

Decoding AuDHD

A Playbook for
Understanding and Empowering



Hi there! I'm Rachel!
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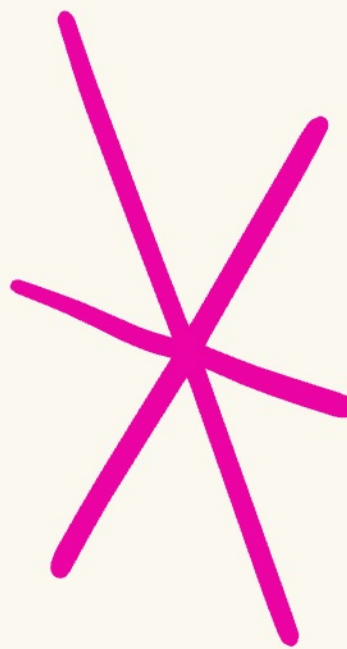
[Rachelfeldmanlcsw](https://www.instagram.com/Rachelfeldmanlcsw)



[AuDHD Presentation 1](#)



Disclosure





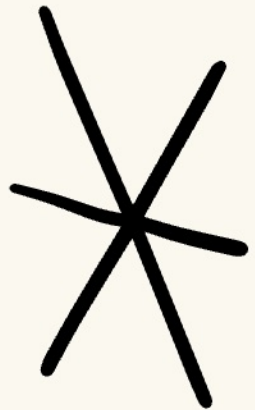
Objectives

- 
- 1** Different, not deficient
 - 2** How to think about trait presentation
 - 3** Areas of overlap between ADHD & Autism
 - 4** Understanding = advocacy & acceptance

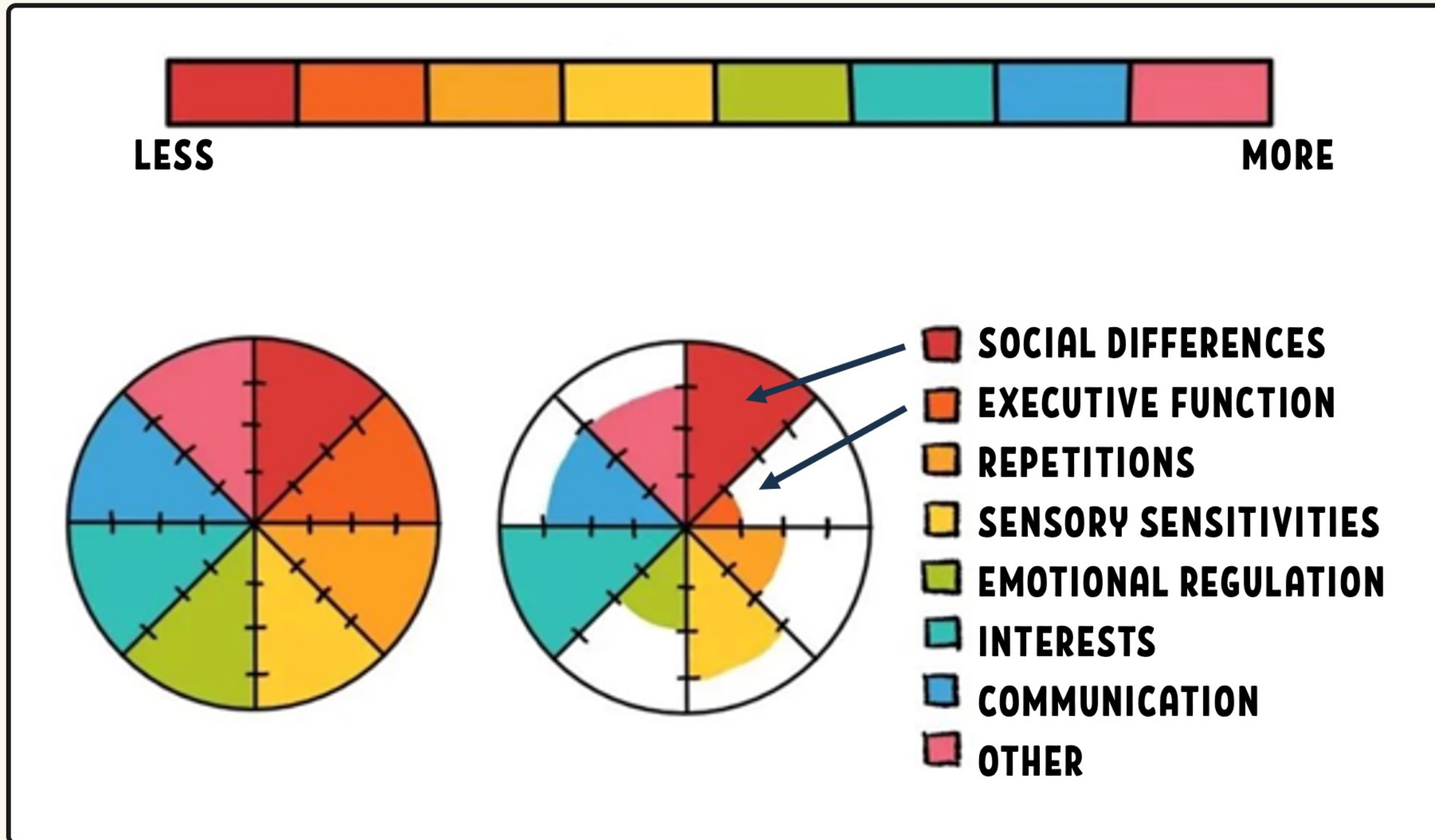


Agenda

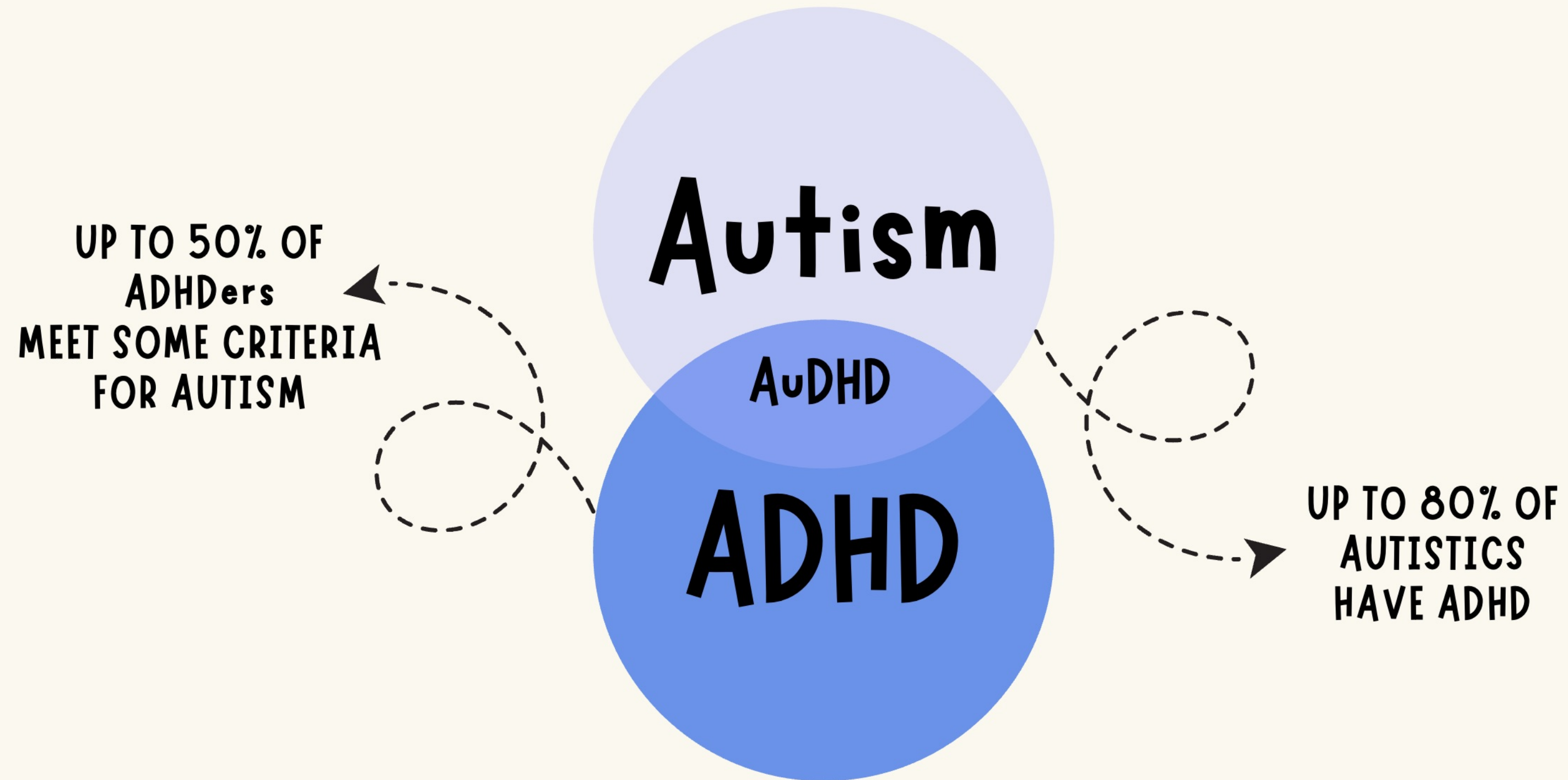
- 1** Overview of AuDHD
- 2** ADHD & Autism
Overlapping traits
- 3** The Impact of highlighted traits
 - Executive Functioning
 - Sensory Processing
 - Emotional Dysregulation
 - Socialization/Communication
- 4** Q&A



Spectrums

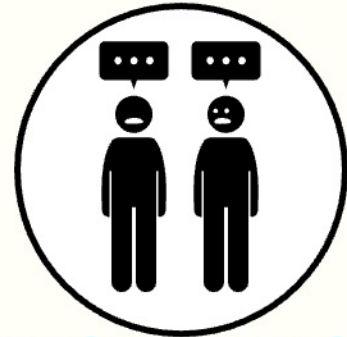


What is AuDHD?

