



‘People should be allowed to do what they like’: Autistic adults’ views and experiences of stimming.

- Kapp, S. K., Steward, R., Crane, L., Elliott, D., Elphick, C., Pellicano, E., & Russell, G. (2019).

Introduction to Stimming?

1

Definition:
Stimming, short for “self-stimulatory behavior,” involves repetitive body movements or sounds.

2

Common Examples: Hand flapping, rocking, spinning, tapping objects, and repeating sounds or phrases.

3

Purpose: Often used for self-regulation, sensory management, or as an emotional outlet.

Research Purpose

Purpose of the Study: Understand autistic adults' personal experiences with stimming.

Gather insights into stimming's significance from the perspective of those who practice it.



Research Methods

Methodology: Qualitative interviews

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Participants: Autistic adults from various backgrounds

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Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews focusing on experiences with stimming

Participants' Background

Diverse backgrounds:

- Age, gender, and cultural differences among participants.

Varying experiences:

- Some had been discouraged from stimming, while others found acceptance.

Positive Aspects of Stimming



Self-regulation:

Reduces anxiety and sensory overload.



Focus and

comfort:
Provides a sense of calm and control.



Self-expression:

Allows for the expression of individuality.

Negative Aspects of Stimming

01

Societal stigma:
Viewed as
"inappropriate" by
others.

02

External pressures:
Family, educators,
or peers sometimes
discourage
stimming.

03

Internal conflict:
Some participants
experienced shame
or confusion due to
societal pressure.

Societal Views and Misconceptions

Misconception:

Stimming is often misunderstood as "strange" or "problematic."

Consequence:

Lack of understanding can lead to exclusion or judgment.

Importance of awareness:

Educating society on the benefits of stimming.

Impact of Suppressing Stimming



PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL:
SUPPRESSING STIMMING CAN
INCREASE STRESS AND
ANXIETY.



REDUCED QUALITY OF LIFE:
LEADS TO DISCOMFORT AND
REDUCED EMOTIONAL
REGULATION.



LONG-TERM EFFECTS:
POTENTIAL FOR LASTING
NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON MENTAL
HEALTH.

Recommendations from Autistic Adults

Encouragement
of
acceptance:

Advocate for
stimming as a valid
coping mechanism.

Inclusive
environments:

Create spaces
where stimming is
normalized.

Educate
others:

Promote
understanding of
stimming among
family, peers, and
educators.

Implications for Practitioners

ABA Practitioners:

- Encourage practices that respect stimming as a valid behavior.

Clinical impact:

- Focus on reducing the stigma rather than the behavior itself.

Person-centered approach:

- Prioritize the individual's needs and comfort.

Why We Do Not Address Reducing Stimming

Functional benefits:

- Stimming supports emotional and sensory regulation.

Avoiding harm:

- Reducing stimming can increase distress.

Alternative strategies:

- Focus on acceptance and education over reduction.

Practical Applications

Strategies for acceptance:

Model positive language around stimming.

Training for educators:

Provide resources to foster understanding.

Supportive environments
:

Create settings where stimming is acknowledged and accepted.

Conclusion

Summary:

- Stimming provides vital self-regulation, comfort, and expression for autistic individuals.

Societal Shift:

- Understanding and acceptance can reduce stigma and promote well-being.

Final Thought:

- Embracing stimming as a positive behavior benefits both individuals with ASD and society as a whole.

Reference

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Why Do We Not Address Reducing Stimming Behavior for Kids with ASD?

Reducing stimming is typically avoided because these behaviors serve critical self-regulatory and expressive functions for autistic individuals.

Stimming can help manage sensory input, reduce anxiety, and create a sense of comfort and control in otherwise overwhelming environments.

For many, stimming is an essential aspect of well-being, and intervening to reduce it could potentially increase stress, disrupt emotional regulation, and diminish quality of life.