

AUTISM MECHANICS

These mechanics were developed for Autistic characters in Dungeons & Dragons. This takes a variety of aspects of autism and turns them into usable mechanics for gameplay.

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STATS

Characters will have proficiency in **one** of the following: Performance, Persuasion, or Deception

Characters will have Disadvantage on Insight checks.

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Characters will have Advantage on any kind of check that relates to their special interest in some way. This could be anything ranging from a history check related to a character's interest, or for use of tools such as carpenter's tools or a forger's kit. As a player, you will need to have at least one special interest already decided for your character when you start using these mechanics - let your DM know. This could be things like stars, a very specific history topic, coin collecting - there's a lot of possibilities. Pick what makes sense for your character!

They will gain additional tool proficiencies for things that relate to a special interest. For example, if the character has a special interest for something like card tricks, they will gain proficiency in using the gaming set. Or a special interest for lockpicking - even if they aren't a rogue - they will be proficient in thieves tools.

MELTDOWNS

The player will need to decide before utilizing these mechanics what triggers their characters will have for meltdowns, and make sure the DM knows. The player should keep a list of these triggers, which can be added to or subtracted from depending on the progression of the story. Triggers could be things like a reminder of someone who has hurt the character, being alone for too long, being yelled at, certain smells or sights or sounds.

If the character encounters one of their triggers, the character must make a straight d20 roll. The DC may be lowered for a specific trigger after succeeding the saving throw many times - this is up to the DM's discretion.

The DCs are:

5 if the trigger is mentioned in passing.

10 if the character knows that the trigger is there, but it can be widely avoided.

15 if the trigger is there, or starting to happen, but the player/character believes they can work through it.

20 if the trigger is actively a problem or happening.

The character will take 1 point of exhaustion if they fail their save with a DC of 15 or higher.

If your character hits **5 stress points** it will automatically trigger a meltdown. The DC is 15. Succeeding this saving throw will put the character back down to **3 stress points**.

Stimming adds a +1 bonus to your saving throw roll. Player's discretion on whether or not their character will be helped by stimming or not for the highest two DCs.

You **must** subtract whatever your current number of Stress Points is from your d20 saving roll for all meltdowns.

NONVERBAL

Autistic characters who experience periods of being nonverbal (player's choice whether they do) may utilize the Message Pebble disability aid, a common item that allows the character to use the Message cantrip at will. This allows the character to still communicate if necessary.

Hitting **4 stress points** can trigger being nonverbal. The character may make a DC 10 straight d20 roll. On a failed save, the character will be nonverbal.

COMPLETING TASKS

15 minutes of stimming can remove -1 stress point. 5 minutes spent stimming will add a +1 bonus to their meltdown saving throws.

If a character relies on a specific form of stimming - something verbal, a specific item they fidget with - where there may be times they need to stim, but can't due to their situation, they must take +1 stress points.

HYPERFOCUSING

Benefits: If the character is trying to do something that is important, or something that they really care about, they will have Advantage on any kind of check relating to the completing this task. This could be a breakthrough, or an intelligence check to see if they figure something out.

Drawbacks: The character is so intensely focused on this One Specific Thing that nothing else matters or can be focused on. They will have Disadvantage at this time relating to any kind of check that doesn't involve what they're currently hyperfocusing on. Especially Perception checks.

If the character is alone while working on this, with no one there to remind them to take breaks or stop, they may forget to take their long rest. Roll a Percentile die, the DC being 30%-50% DM's discretion. If the character rolls below the DC, they must take 1 point of exhaustion for the following day.

Meditation: If the character struggles on focusing on long or boring tasks, they may struggle with things that require meditation (such as ritual spells). Roll a d4 - it will take that many hours longer to complete.

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

These will be separate mechanics, but will work in tandem with the Autism mechanics. While this is a large part of an autistic person's experience, because you can have SPD without being autistic, we wanted to keep it a separate mechanic. Just note that, if you start using the Autism mechanics now, there will later be an addition in the form of SPD mechanics.

REFERENCES & CREDITS

All works are carefully researched for authenticity and realism, and disabled individuals are consulted throughout the process. A lot of people reviewed these mechanics to give feedback. Primarily, the team:

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