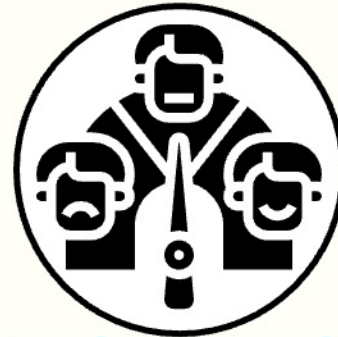


AuDHD Overview*

Autism
+
ADHD



**** Differences in
Social emotional reciprocity**
Mind seemingly elsewhere
during communication



**** Differences in
Nonverbal social behaviors**



**** Differences in
Neurotypical
social relationships**



**A drive to plan and organize,
And difficulty following
through due to overwhelm**



**Preference for sameness and
predictability
Which can spontaneously change**



**Challenges in daily functioning
And forgetful in daily activities**



**Attention to detail
And prone to mistakes**



**Severe sensory sensitivities
And a need for stimulation**



**Finds special interests soothing,
And alternates between
interests**

*This list is not exhaustive
**Considered different in
comparison to neurotypical
societal expectations.

1

What is AuDHD?

AuDHD Contradictions

ADHD

THRIVES IN FLEXIBILITY
EASILY UNDERSTIMULATED
SEEKING CONNECTION
CAREFUL PLANNING
WIDE VARIETY OF INTERESTS

AUTISM

THRIVES ON ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE
EASILY OVERSTIMULATED
EXHAUSTED BY SOCIALIZING
IMPULSIVE DECISIONS
SPECIFIC INTERESTS

What is does AuDHD feel like?



The Irritated Autie7 
@AutieAdorableMC

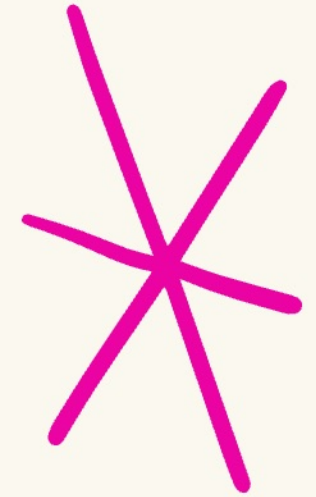
Sometimes I think it's impossible to differentiate ADHD from Autism but then I realize things like pedanticism, truth-pain, excessive honesty, a need for certainty aren't ADHD traits.

It's like ADHD is in charge of my reward circuits, whereas Autism is my philosophy of being.

23:42 · 08 Oct 21 · [Twitter for Android](#)

