

# Adolescence and Autism

## A Parent's Guide to Understanding and Support



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# Childhood was predictable

Aarav has autism,  
He likes routines,  
trains, and quiet spaces.

'He can play  
with these trains  
for hours.'



Life was predictable.  
Aarav liked doing  
things the same way  
every day.



He feels comfortable  
when things stay the  
same.





# Adolescence Begins



Now Aarav is 13 years old.

But adolescence brings many changes — especially in the body and brain.



During adolescence, emotional changes can become stronger in autistic teenagers.

But adolescence brings many changes — especially in the body and brain.



Aarav looks confused.

'He was never this angry before.'





# Why Adolescence is Harder in Autism



The teenage brain is changing rapidly.

Autistic adolescents experience the same hormonal changes as others.

But they may struggle more with understanding emotions and social expectations.

During adolescence, emotional changes can become stronger in autistic teenagers.



These difficulties may become more visible during adolescence.

### Emotional Regulation



### Social Understanding



### Sensory Overload





# Sudden Emotional Outbursts



Teenagers with autism may experience strong emotional reactions. Sometimes it is not anger – it may be overwhelm or sensory overload.



# Difficulty Understanding Social Changes

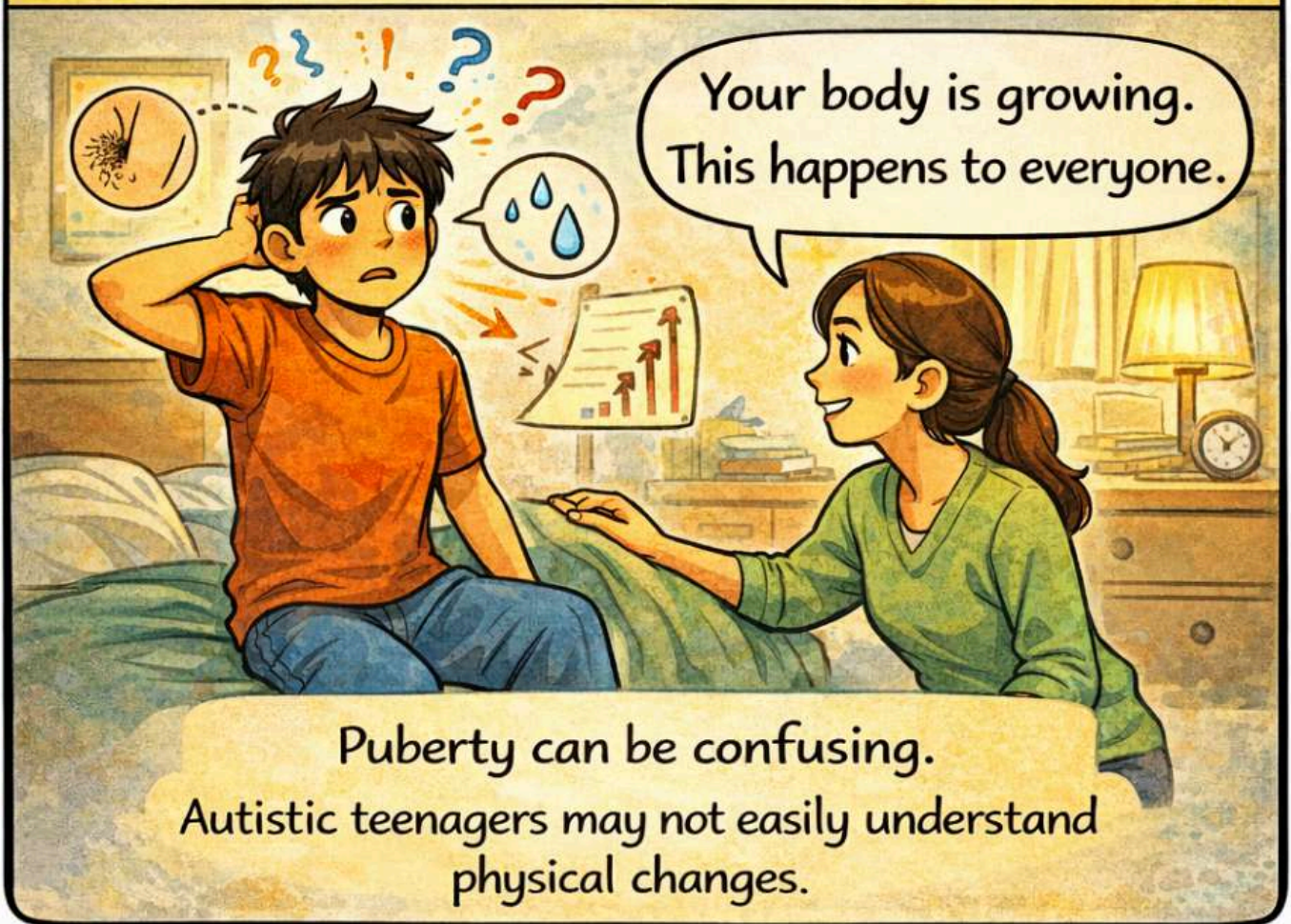


Social interactions become more complex during adolescence.

Autistic teens may struggle to understand sarcasm, jokes, and peer dynamics.



# Body Changes and Confusion



Parents must prepare autistic teens for these changes.

Explain puberty clearly and calmly.

Do not assume the child will learn it automatically.





# Increased Anxiety

Everything feels different.



Adolescents with autism may develop **anxiety** or **depression**, especially if they feel socially isolated.

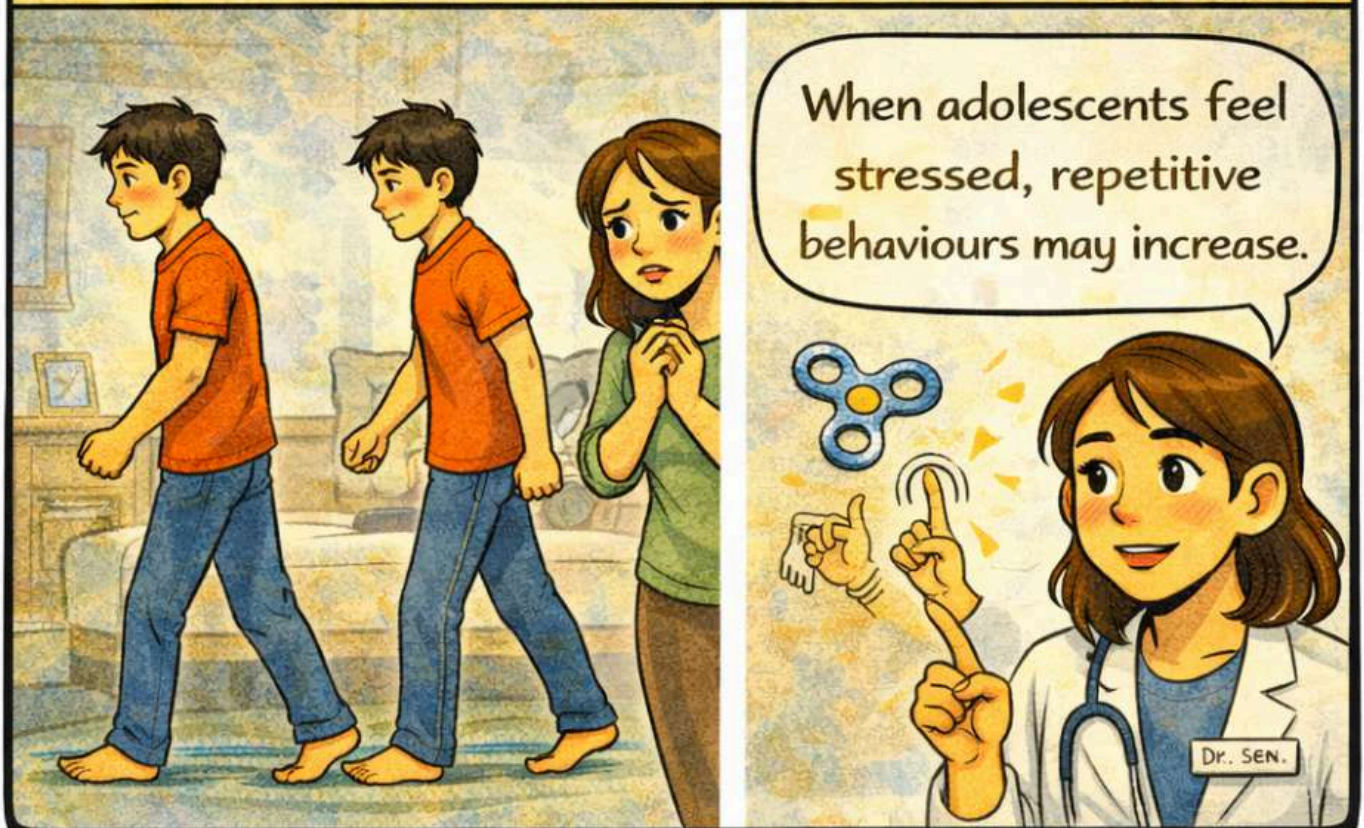
He spends more time alone now.



