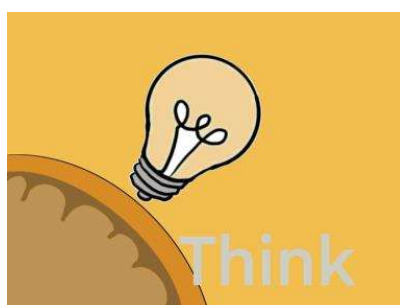


Masturbation

Masturbation is common and perfectly normal, even if most people might not admit to doing it themselves. Although people of all genders and sexual identities masturbate, not everyone masturbates. Single people and people in romantic relationships may choose to masturbate. Masturbation means deliberately touching your genitals in order to feel sexually aroused. Masturbation is not harmful and can be a healthy way to learn about your body and experience sexual pleasure. Masturbation should be done in private or with your partner.



Some Autistic people may need additional support to understand the boundaries about when and where it is acceptable to masturbate. Some may use masturbation to calm or regulate themselves when they are distressed or overwhelmed. Some Autistic people may masturbate to excess or they may find feelings of sexual arousal overwhelming.



Some Autistic people may have a muted sense of interoception. This means they may not feel sexual arousal as a strong sensation in their body, with the result that they might find it difficult to have an orgasm. Just because someone masturbates frequently, it does not necessarily mean they are experiencing high levels of sexual arousal. In fact, it may be the case that they are not able to feel the arousal they require in order to have an orgasm. Autistic people who experience strong sensations in their body may feel overwhelmed by sexual arousal or orgasm.



Talking about bodies and masturbation can also provide opportunities for discussing consent, personal hygiene and privacy. It is important to choose the appropriate time, place and language for a discussion about bodies and masturbation.