



DERBY & DERBYSHIRE

**Autism Information
& Advice Service**

AUTISTIC JOY AND SPECIAL INTERESTS

Autism Alliance Newsletter - October 2025



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month's topic from
our members

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Autistic Joy and Special Interests

This month the Autism Alliance spoke about autistic joy and special interests and the impact these have on wellbeing. But what is autistic joy?

Autistic joy refers to feelings of intense happiness that are often linked to sensory experiences, special interests, activities or interactions.

Autistic joy can be experienced as feelings of intense excitement and happiness, relaxation or can sometimes result in a physical reaction such as stimming.



Everyone experiences autistic joy differently and can vary in levels of intensity based on the individual.

One of our Autism Alliance members said - **the autistic joy they experience from their special interests helps them to feel calm and relaxed.**



What Does Autistic Joy Feel Like?

Experiences of autistic joy differ from person to person, but here's how some of our Autism Alliance members experience it:

- Intense feelings of happiness and excitement
- Feeling sparks and glimmers inside
- Needing to move and stim to release excitement
- Feeling calm, content and safe



Sometimes autistic joy can also bring people feelings of shame due to worrying about how other people might perceive them.

Our Autism Alliance members said - **it's important to remember that the small things in life make life worth living and it's okay to express joy differently to other people.**



Common Causes of Autistic Joy

During the Autism Alliance, we discussed common causes of autistic joy. Here's what gave our members the most joy:

- Special interests
- Connecting with other autistic people or people with a shared interest
- Sensory experiences
- Being able to unmask



Autistic joy and special interests not only bring people happiness but can also help autistic people to become more confident.

One Autism Alliance member said - **finding joy in their special interests has helped develop their autistic identity and has helped them find meaning in life.**



The Impact of Autistic Joy

We asked our Autism Alliance members what impact autistic joy had on their lives and overall wellbeing and here's what they had to say:

- Autistic joy and special interests helps to regulate mood and emotions
- Autistic joy helps autistic people deal with life's every day challenges
- Autistic joy helps autistic people to unmask and embrace their autistic identity



Although autistic joy can make a positive difference to wellbeing, it's important to remember to factor in periods of rest, as positive emotions can be overwhelming too.

One Autism Alliance member said - **engaging in their special interests can drain their energy/spoons so they always factor in time to recover.**

