

Examples of questions related to social interactions:

- How does it feel to talk with people generally? When is it comfortable and when isn't it?
 - Do you do better one-to-one or in smaller or larger groups?
 - Who do you like to talk to, and what do you talk about?
 - Do people ever tell you that you don't listen? Or that you interrupt? Or that you talk too much? Or that you are too quiet?
 - Do you feel that there is a "cost" to socializing for you?
 - Does it ever feel like other people have a built-in manual for how to handle social interaction that you somehow missed out on? (While this is a fairly specific question, it reflects a very common feeling autistics have.)
 - Have you gotten feedback from other people about your style of interacting? If so, what was it? Did it resonate with you? Did it come from one person or multiple people?
- Do you try to figure out the implicit (or unstated) rules of interactions? What happens if you can't figure out the rules?
- Have you noticed a pattern of difficulty connecting with other people? If so, can you help me understand the pattern?
- Do you find yourself wondering why we follow some social norms, or do you find social norms annoying or illogical?
- What were your parents' stories about you? (From Dr. Theresa Regan)
- How would you know if someone likes you, wants to interact with you? (This could also fit in the nonverbal communication section, depending on the client's response)

Examples of questions related to nonverbal communication:

- Has anyone ever commented about the way you talk or move your body?
- Have you noticed anything about how you use your voice, hands, face, or other parts of your body during conversation?
- Have you ever been told that you don't look people in the eye, or have you ever had trouble looking people in the eye? Does making direct eye contact with someone feel natural to you? Do you look at their eyes or at another spot, like between their eyes?
- Do people find you "hard to read" or have they commented that you don't show your emotions?
- Do you find it "hard to read" other people?
- Are you particularly sensitive to what other people are thinking or

Feeling?

Examples of questions related to relationships:

- Do other people seem to need more social connection than you?
- Have you ever had problems getting along with people? How do you handle conflict?
- Do you have some friends? (As in the parent interview, ask your client to “name names” as they talk about their friends, so that you can build your friendship map and compare their perceptions to others’ observations of their friendships.)
- Describe your friendships, e.g., How did you meet? How often do you connect? What do you have in common?
- How satisfied are you with the relationships in your life?
- Have you ever felt pressured to want or have more friends?

Examples of questions related to camouflaging:

While camouflaging is not part of the diagnostic criteria, understanding a client’s camouflaging will give you insight into their experience of social interactions, and as such it merits its own section.

- Can you tell me about a time when your outer behavior did not match your inner experience? How frequently does this happen? In what circumstances?

- Do you ever use a script or a plan when navigating a social situation? Do you find it helpful or even necessary to rehearse what will

happen ahead of time?

- Have you ever studied or copied other people – either people you know or characters from TV/movies – to get through social situations?
- When or with whom can you completely be yourself ?
- When do you use a script to navigate a social interaction? What would it look like and feel like if you didn’t use that script?
- Are there behaviors that you force yourself to do or not to do in front of others?

- Are you camouflaging now? How would you look and feel differently if you weren’t?

Examples of questions related to repetitive behaviors/
stimming:

- What kinds of things do you do when you are stressed or excited?

How about when you were younger?

- Do you do or say anything over and over again, like a certain movement, song, word or phrase, or activity? Did you do this when you

were younger?

- Have you ever watched the same show/movie, read the same book, or listened to the same song over and over and over again?
- Have you ever made lists or spreadsheets, either more frequently or more extensively than most people, or for the sheer joy of making them?
- Has anyone ever told you that your behavior or speech patterns were odd? If so, whom, when, and why?
- Note: I often give multiple examples for this category, such as

picking, pacing, making unnecessary but enjoyable lists or spreadsheets repeatedly, etc. (See the chapter on repetitive behaviors in *Is*

This Autism? A Guide for Clinicians and Everyone Else.)

Examples of questions related to flexibility:

- How do you feel and what does your body do when things don't go as you expected, wanted, or had planned?
- How do you feel and what does your body do when you go somewhere new, start a new activity, or meet new people?
- How do you prepare for or cope with something new?
- Have other people ever called you very stubborn or even rigid?
- Do you sometimes get stuck on thoughts, perceptions, or activities?
- Do you feel strongly about morals/justice/fairness/following the rules?
- Do you try to do everything exactly right/perfectly?
- Do you make puns? Do you hear double-meanings in things others say and riff on them? Even to the point of annoying others? Do you frequently point out ambiguity, even if you understand it?

Examples of questions related to interests:

- What are your interests? Are there things you really love to do, to think about, or to research? Can you reflect back on your childhood interests?

- Are you an expert at anything?
- Do/did you have a hard time transitioning away from these interests to other tasks/activities?
- Have you ever been told that you engage in a particular activity or talk about a particular topic too much? Has anyone ever said that you have obsessions?
- Describe what it is like when you get interested in something. Does it affect your eating, sleeping, ability to work, or interactions with Others?

Examples of questions related to sensory experiences:

- Do you have any sensory sensitivities or interests?
- Do you find it hard to focus when it's noisy? Do you get agitated when there is more than one sound going on at once?
- Are you bothered by: perfume or other smells? textures? human contact? How do you cope with this? (You may want to substitute items or add to this list, based on what you have learned about the client's sensory experiences before you ask this question.)
- Do you find yourself drawn to particular tastes, smells, textures, sounds, sights, or movements?
- Are there certain experiences that make you feel overwhelmed? Do you need to leave certain situations? Which ones?
- Are you prone to shutting down? What causes you to shut down?
- How is your pain tolerance? Do you have any examples of it being particularly high or low?
- Do you get hungry or thirsty very much? How does your body feel when you are hungry or thirsty?
- How does your body feel when you're happy/anxious/angry/etc.?
- Do you notice details, changes, movements, etc., that most people miss?, e.g., changes in temperature, a different kind of light bulb, or a slight change in the scent of your favorite brand of shampoo?
- Have you ever felt or been called clumsy? Have you frequently gotten carsick or dizzy? Have you frequently tripped or fallen?
- Have you been accused of being overly sensitive? When do people say this?