



AUTISTIC JOY, PRIDE AND ROLE MODELS

A feel-good project for Autistic young people

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED?

- Are you Autistic and aged between 8-17?
- Would you like to share your thoughts, feelings or experiences of Autistic joy, Autistic pride and / or Autistic role models?

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

- At GROVE we feel that the world needs to **listen to Autistic young people!**
- In particular, we think your thoughts, feelings and experiences are really important for other Autistic young people to hear.
- So, we were wondering if you might like to share some of that perhaps?
- At this time we would like this to focus on **Autistic joy, Autistic pride and Autistic role models**. We'll run similar projects for other areas in the future.
- This is an optional project that do you not have to take part in.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'AUTISTIC JOY'?

- Joy is a feeling of great **happiness** and maybe **excitement** too.
- Lots of things can bring us joy. Often, Autistic people will find a huge amount of joy in:
 - Our interests

- Certain sensory experiences
- Stimming
- Getting into a flow state
- Whatever brings you joy is wonderful and unique to you!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'AUTISTIC PRIDE'?

Pride can be understood in a few different ways but when we think about Autistic pride we mean feeling **respect**, **happiness** and **satisfaction** in our identity as Autistic people. That may help us feel part of a community as we have some things in common with many other Autistic people.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'AUTISTIC ROLE MODELS'?

- A 'role model' is someone who you admire for any reason that is important to you.
- Is there an Autistic person who you admire?
- Perhaps they are a friend, a family member or maybe someone famous. It could even be a character from a book, TV show, game or film.
- You could consider: What is it about them that you admire? Why do you like them? Have they helped you understand anything about yourself?

WHAT COULD I CREATE?

- You might write a poem, a story, a short description or a even a script. You could take photos, create a picture, a poster, a collage, a storyboard, an animation. You could create a 3D sculpture out of Lego, clay or sand for example. It is your choice.
- We cannot accept recordings of you (either your voice or image) but animations or any other kind of recordings are fine. The reason for this is we need to be sure that you are safe online and that means making sure no one can identity you from a recording.

- You could create something about just Autistic joy or Autistic pride or Autistic role models, or you might create something that covers more than one of those. It is your choice.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH MY CREATION?

- You are in control of that!
- When you send us your creation you'll get to choose whether we are allowed to:
 - Put it on our website, in our Newsletter, on social media, on webinars or training we run and show it to young people in our groups or individual mentoring;
 - You can choose to say yes to some of those, all of those or none of those;
 - You may choose only to share it with Jess at GROVE and not anyone else - that's absolutely fine and I will love seeing it!
 - You can also choose not to share it with anybody and just enjoy creating for yourself.
- You can change your mind about what you have given us permission for at any time - your parent or carer just needs to email us and we will remove your creation from that point onwards - we can't remove it from anything already published of course.

HOW WILL YOU KEEP ME SAFE ONLINE?

- We need to make sure no one can work out who you are from your creation. So to do that:
 - Please use only your first name, a made-up / chosen name or put no name at all;
 - You can put your age if you want to but not your date of birth;
 - If you use photography, please make sure we can't tell who any people they are or where they or you live.
- The other thing is that we need your parent or carer involved in this process just to make sure they are happy for you to take part. So, due to this your creation must be sent to us via your parent or carer please.

WHERE DO WE SEND IT AND BY WHEN?

- Please ask your parent or carer to email it to Jess on jess@gr0ve.org by the **end of August**. Jess is GROVE's owner.
- If you create an object of some kind then please send a photo of it but remember to make sure we can't tell who any people are or where they or you live.
- In your email your parent or carer needs to state where you give permission for us to share your creation:
 - In our groups or individual mentoring? Yes/no
 - Newsletter? Yes/no
 - Social media? Yes/no
 - Website? Yes/no
 - Training, presentations or webinars we run? Yes/no
 - None of these - only to be viewed by Jess at GROVE.
- Remember we will only use it in the way you agree to and you will be able to change your mind on that;
 - You do not have to agree for us to share your creation at all.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Please ask your parent or carer to email Jess on jess@gr0ve.org or send a message on Facebook.
- It's important that email comes from your parent or carer as Jess can only reply to them. This is because we need to keep you safe online.