Adolescents with autism may develop **anxiety** or **depression**, especially if they feel socially isolated.



# Repetitive Behaviour May Increase



These behaviours are often coping mechanisms. They are signals that the child may be overwhelmed.





# What Parents Should Watch For:



✓ Increased anger or irritability



✓ Withdrawal from activities



✓ Increased repetitive behaviour

✓ Sleep changes



✓ Anxiety or sadness

✓ Difficulty at school



# How Parents Can Help

## Stay Calm During Emotional Outbursts



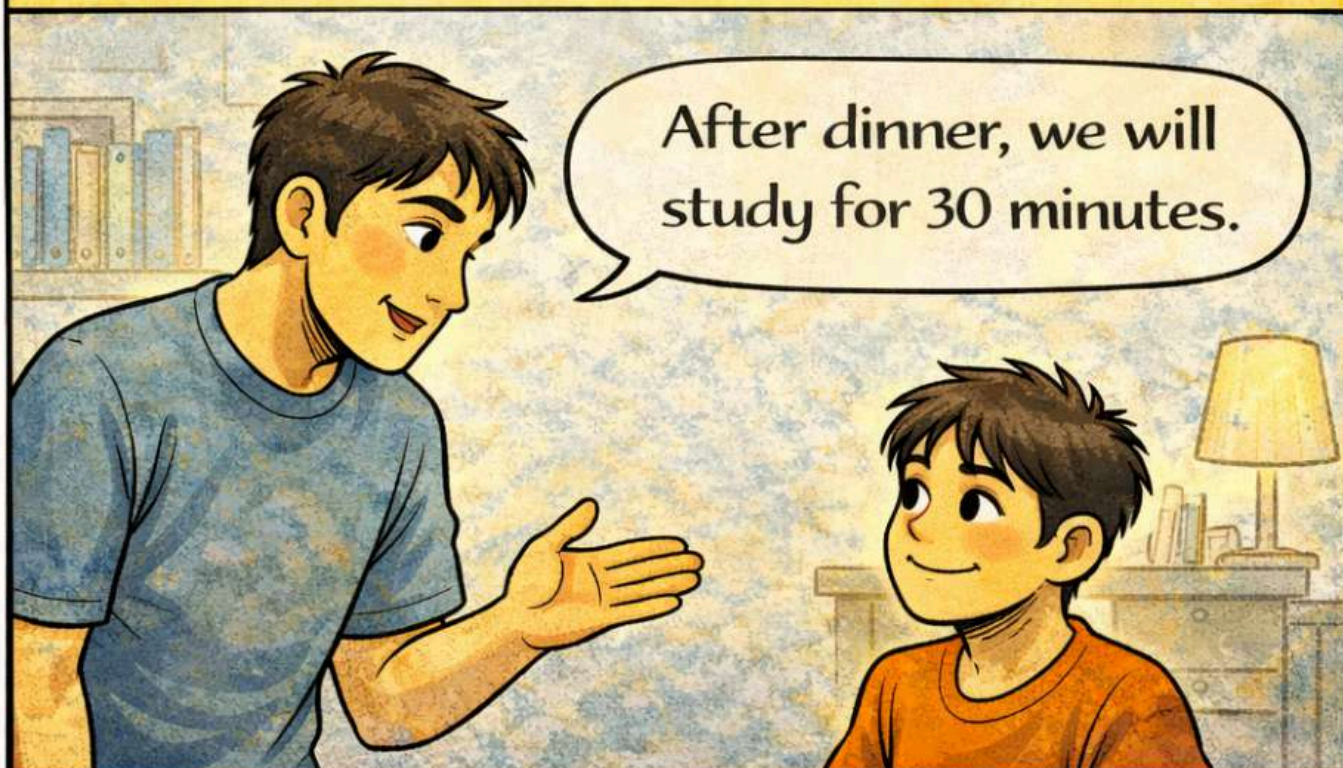
When emotions escalate, **stay calm** instead of reacting with anger.