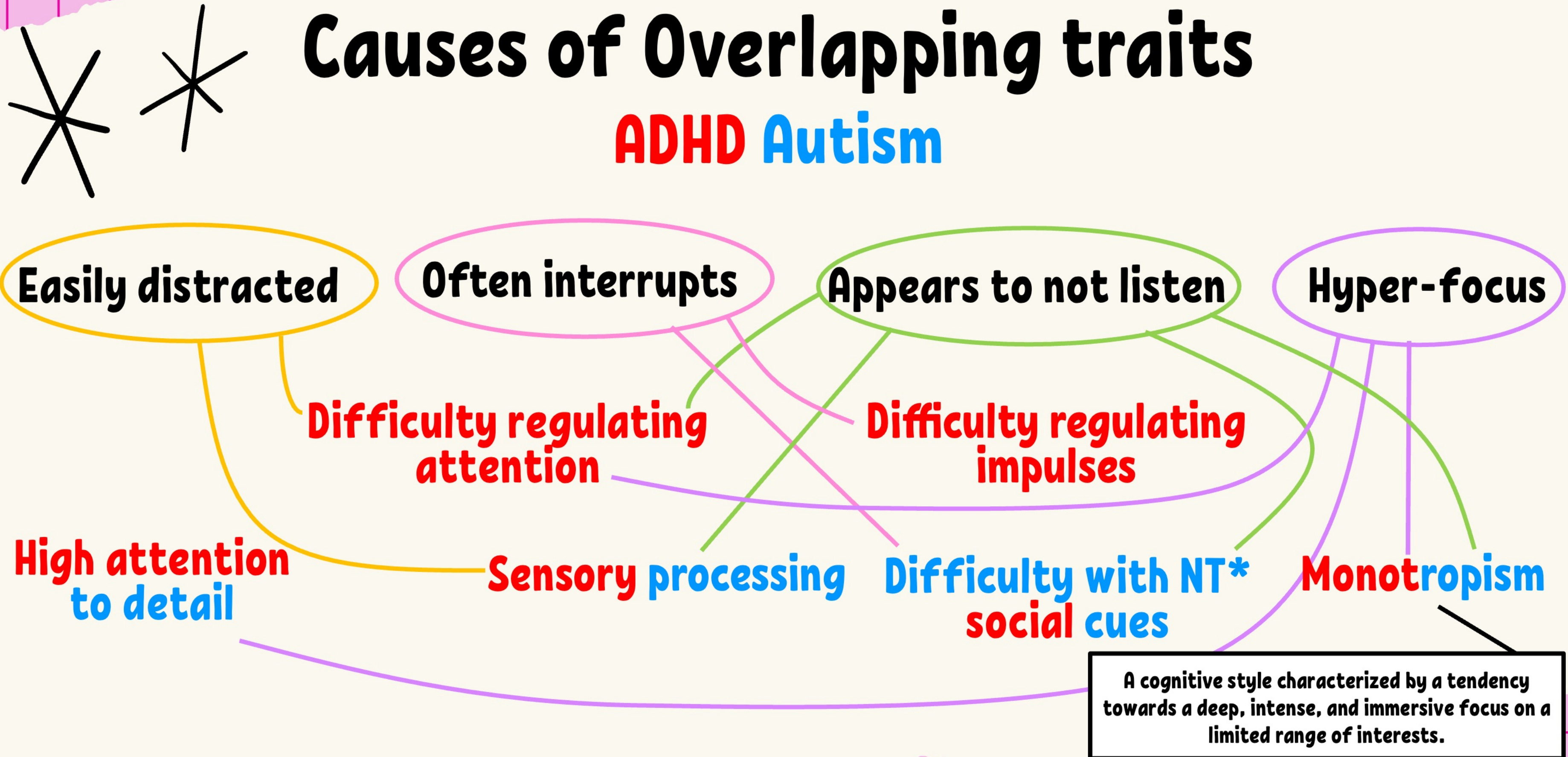


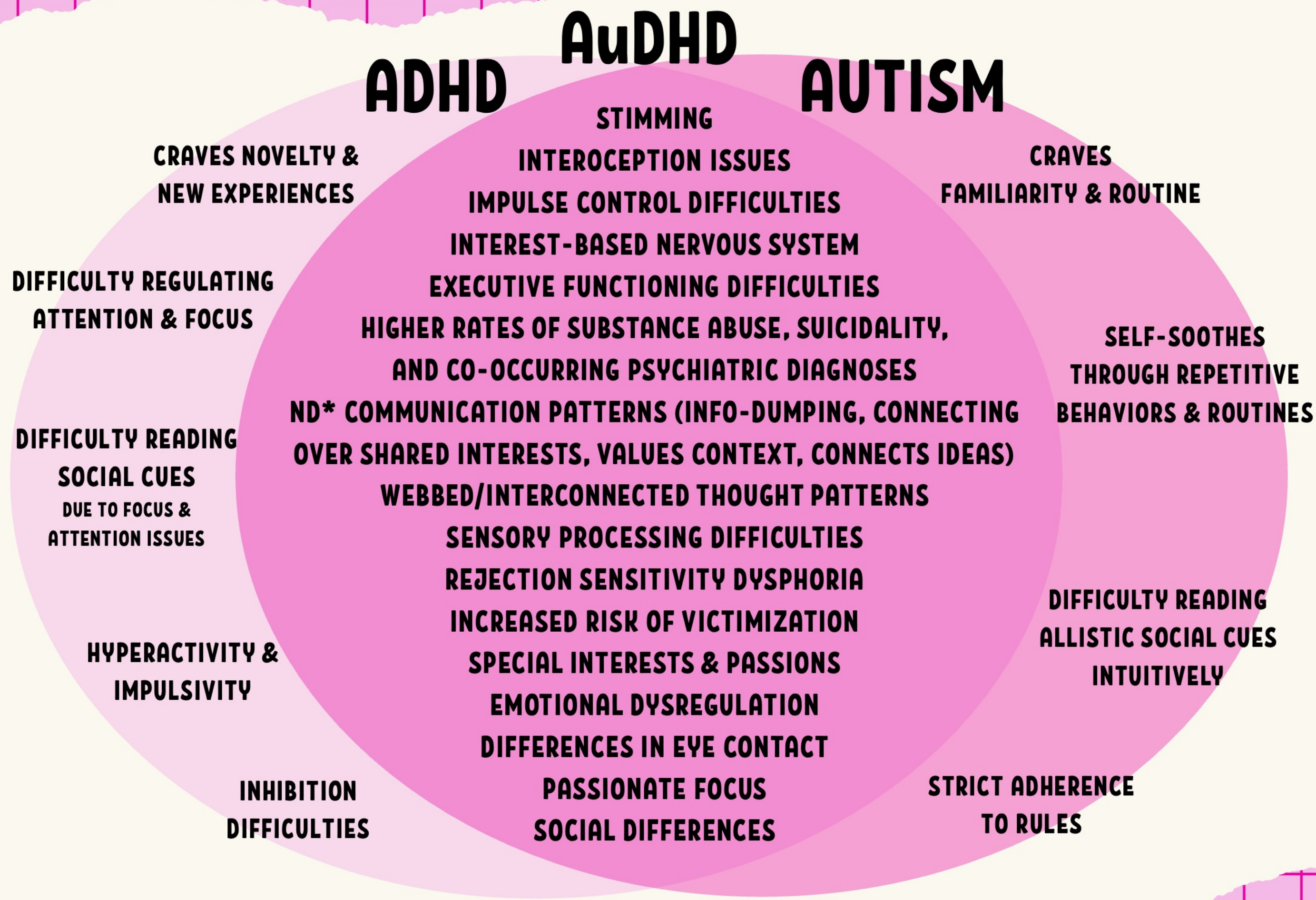
ADHD & Autism: Overlapping Traits



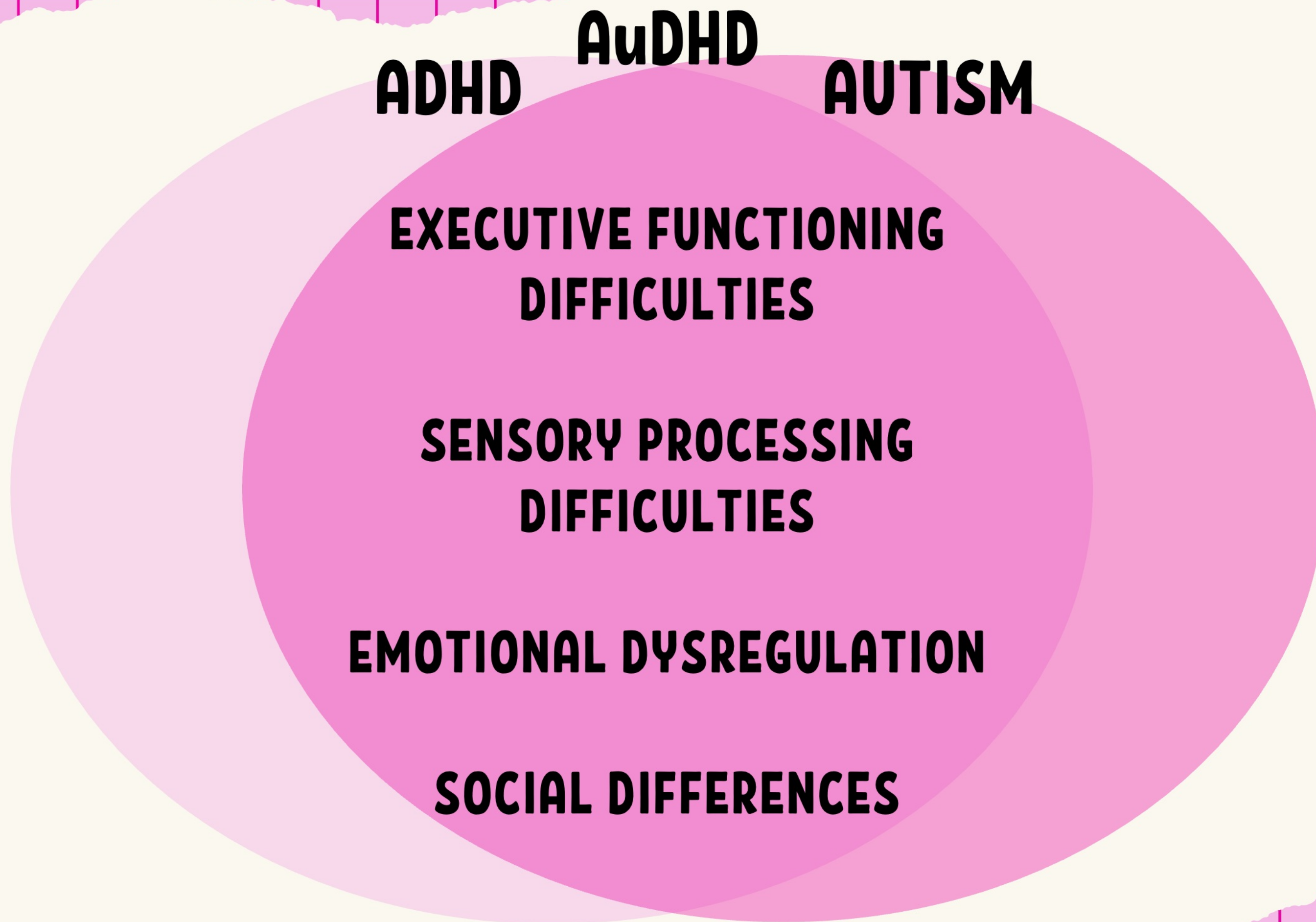
Causes of Overlapping traits

ADHD Autism

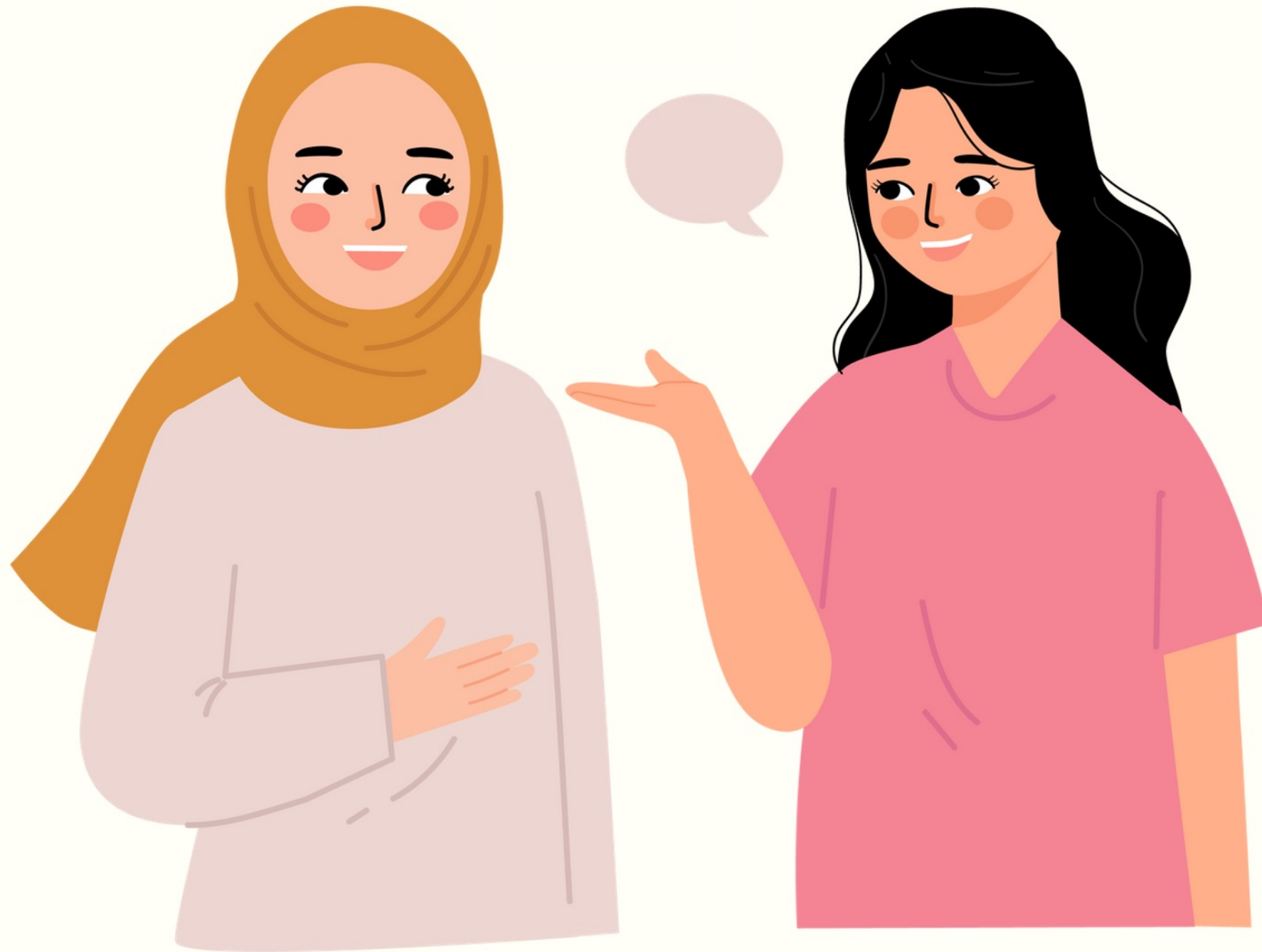




*ND: Neurodivergent



2 ADHD & Autism: Overlapping Traits



The Impact of *

Highlighted AuDHD Traits

Executive Functions, Sensory Processing,

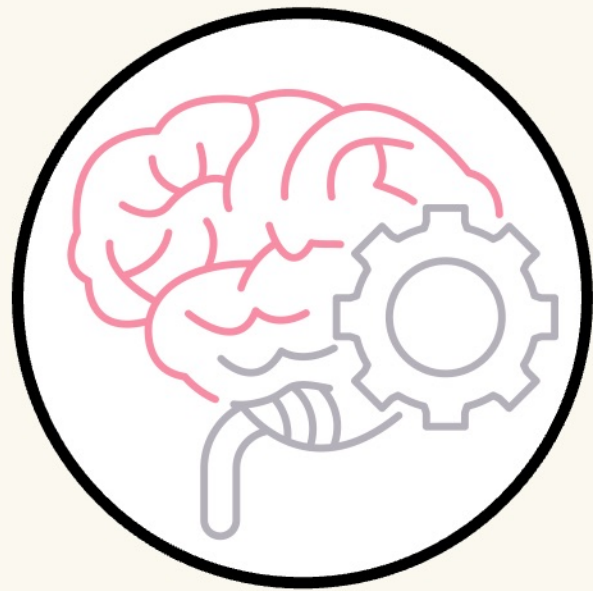
Emotional Dysregulation,