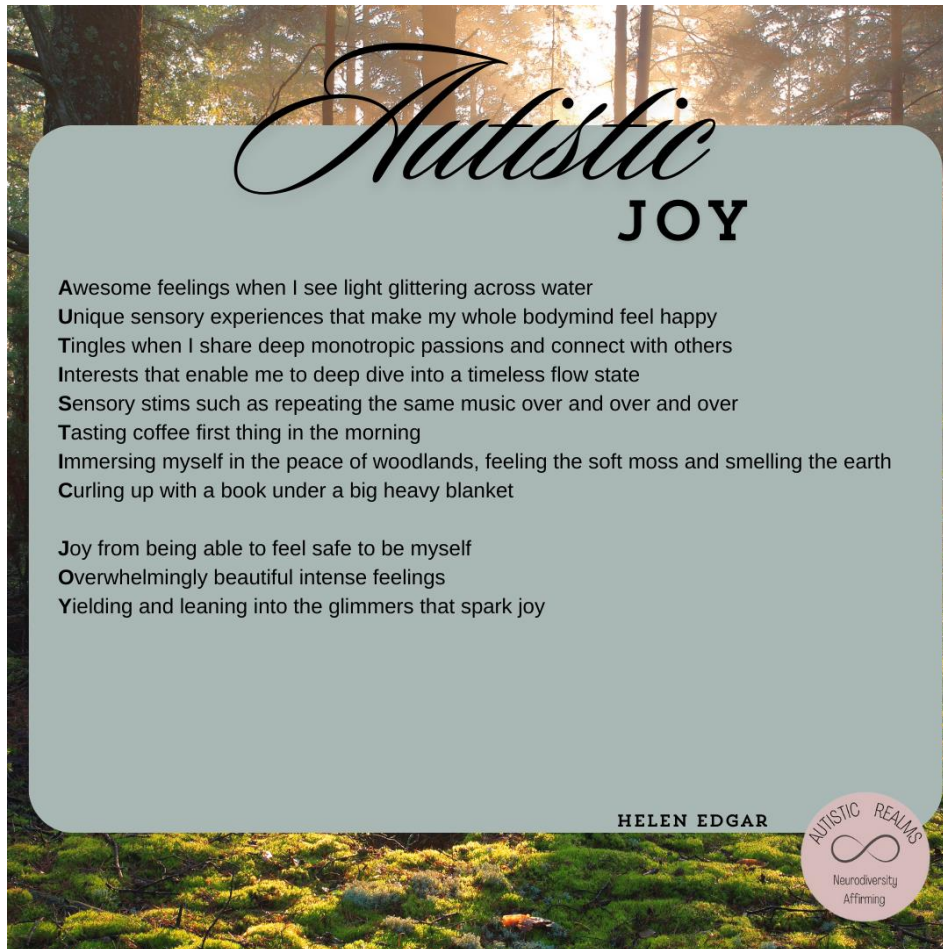
I'D LIKE TO TAKE PART BUT I NEED HELP GETTING STARTED...

That's totally normal and understandable. I've created some ideas, starting points and examples that might help. Because I don't know you personally it's possible that none of these will help because I've had to make some guesses rather than making it just right for you. So, just to be clear - it's not your fault if something is feeling tricky! And also, there is no right or wrong way to take part in this project. If it is causing you stress then it's ok to stop and not take part anymore.

Here is a brief recap of the project:

- To share something about your unique thoughts, feelings or experiences of Autistic joy, Autistic pride or Autistic role models.
- You can choose one, two or all of those three areas.
- You can create more than one thing.

AUTISTIC JOY



Acrostic poem by Helen (Autistic adult)

Awesome feelings when I see light glittering across water

Unique sensory experiences that make my whole bodymind feel happy

Tingles when I share deep monotropic passions and connect with others

Interests that enable me to deep dive into a timeless flow state

Sensory stims such as repeating the same music over and over and over

Tasting coffee first thing in the morning

Immersing myself in the peace of the woodlands, feeling the soft moss and smelling the earth

Curling up with a book under a big heavy blanket

Joy from being able to feel safe to be myself

Overwhelming beautiful intense feelings

Yeilding and leaning into glimmers that spark joy

Other types of poetry: Haiku, free verse, calligram, narrative and there are many more!

Collage of things that bring me joy. By Jess (GROVE's owner, Autistic and ADHD):



Image description: A collage containing small pictures of: autumn leaves, tree bark, fairies, theatre, beach with waves, slide guitar, snowy forest, embers of a fire, human body book, microphone, group of paper people in a circle showing 'community'.

AUTISTIC PRIDE

Possible starting points:

- Perhaps you could write a letter to other Autistic young people explaining why you feel pride in your Autistic identity?
- Or maybe a poster to raise awareness of Autistic pride?

ROLE MODELS

Possible starting points:

- Who do you know who is also Autistic?
- What do you admire about them?

- Perhaps you could choose some words to describe them? Maybe those words could even be represented through images you choose or draw?

Examples:

Brave

Strong

Energetic

Funny

Kind

Gentle

Confident

Accepting

OPTIONAL TEMPLATES

- Sometimes having lots of choices can be overwhelming.
- So, if you'd like to use them there are some optional templates you could fill in on the next few pages instead.

AUTISTIC JOY, PRIDE AND ROLE MODELS

Things that bring me joy:

I am proud to be Autistic because:

My Autistic role models are:

AUTISTIC JOY

These are the things that bring me joy:

AUTISTIC PRIDE

For me, Autistic pride means:

AUTISTIC ROLE MODELS

My Autistic role models are:

I admire them because: