



Other people should understand:

# What it means to be autistic

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# MISSION: UNDERSTAND

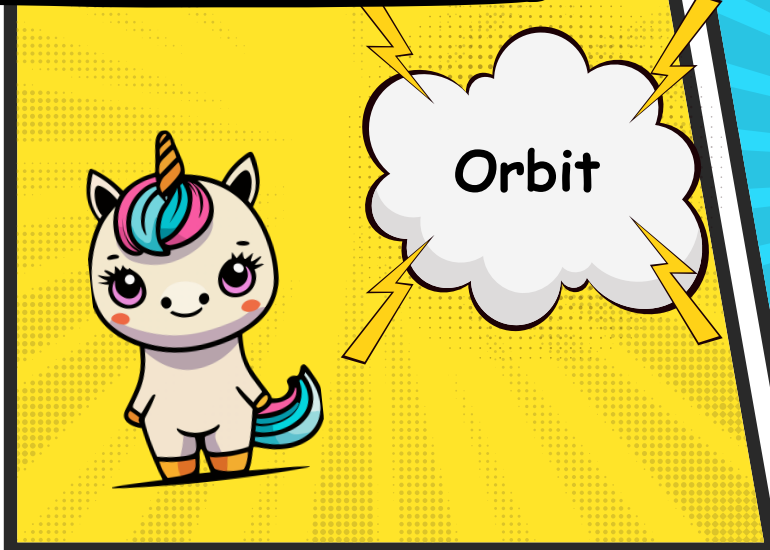
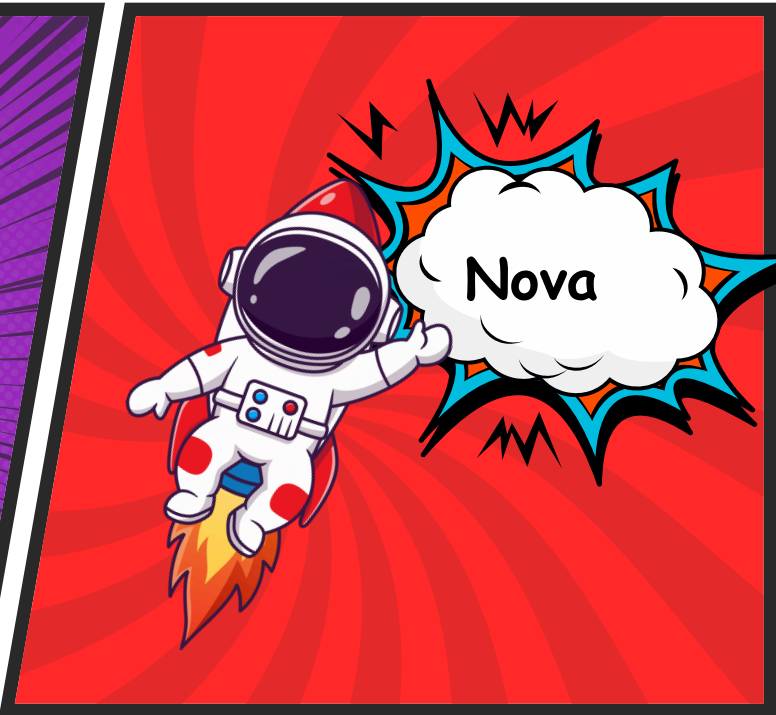
## A Cosmic Journey to Understand Autistic Youth

Join the mission! This graphic novel aims to spark conversation and connection between autistic youth and people close to them.



Blip is our non-autistic character. He's here to learn from Nova, Orbit & Nebula - our awesome autistic characters.

This story is a starting point. Every autistic person is different.



