

Scripts for Supporting Autistic Girls

Building trust through understanding their unique experiences

Autistic girls often fly under the radar in our schools, working incredibly hard to appear 'typical' while managing intense internal struggles. They might seem socially capable on the surface but feel exhausted from constantly monitoring their behaviour, or appear academically successful whilst battling perfectionism that leaves them paralysed by fear of making mistakes.

These ready-to-use scripts acknowledge the particular ways autism presents in girls; the masking, the people-pleasing, the internalised anxiety - and offer language that validates their experiences rather than dismissing them. You can adapt these phrases to match your natural speaking style and the individual student's communication preferences, but the core message remains: her struggles are real, her needs matter, and she deserves support that truly sees her.

Implementation Tips

Match your tone:

Keep your voice calm and matter-of-fact. Autistic girls often pick up on emotional undertones and may shut down if they sense pity or false cheerfulness.

Be specific:

Vague reassurances like "everything will be fine" aren't helpful. Address the actual situation with concrete language.

Follow her lead:

If she needs space to process, respect that. If she wants to talk through details, listen without rushing to fix.

Stay consistent:

Use similar language across interactions so she knows what to expect from conversations with you.

Key Considerations

Remember that autistic girls often internalise their struggles and may appear to be coping when they're actually overwhelmed. These scripts acknowledge the hidden effort she puts into navigating school life and validate experiences that others might not recognise as challenging.

The goal isn't to fix or change her, but to create an environment where she can be authentic while building skills for self-advocacy and emotional regulation. Many autistic girls have been told they're "too sensitive" or "dramatic" - these scripts counter those harmful messages by treating her experiences as valid and worthy of support.

Recognising and Validating Hidden Struggles

Autistic girls excel at masking their difficulties, often appearing socially competent whilst feeling completely overwhelmed. They may also struggle with intense perfectionism that paralyses rather than motivates them.

When you notice masking or exhaustion

- "I've noticed you seem really tired after social situations. That's completely understandable - managing social interactions can be hard work."
- "It's okay not to be 'fine' all the time. Many people find school overwhelming sometimes."
- "You don't have to keep smiling if you're not feeling it. Your real feelings are valid."

When perfectionism becomes overwhelming

- "I can see you're working really hard to get everything perfect. Sometimes 'good enough' is actually better than perfect."
- "Making mistakes is how we learn. I'm more interested in your thinking than getting the 'right' answer."
- "You're putting a lot of pressure on yourself. What would happen if you aimed for progress instead of perfection?"

Building Trust and Safety

Creating emotional safety is crucial for autistic girls who may have learned to hide their true selves. These scripts help establish that you're someone who truly sees and accepts her authentic experience.

Creating emotional safety

- "This is a judgement-free space. You can tell me what's really going on."
- "I believe you when you say something is difficult, even if it looks easy to others."
- "Your needs matter, even if they're different from what other students need."

Acknowledging her perspective

- "Help me understand what that experience is like for you."
- "I'm learning about how your mind works, and I want to support you better."
- "Your way of seeing things brings something valuable to our classroom."

Addressing Sensory and Environmental Needs

Autistic girls may be more likely to suffer in silence when sensory environments become overwhelming, rather than obviously demonstrating distress. Watch for subtle signs and offer proactive support.

When sensory issues arise

- "Let's find a way to make this more comfortable for you. What usually helps?"
- "I notice you're covering your ears. Shall we step somewhere quieter?"
- "The lighting/noise/texture seems to be bothering you. Let's sort that out first."

Offering environmental adjustments

- "Would it help to sit in a different spot today?"
- "You can take breaks whenever you need them. Just give me a signal."
- "Some people work better with background music or fidgets. What works for you?"

Supporting Social Interactions

Social relationships can be particularly complex for autistic girls, who often understand the 'rules' intellectually but struggle with the emotional exhaustion of constant social monitoring and the confusion when those rules don't work as expected.

When friendships feel difficult

- "Friendships can be confusing. It's normal to need help figuring out social situations."
- "Not everyone will understand you, but the right friends will. Those are the ones worth having."
- "Quality matters more than quantity when it comes to friendships."

During social conflicts

- "Let's think about what happened step by step. What were you trying to communicate?"
- "Sometimes people say things they don't mean when they're upset. That doesn't make it okay, though."
- "You're not responsible for managing other people's emotions."

Academic Support and Accommodations

Many autistic girls are high achievers who suffer in silence, reluctant to ask for help because they fear appearing incapable. They may also have learning profiles that don't match traditional teaching approaches.

When she struggles to ask for help

- "I can see you're working hard on this. What part feels most challenging right now?"
- "Asking for help shows wisdom, not weakness. What support would be most useful?"
- "Everyone needs different things to succeed. Let's find what works for you."

Offering different approaches

- "There are lots of ways to show what you know. Would you prefer to write, draw, or talk through your ideas?"
- "Take your time. I'm more interested in understanding your thinking than speed."
- "This approach isn't working for you. Let's try a different way."

Managing Overwhelm and Meltdowns

Autistic girls may internalise their distress, leading to shutdown rather than obvious meltdown behaviours. Learning to recognise early warning signs and respond with compassion is essential.

When you notice early warning signs

- "I can see this is getting overwhelming. Let's take a step back."
- "Your body is telling you something important. What do you need right now?"
- "It's okay to take a break. We can come back to this when you're ready."

During or after difficult moments

- "That looked really hard. You're safe now."
- "Strong feelings are normal. You're not in trouble for having them."
- "Let's think about what might help next time this feeling comes up."

Encouraging Self-Advocacy

Building confidence in autistic girls to express their needs is crucial, as they're often socialised to prioritise others' comfort over their own wellbeing and may not recognise that their needs are valid and important.

Building confidence to speak up

- "Your voice matters. What would you like people to know about you?"
- "You know yourself better than anyone else. Trust that knowledge."
- "It's okay to ask for what you need. That's not being demanding - it's being smart."

Discussing strengths and differences

- "Your attention to detail is brilliant. How can we use that strength here?"
- "The way you think about problems is really creative. I'd like to hear more."
- "Being different isn't something to fix. It's something to understand and support."

Supporting Self-Care and Identity

Autistic girls often struggle with self-acceptance, particularly during adolescence when social pressures intensify. These conversations help them understand that being different isn't something to fix or hide.

Discussing self-acceptance

- "You don't have to change who you are to fit in. The right spaces will appreciate you as you are."
- "Learning about yourself - including being autistic - is a lifelong journey. Take it one step at a time."
- "Your special interests and intense focus are gifts, not problems to solve."

When she feels different or isolated

- "Feeling different doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. It means you see the world in your own way."
- "Many successful, creative people think differently. You're in good company."
- "Finding your people takes time. They're out there, and they'll value what makes you unique."

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