Socialization/Communication

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Executive Functions

The control center of the brain responsible for various cognitive processes



**Brain's control
center**



**3-4 year behind
development**



**Variable
difficulties**



**Challenges
impact life**

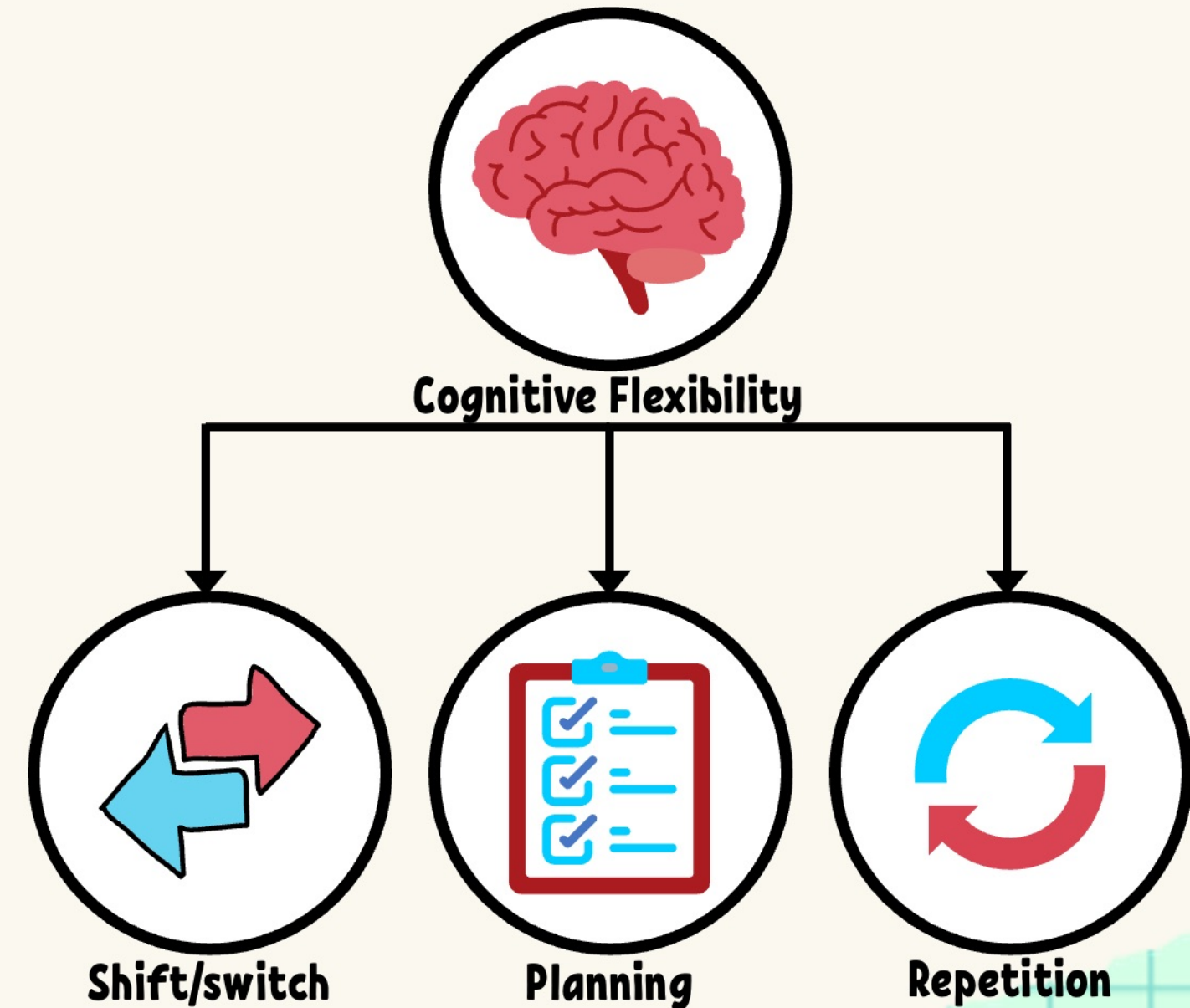
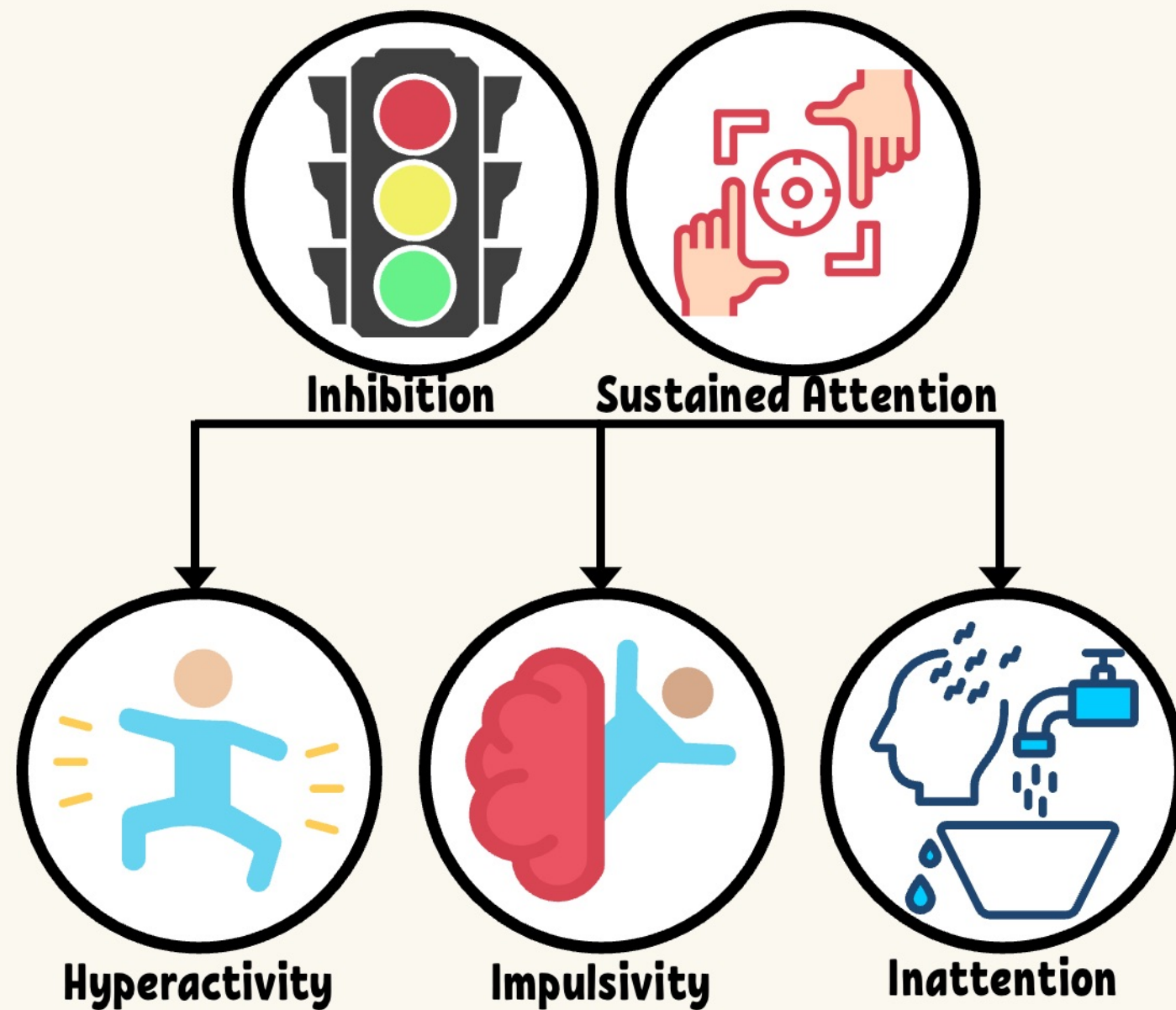
3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Executive Functions (EFs)

The control center of the brain responsible for various cognitive processes

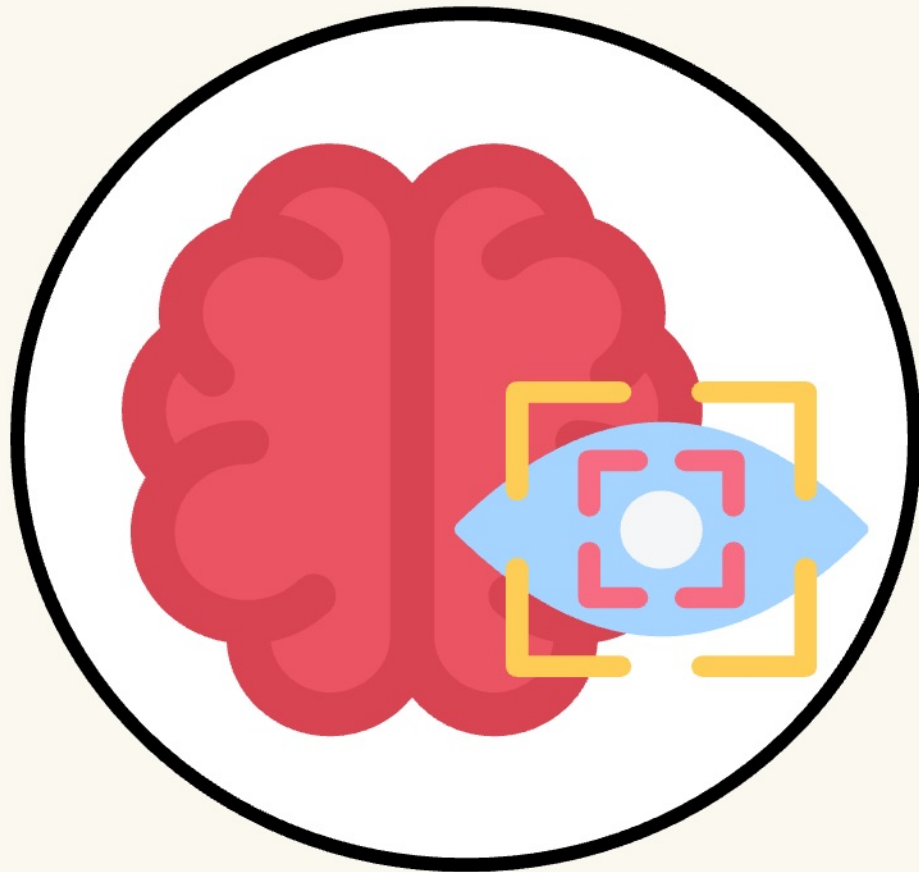
ADHD

Autism

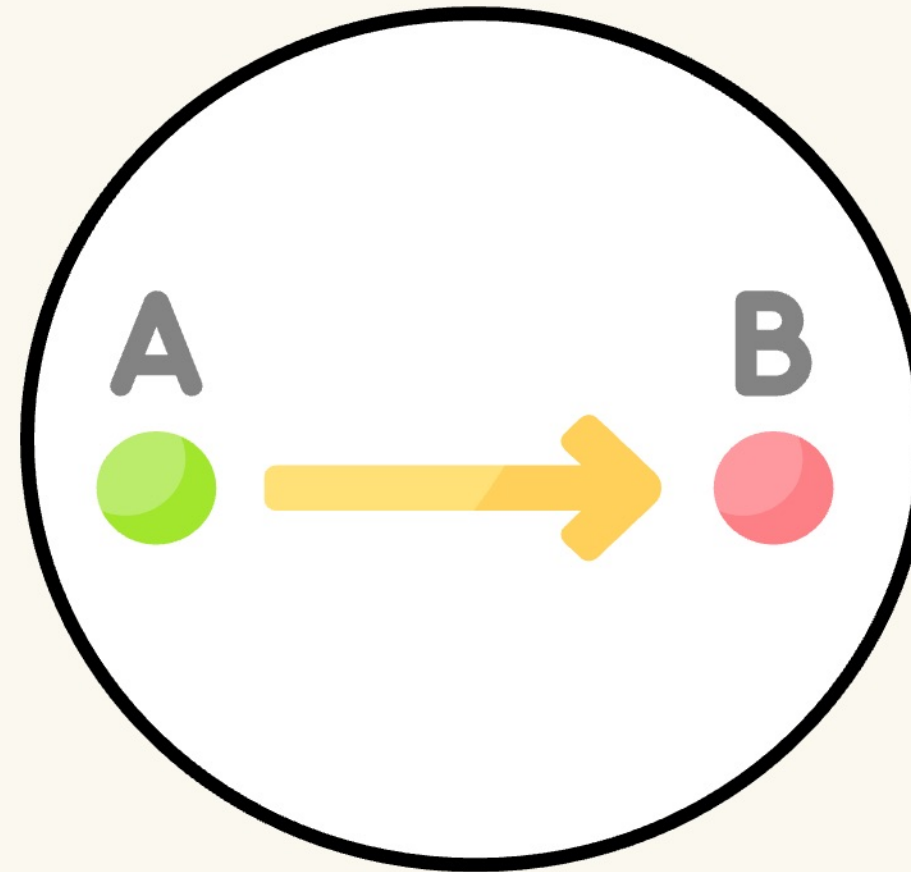


Executive Functions (EFs)

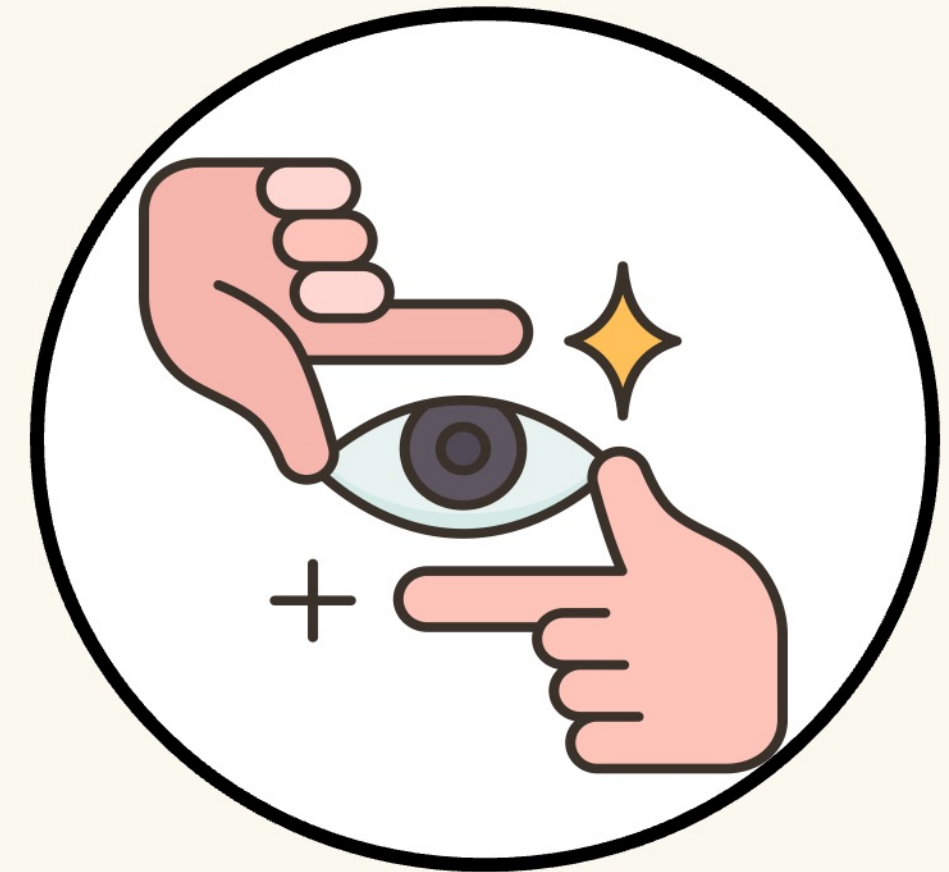
The control center of the brain responsible for various cognitive processes



