

# DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION BANK: COLLATERAL SOURCE INQUIRY

SUBJECT: Interview Protocol for Teachers, Parents, and Partners

OBJECTIVE: To uncover the neuro-cognitive mechanics behind observed behaviors, specifically targeting high-masking Autism, ADHD, and the AuDHD phenotype.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL:

Do not ask "Does he fidget?" or "Is she shy?" These are surface behaviors. You must ask questions that reveal the internal cost of the behavior and the context of the struggle.

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## PART 1: QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS / EDUCATORS

*Focus: Academic Discrepancy, Social Mechanics, and Executive Function.*

### DOMAIN: THE "PARADOX OF COMPETENCE" (AuDHD Indicator)

#### 1. The "Lazy Genius" Probe:

- *Question:* "Is there a significant gap between this student's oral understanding of complex concepts and their ability to produce written work? Do they ace the discussion but fail the worksheet?"
- *Look For:* Executive Dysfunction (Initiation paralysis) masking high intellect.

#### 2. The Hyperfocus Check:

- *Question:* "Does the student demonstrate inconsistent attention—for example, being unable to focus on a 5-minute warm-up, but capable of sustaining deep focus for an hour on a topic of interest?"
- *Look For:* An *Interest-Based Nervous System* (ADHD/Autism) rather than a global attention deficit.

#### 3. The Instruction Literalism Probe:

- *Question:* "When you give open-ended instructions (e.g., 'Write about your weekend'), does the student freeze or ask for excessive clarification on parameters?"
- *Look For:* Bottom-Up Processing (Need for explicit rules before starting).

## DOMAIN: SOCIAL & SENSORY IN THE CLASSROOM

### 4. The Playground Observation:

- *Question:* "During unstructured time (recess/lunch), does the student interact with a large group, or do they tend to hover on the periphery, pace, or engage with a teacher instead of peers?"
- *Look For:* Social exhaustion/overwhelm vs. Social anxiety. Seeking "safe" structured interaction with adults.

### 5. The Justice Sensitivity Probe:

- *Question:* "Does the student publicly correct you or other students on facts or rules? Do they seem unable to 'let it go' if they perceive something as unfair or illogical?"
- *Look For:* Autistic pattern recognition and rigidity regarding truth/rules.

### 6. The Sensory Shielding:

- *Question:* "Does the student frequently ask to go to the bathroom or nurse during loud or chaotic activities (assemblies, group work)? Do they wear hoods or headphones whenever allowed?"
  - *Look For:* Self-regulation strategies to manage sensory overload.
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## PART 2: QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY / PARENTS / PARTNERS

*Focus: Masking, Meltdowns, and Daily Living Skills.*

## DOMAIN: THE "MASKING" COST

### 7. The After-School Collapse:

- *Question:* "Describe the first 30 minutes after they return home from school/work. Is there an immediate shift in mood—explosiveness, total withdrawal, or crying—that is not seen in public?"
- *Look For:* The cost of "Masking" (suppressing traits all day). This confirms neurodivergence even if the teacher reports "no issues."

### 8. The "Batteries Included" Sleep Pattern:

- *Question:* "Does their brain seem to 'wake up' late at night? Do they struggle to shut down their thoughts to sleep, or do they need specific sensory conditions (white noise, heavy blankets) to rest?"
- *Look For:* Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome (common in ADHD) or sensory regulation needs.

## DOMAIN: ROUTINE & RIGIDITY

### 9. The Routine Paradox (AuDHD):

- *Question:* "Do they crave a plan for the weekend, but then resist or become irritable when it's actually time to execute the plan they created?"
- *Look For:* The clash between Autistic need for structure and ADHD demand avoidance.

### 10. The Transition Friction:

- *Question:* "How do they react if you suddenly change plans (e.g., 'Let's stop at the store on the way home')? Is the reaction annoyance, or is it disproportionate distress/panic?"
- *Look For:* Monotropic "switching costs" (difficulty re-allocating cognitive resources).

### 11. The Special Interest Intensity:

- *Question:* "Does the individual engage in hobbies, or do they engage in 'research projects'? Do they memorize data/facts about their interest to a degree that seems exhausting to others?"
- *Look For:* Autistic Special Interests vs. Neurotypical hobbies.

## DOMAIN: EMOTIONAL & SENSORY REGULATION

### 12. The Clothing/Food Battle:

- *Question:* "Are there specific textures of food or clothing that trigger a gag reflex or intense anger? Do they wear the same 'safe' clothes repeatedly?"
- *Look For:* Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).

### 13. The Empathy Question (Re-framed):

- *Question:* "Would you describe them as 'unemotional', or do they feel *too much* emotion (absorbing the stress of others/movies/news) to the point of shutting down?"
- *Look For:* Hyper-empathy leading to Alexithymia (shutting off feelings to survive).

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## PART 3: THE "DIAGNOSTIC TRAPS" (Questions to Rule OUT Misdiagnoses)

Use these to differentiate Neurodivergence from Personality Disorders or Anxiety.

**14. Trauma vs. Sensory Overload:**

- *Question:* "Is their anxiety triggered by specific thoughts/fears (General Anxiety), or is it triggered by environments, noise, lights, and demands (Sensory Overload)?"

**15. Narcissism vs. Monologuing:**

- *Question:* "When they dominate a conversation, are they bragging about themselves (Ego), or are they enthusiastically sharing information about a topic they love (Info-dumping/Sharing Joy)?"

**16. Defiance vs. Confusion:**

- *Question:* "When they refuse a request, do they do it to be controlling, or do they refuse because the request was vague, illogical, or interrupted their focus?"

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## NEXT STEP FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

The Validation Matrix:

If the answers indicate:

- **High Intellect + Low Practical Output**
- **High Empathy + Low Social "Performance"**
- **High Need for Routine + Low Ability to Stick to It**

Then the diagnosis is likely **AuDHD**. The treatment is not "behavior correction"; it is **Environmental Accommodation** and **Pattern Utilization**.