

Abstract

This study surveyed 342 autistic adults recruited from social media. Higher self-reported autistic masking behavior (defined as camouflaging behavior attempting to conceal autistic traits) was associated with higher reports of past interpersonal trauma, greater anxiety and depression symptoms, lower self-esteem, lower authenticity, and lower participation within the autistic community. Autistic masking was not found to be associated with gender identity or sexual orientation. The results highlight the relationship between autistic masking and past interpersonal trauma, and that autistic masking behavior is associated with mental health, self-esteem, and authenticity risks for autistic adults. The researchers call into question the teaching of autistic masking strategies in therapies and education programs for autistic people based on the negative associations with autistic masking presented in this study and other research in this field.