**Regulating
attention**



**Transitioning
between tasks**



**Perspective
taking**

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SUPPORT TIPS

AuDHDer

1. Brain Dumping
2. Timers & External Cues
3. Visual Reminders & Checklists
4. Outsourcing & Automating Tasks
5. Personalized Strategies

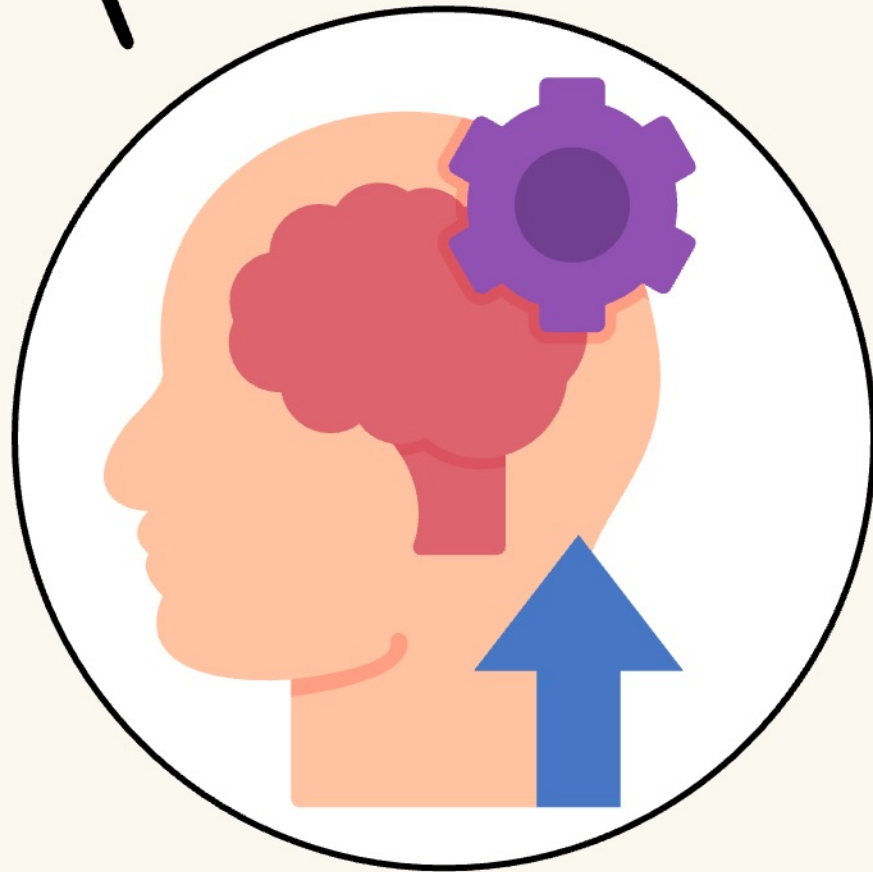
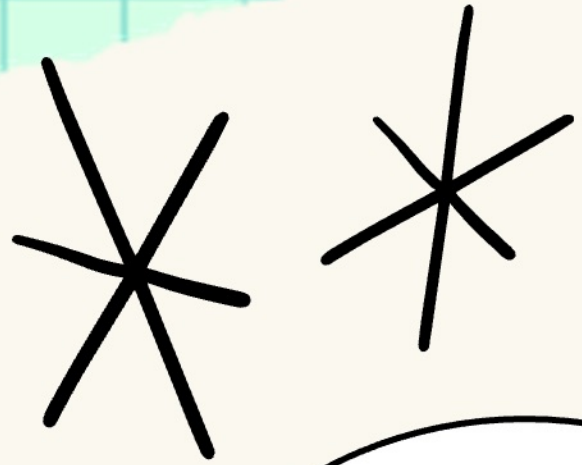
AuDHD ally

1. Reducing Cognitive Load
2. Support \neq Infantilization
3. Collaborative Support

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Sensory Processing

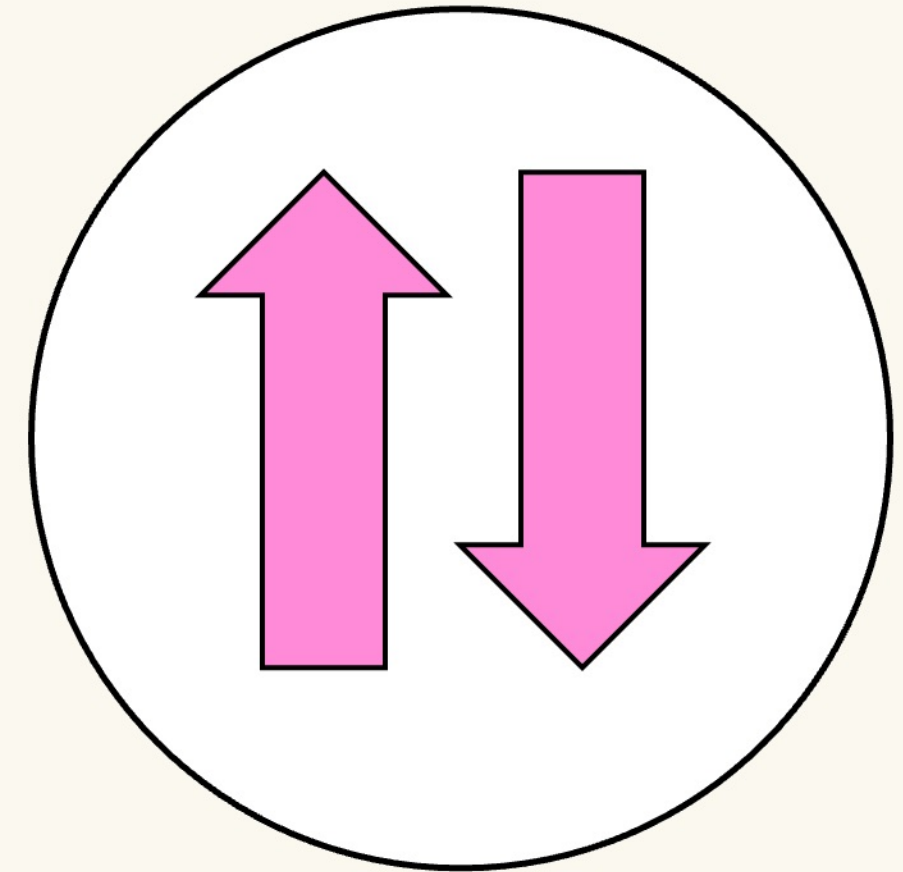
The brain's ability to filter sensory information and send messages of how to respond accordingly



Bottom Up Processing



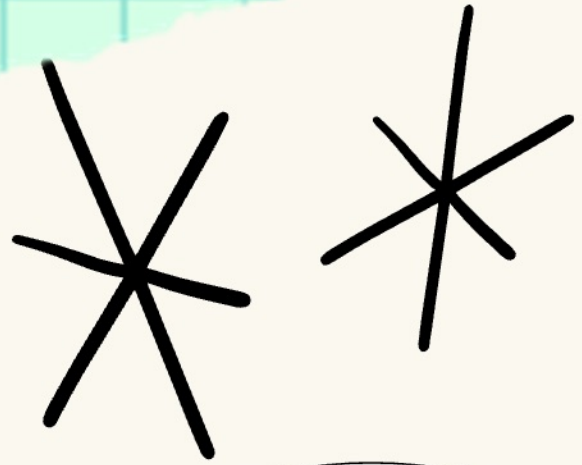
Reticular Activating System (RAS) Filtering system



Hyper/Hypo Responsive

Sensory Processing

The brain's ability to filter sensory information and send messages of how to respond accordingly