Autistic teens often need **time and space** to regulate emotions.





## Use Clear and Direct Communication



- 🎯 Autistic adolescents understand better when instructions are clear, simple, and predictable. Avoid vague instructions like "Behave properly" or "Be sensible."



# Maintain Structure and Routine

## Visual Schedule on the Wall



Daily routines and visual schedules reduce anxiety.

Predictability helps autistic adolescents feel safe.



# Teach Emotional Skills

Are you feeling angry, worried, or overwhelmed?

## EMOTIONS



Happy



Angry



Sad



Worried



Calm



Overwhelmed

Many autistic teens struggle to identify emotions.

Parents can teach emotional awareness using:



Emotion charts



Calm breathing



Taking short breaks



# Reduce Sensory Overload



Identify sensory triggers like loud noise, bright lights, or crowded places.

If it gets too loud, you can use these.



Noise-cancelling  
headphones



Quiet spaces

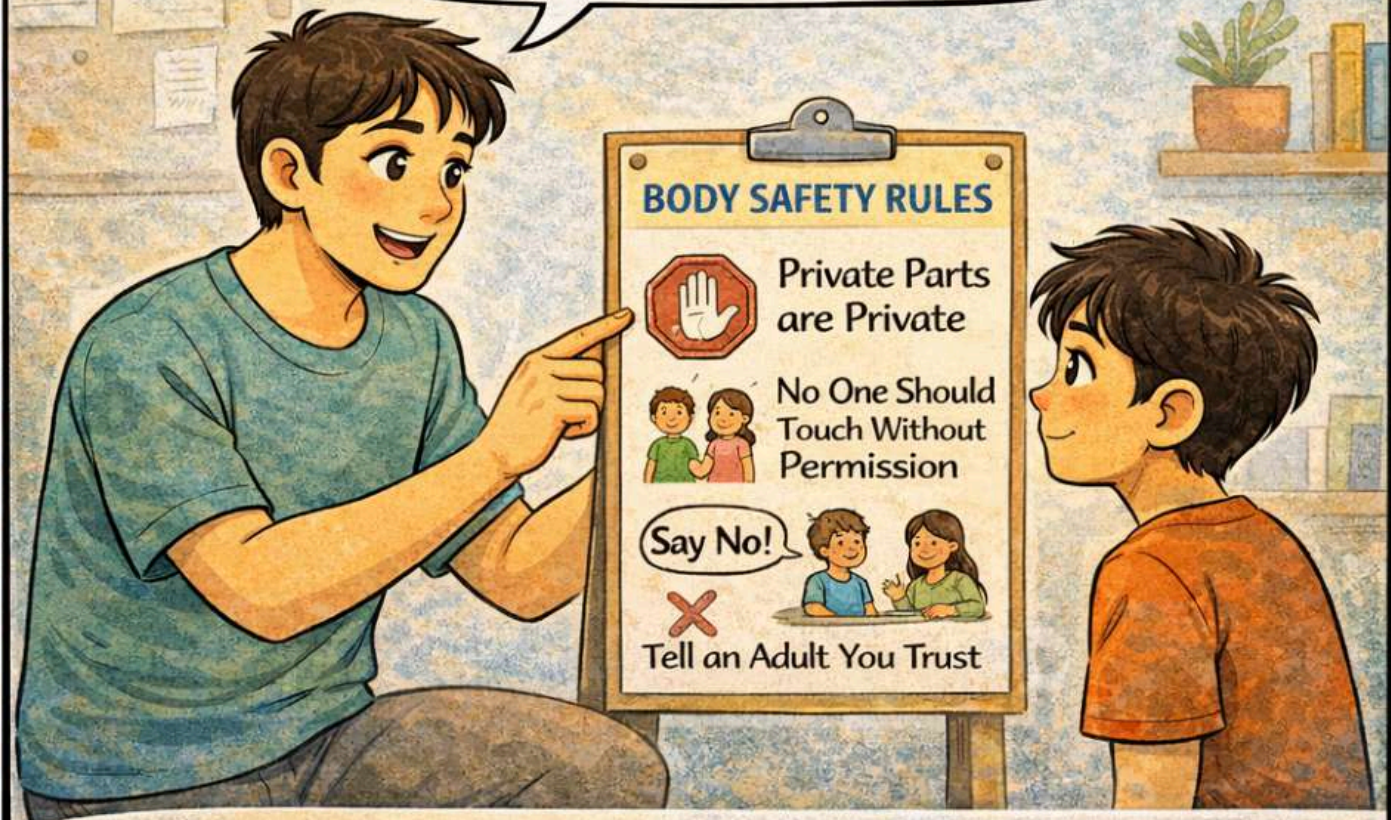


Short breaks



# Safety, Boundaries and Sexual Education for Autistic Adolescents

Some parts of our body are private.



Children must learn:

- ✓ Which body parts are private
- ✓ That no one should touch them without permission



# Public vs Private Behaviour

Some behaviours are private and should only happen in your bedroom or bathroom.



Autistic adolescents may need **explicit** teaching about what behaviour is public and what is private.



# Understanding Personal Boundaries



Teach adolescents:

- ✓ They have the right to say no
- ✓ They must also respect others' boundaries:



# Recognising Unsafe Situations

If someone asks you to keep a secret about touching, you should tell a trusted adult.



Autistic adolescents must learn:

- ✓ Safe touch vs unsafe touch
- ✓ Secrets that should never be kept



# Internet and Online Safety



Many adolescents are exposed to risks through the internet and social media.

Parents should guide them about:

- ✓ Online boundaries
- ✓ Privacy
- ✓ Talking to strangers online



If you ever feel uncomfortable,  
tell one of these people.

### Trusted Adults



Mother



Father



Teacher



Doctor



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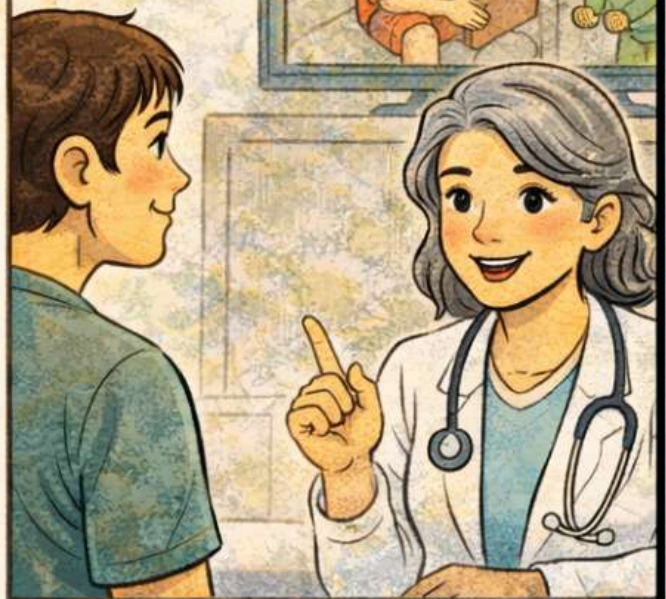
# Addressing Sexual Behaviours in Adolescents with Autism

## Parents Notice a Behaviour

Aarav has started doing this often... I am not sure how to respond.



During adolescence, autistic teenagers may show sexual curiosity or behaviours as their bodies change.



These behaviours are often part of normal development. But autistic adolescents may need clear guidance about when and where behaviours appropriate.



Autistic. adolescents may not automatically understand social rules about privacy.



## Teaching Hygiene and Self-Care



During adolescence, autistic teenagers may show sexual curiosity or behaviours as their bodies change.



Parents should teach:

- ✓ Personal hygiene
- ✓ Managing bodily changes
- ✓ Appropriate self-care habits





**Sexual development is a normal part of adolescence, including for autistic teenagers.**

**With clear guidance, patience, and open communication, parents can help adolescents develop healthy and respectful behaviours.**