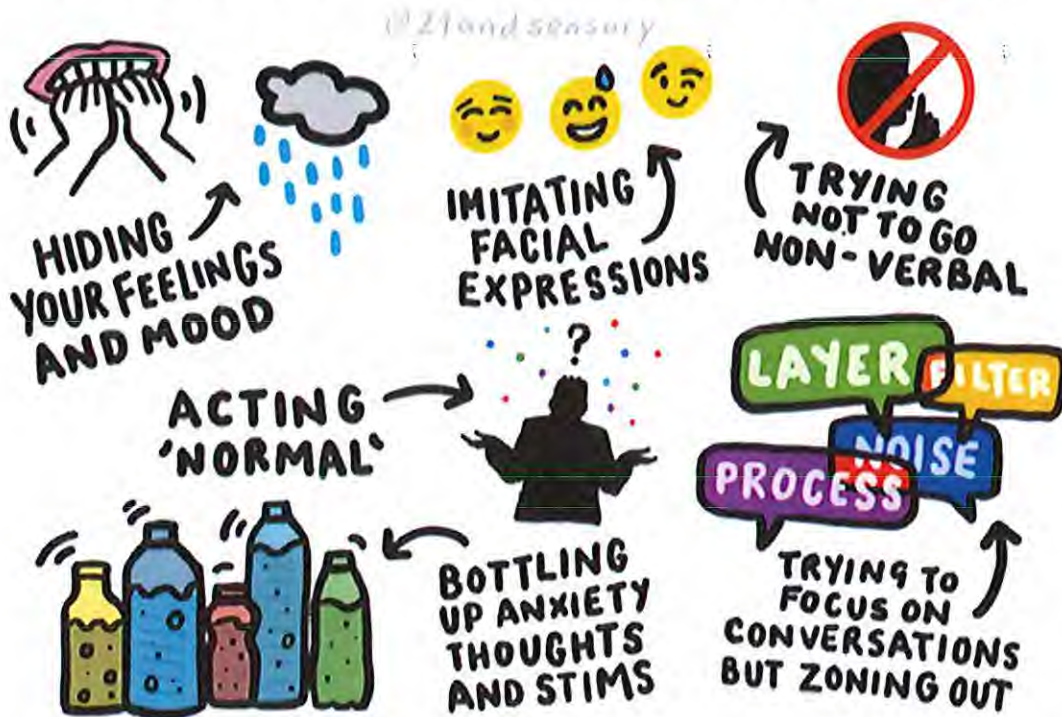


# WHAT IS 'MASKING'?



**THIS CAN LEAD TO AUTISTIC BURNOUT + SENSORY HANGOVER.**

What is 'masking'? - a guest blog

We're delighted to bring you this post from Emily of the 21andsensory blog. A UK-based graphic designer, Emily is in her twenties, has a diagnosis of autism and sensory processing disorder and publishes posts and podcasts on 'daily living as a sensory-being'. Here, Emily discusses her experience of masking:

"So what actually is masking? Masking involves trying to hide being autistic so others will accept us. It's also referred to as camouflaging. This means we act in ways that other people will think we are 'normal' and to try and be accepted socially. My doodle includes a few examples of trying to mask.

“Over the course of my life I feel I have perfected the art of masking (which isn’t necessarily a good thing). I am extremely good at with-holding my feelings and emotions, bottling them up until I get home. I would cry when I had to go to primary school each morning. Then speed forward a bit in time and I’d come home from secondary school each day very tearful. I even used to cry up in the SENCOs (special needs support) room at break and lunch times because secondary school is quite literally THE most overwhelming place I have ever had to cope in . But slowly through sixth form and university I began to build up a resilience to the world and although I still get overwhelmed I can always come home, have a bit of a sensory meltdown (and a good cry) then move on with things.

“Socialising will always be hard for me and I think I will always cope with the world like this. But that’s okay. I have to actively remind myself that ‘normal’ isn’t real. And I think you should too. Masking is an autistic and sensory way of coping with the everyday and just trying to get by. Now that is brave. To go out in the world and just exist is a huge thing.”

You can follow Emily on social media: [@21andsensory](#)