Clumsiness



High pain tolerance



Sensory aversions

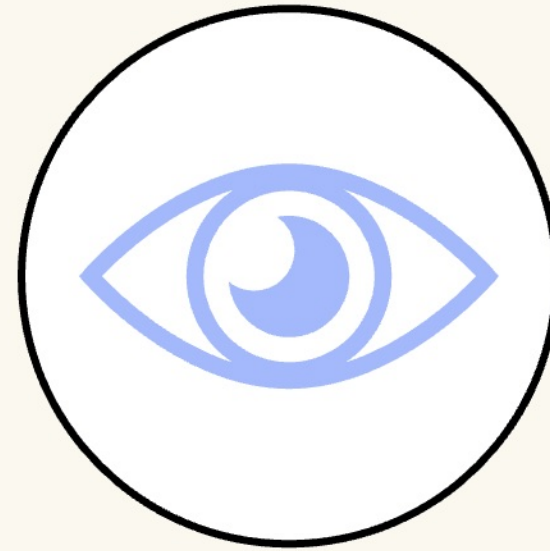
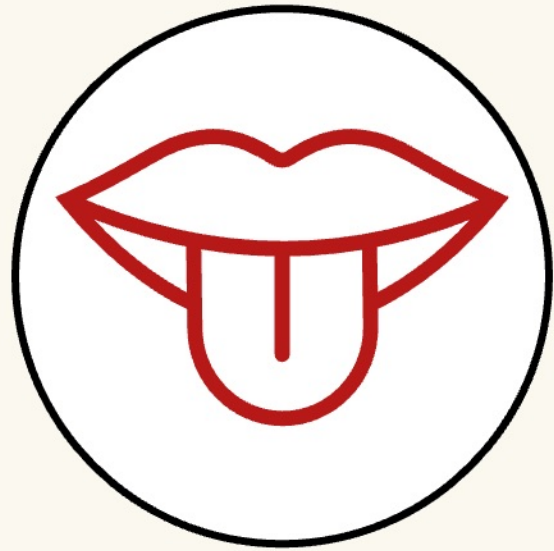


Car sickness

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Sensory Processing

The brain's ability to filter sensory information and send messages of how to respond accordingly



Vestibular



Proprioception



Interception

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

SENSORY SUPPORT TIPS

AuDHDer

- 1. Know Your Sensory Profile**
- 2. Sensory Regulation = Foundation**
- 3. Develop a Sensory Safety Plan**
- 4. Use Sensory Journals & Checklists**
- 5. Have an Exit Strategy**

AuDHD ally

- 1. Be Aware of Sensory Inputs**
- 2. Encourage Sensory Tools**
- 3. Normalize & Respect Stimming**
- 4. Educate & Advocate**
- 5. Respect Individual Sensory Needs**

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Difficulty controlling
emotions and how you
respond to those
emotions

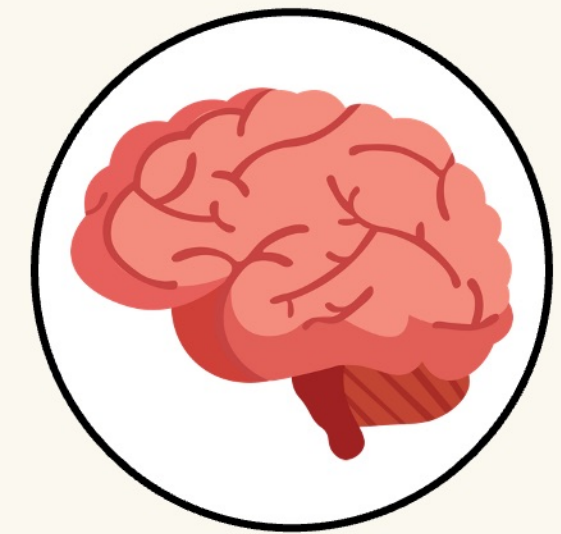
Causes of Emotional Dysregulation



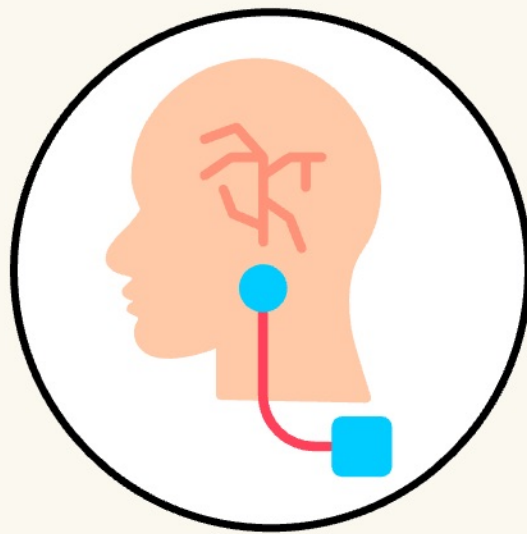
3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Difficulty controlling emotions and how you respond to those emotions

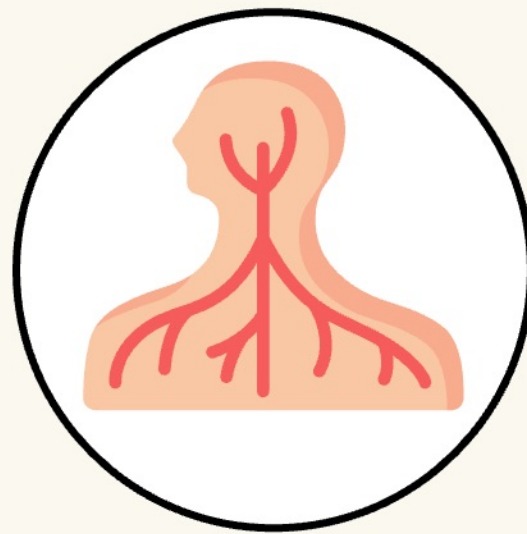
Causes of Emotional Dysregulation



Sensitive amygdala



Low vagal tone



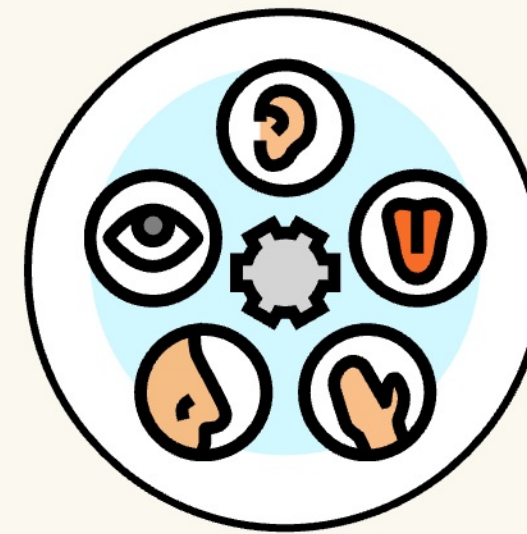
Rigid nervous system



Interoception Difficulties



Executive Functioning



Sensory Processing

Alexithymia: difficulty identifying and naming emotions in the self

Impact of Emotional Dysregulation on Relationships



**More emotional
dysregulation**

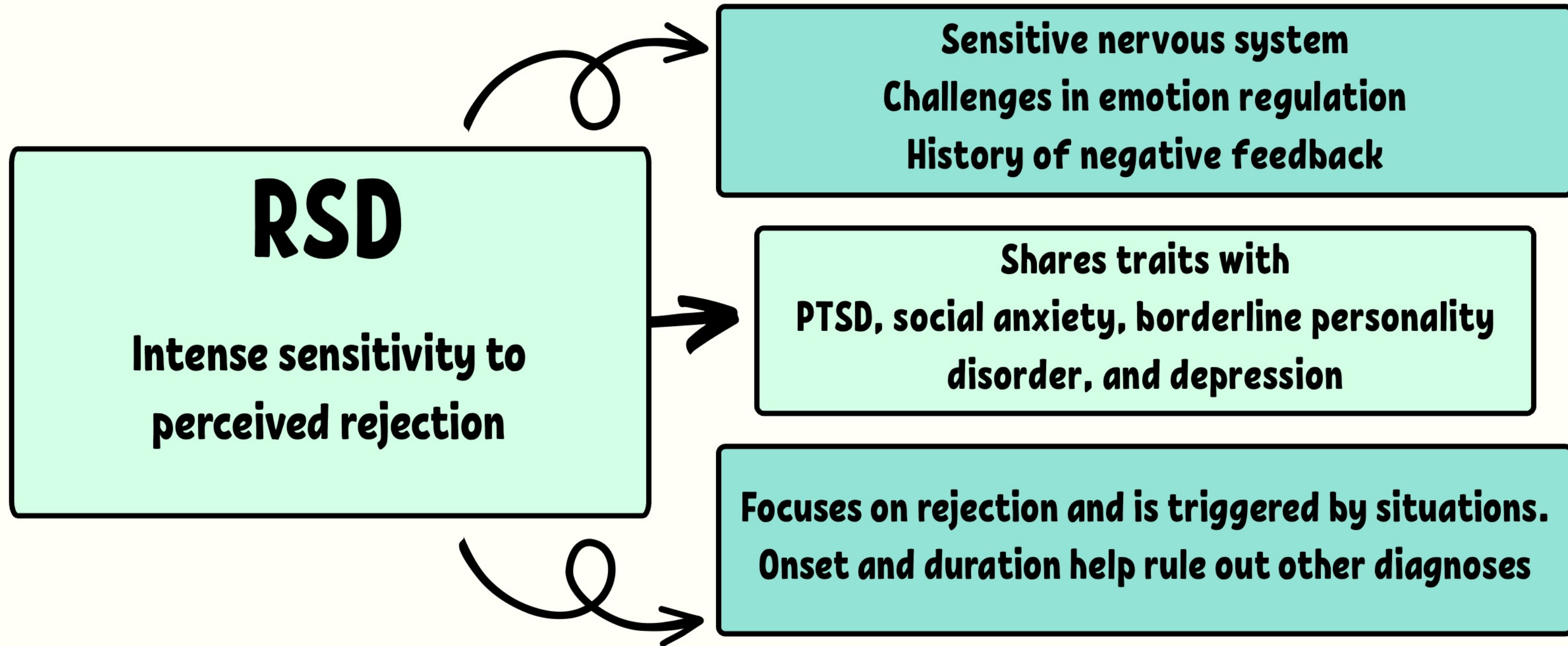


**Meltdowns and
panic attacks**



Miscommunication

* Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)



The Impact of RSD



Intensified Emotional Responses



Social Anxiety and Avoidance



Camouflage

Camouflaging: changing or concealing one's natural personality to fit in or be perceived as neurotypical.



