained by expectations
- Less bias
- Prioritize logic over emotion

10



Cognitive Strength


System(at)izing

Bottom-up thinkers who analyze detailed information and construct systems to make sense of it.

- Organize
- Categorize
- Discover law-based patterns

11


Types of Systematizing



Visual

Love figuring out how things work


- Think in pictures
- Learn when manipulating objects



Verbal

Fascinated by language

- Study words, literature, and speech
- Good at learning languages



Creative

Unique thought processes

- Extraordinary imaginations
- Express novel ideas in surprising ways

A drive to experience novel forms of complexity.

12

3. INTENSE INTERESTS

Curiosity, Desire to Learn, Intense Focus, Deep Understanding, Self-Directed

13

In areas of intense interest

- ▷ Intense curiosity
- ▷ Intense ability to focus
- ▷ Deep desire to learn
- ▷ Self-directed

... so can become highly skilled.

14

4. CONSISTENCY

Schedules, Rules, Processes, Work Quality

15

Consistency

<p>Schedules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punctual• Reliable• Once schedule is in place, will follow every time.	<p>Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants to follow rules• Wants others to follow rules too
<p>Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows protocol to the letter• Ensures no steps are missed• Excellent for jobs that require rigid adherence to a protocol	<p>Work Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aims to do job as learned

Referee
Air Traffic Controller
Nuclear Reactor Operator

16

5. COMMUNICATION STYLE

Emotionally Attuned, Empathetic, Just & Fair, Less Hierarchical, Less Susceptible to Peer Pressure, Thoughtful, Straightforward

17

Communication Style

- Emotionally attuned
- Empathic
- Straightforward
- Less hierarchical
- Less susceptible to peer pressure
- Thoughtful
- Just and fair

19

6. HUMOR

Wordplay, Dark Humor, Sarcasm, Flat Affect, Violates Expectations, Irreverence

20

Types of Humor

Words

Wordplay

- Puns
- Deliberate mispronunciations
- Spoonerisms
- Ambiguity
- Reversing portmanteaus
- Saying words backwards



Satire

Wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or folly.



Sarcasm

Saying things that are clearly untrue as a way of spotlighting logical fallacies.



Deadpan Delivery

Deliberate use of flat affect to make it less clear that they are being provocative.



Violating Expectations

Inserting information that is deliberately out-of-place in that context.



Irreverence

Harmless humor that pokes fun at people or things that are generally taken seriously.

21

7. GRIT

Resilience, Perseverance, Strong Work Ethic,
Courageous

22

STRONG DESIRE TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE
IN A WORLD NOT BUILT FOR THEM

Perseverance

Even when situations are incredibly challenging, autistic people keep working to find strategies that will work.

Resilience

When treated poorly, autistic people figure out how to keep going.

Strong Work Ethic

Autistic people want to contribute, and want to do well. If they can play to their strengths and get support for their challenges, they can be amazing students, employees, and community members.

Courageous

The cost of this work to fit in and contribute cannot be understated. Autistic people must work incredibly, often with very little support, to live their lives.

Grit

23