Relationships



Physical Symptoms



Cognitive Distortions



Self-Esteem and Identity

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TIPS

AuDHDer

1. **Affect Labeling Supports Emotional Regulation**
2. **Develop Emotional Awareness**
3. **Use Visual & Written Tools**
4. **Practice Mindfulness & Seek Support**

AuDHD ally

1. **Avoid Direct Questions About Emotions**
2. **Support Emotional Safety Through Autonomy**
3. **Use Non-Verbal & Alternative Communication**

✱ Social Myths: Social Connection

**Autistic people don't
want social connection**

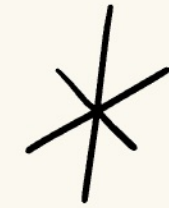


False

**Autistic people desire social
connection and struggle to achieve it**



True





Social Myths: Empathy

Autistic people don't experience empathy



False

Alexithymia: difficulty identifying and naming emotions in the self

**Double empathy problem:
Easier to empathize with people like you than to people unlike you**

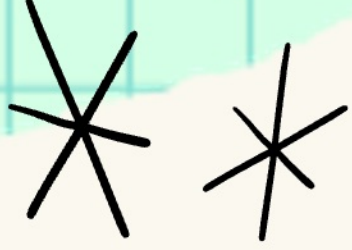
Autistic people can experience hyper-emotional empathy



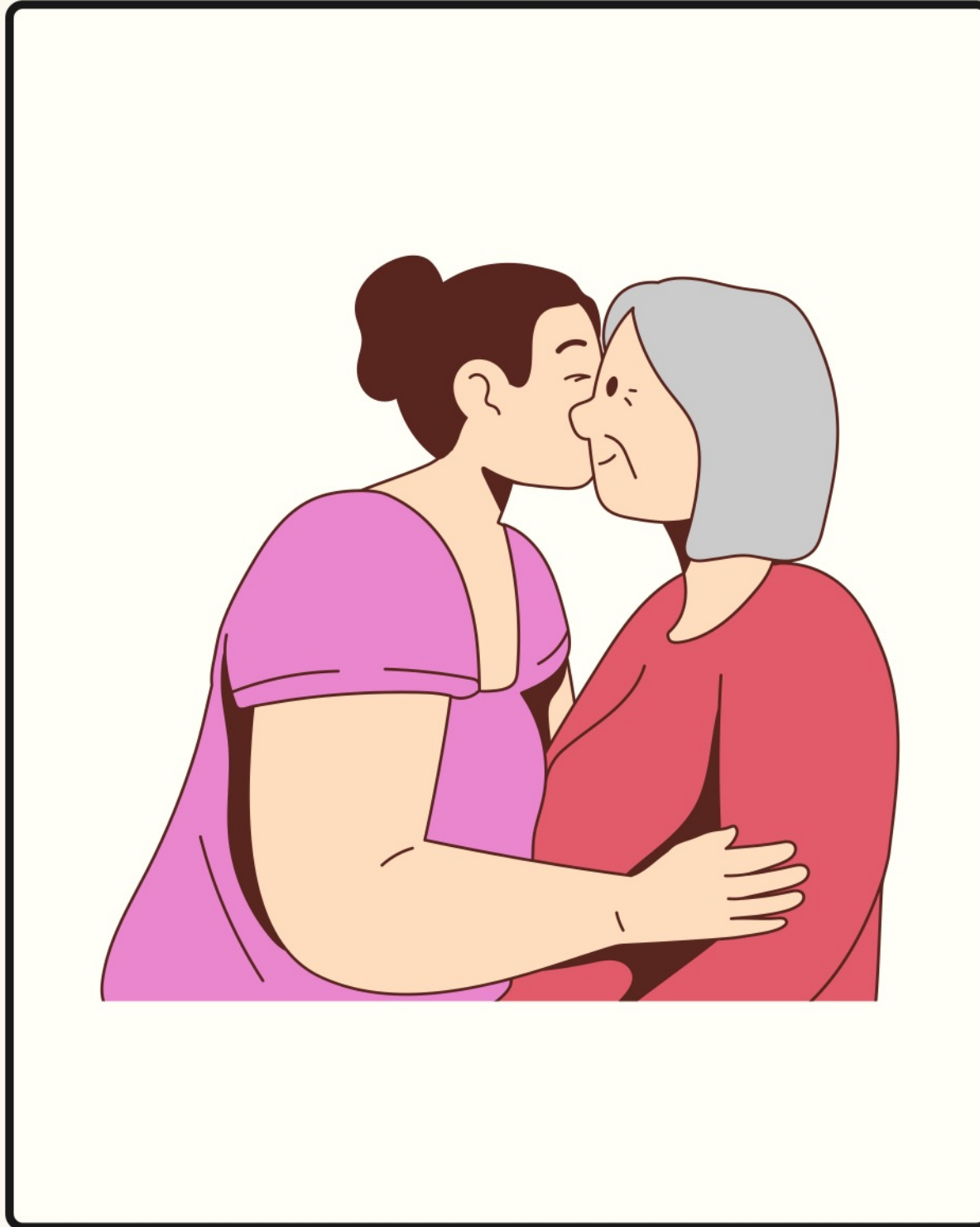
True

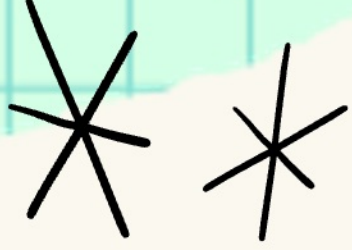


3 The Impact of highlighted traits



Cultural differences





Social Cultural Differences



**Different
communication styles**



**Less focus on social
norms**



Greater acceptance

Social Differences



ADHD


Inattention/difficulty
sustaining focus in
conversations
Missing social signals due to
inattention
Distraction during
conversations
Impulsivity (interrupting
others)
A tendency to go on
"tangents"

AuDHD

Negative judgement from
neurotypical peers
Inhibition and impulsivity
Attention differences
Missing certain social cues
Time spent
concentrating/thinking
instead of having fun

AUTISM

Picking up on social cues/body
language
Understanding subtext
Literal/visual interpreter of
communication
Difficulty with multitasking
Social chit-chat = a sensory
demand
Less social motivation due to a
high need for autonomy/alone
time



3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Camouflage

The process of changing or concealing one's natural personality in order to "fit in", or to be perceived as neurotypical.



The desire to fit in



**Increase connections
with others**

*ND: Neurodivergent

** : Neurotypical

Source: (Neff, 2024; Silverant, 2020)

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Camouflage

The process of changing or concealing one's natural personality in order to "fit in", or to be perceived as neurotypical.

Compensation

What: Strategies used (e.g., learning social scripts) to actively compensate for social differences.

How: Preparing social responses/scripts to better navigate social situations.

Masking

What: Strategies used to hide ND* traits or portray a NT** persona to appear more confident or socially adept.

How: Hiding/concealing ND traits.

Assimilation

What: Strategies used to completely change oneself to fit in.

How: Imitating others' behavior, interests, and even appearance.

*ND: Neurodivergent

** : Neurotypical

Source: (Neff, 2024; Silverant, 2020)

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

Consequences of Camouflaging

(Compensation, Masking, Assimilation)

Physical & mental exhaustion

Increased anxiety & stress

Negative impact on identity and
sense of self

Increased symptoms of
depression

Feel less accepted

Increased risk factor for
suicidality & self harm

Increase in mental health
challenges

Burn out

3 The Impact of highlighted traits

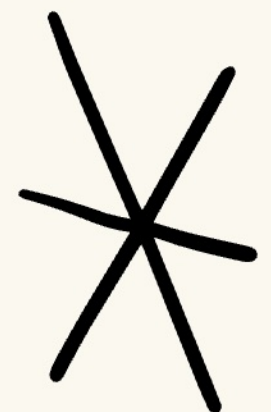
SOCIAL SUPPORT TIPS

AuDHDer

- 1. Connections Through Shared Interests**
- 2. Embrace Context-Heavy Communication**
- 3. Engage with AuDHD Culture & Community**

AuDHD ally

- 1. Respect Different Socialization Styles**
- 2. Prioritize Comfort & Autonomy**
- 3. Create Inclusive Social Spaces**



THANK YOU

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SLIDES



REFERENCES



RESOURCES



[Rachelfeldmanlcsw](https://www.instagram.com/Rachelfeldmanlcsw)



[AuDHD Presentation 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)