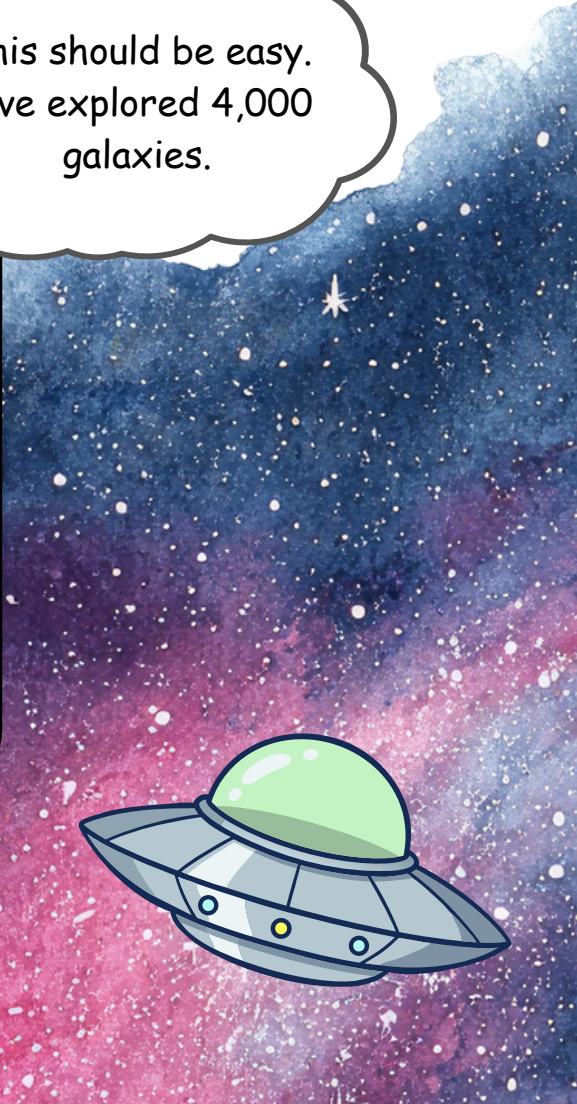


**MISSION: UNDERSTAND**

**Destination:** NeurisDiversica.

**Goal:** Explore with an open mind.  
Learn what it means to be autistic & support autistic youth.

This should be easy.  
I've explored 4,000 galaxies.



Blip had never been more wrong about anything in his life.

A List of Things I  
Already Know  
About Autism.

**GASP!**

- Autistic people are unsociable...
- Autism can be cured...
- All autistic people are the same...

**(DISCLAIMER: THESE ARE MYTHS)**

Let's start over. First  
thing to know — autism  
is part of who I am.  
It's not a disease, a  
tragedy or something to  
fix. It's an identity.

So what IS it?

It means my brain works  
differently. How I experience the  
world, how I communicate, and how  
I process things - it's all different.  
Not broken. Different.

Okay, so tell  
me everything.

I can share my experience,  
but I'm not a textbook.  
Some of this you'll have to  
go and find out yourself.

Remember, my  
experience isn't  
everyone's. Let's  
go meet my  
friends.

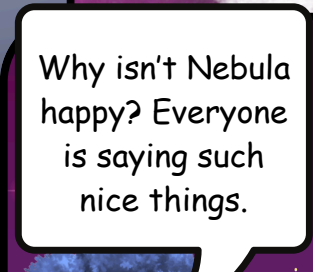
# "THE SUPERPOWER MYTH"



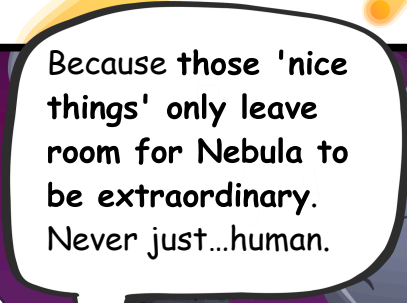
You're so inspiring!

You're amazing — I could never handle what you go through!

Autism is your superpower!



Why isn't Nebula happy? Everyone is saying such nice things.



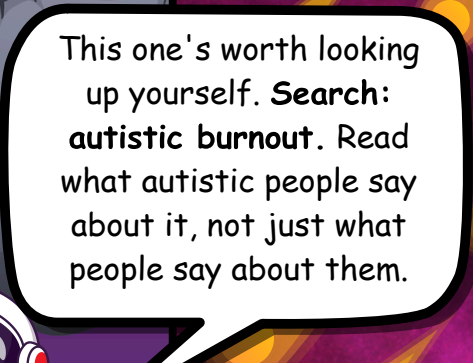
Because those 'nice things' only leave room for Nebula to be extraordinary. Never just...human.



When people call autism my superpower, they're only showing up for my good days. But there are hard days too.



What happens on the hard days?



This one's worth looking up yourself. **Search: autistic burnout.** Read what autistic people say about it, not just what people say about them.



# What other pages will be added?

This resource is still in progress.

Pages 7-10 will include comics about these four concepts:

**Sensory experiences:** Nova takes Blip through a busy school hallway, and they experience it very differently. This page shows how sensory factors can impact autistic youth.

**Stimming:** Orbit is stimming and experiences judgement. Blip learns about stimming, including why it is important and how it can be stigmatized

**Miscommunications:** Nebula communicates directly with a friend who takes it the wrong way. Blip learns about how many autistic youth prefer direct communication.

**Stigma & Ableism:** Nova, Orbit, and Nebula face stigma and show how it impacts them. Blip learns about how it can feel and how to help.



Nova



Nebula



Orbit



Blip



Okay. I want to do better. What actually helps?



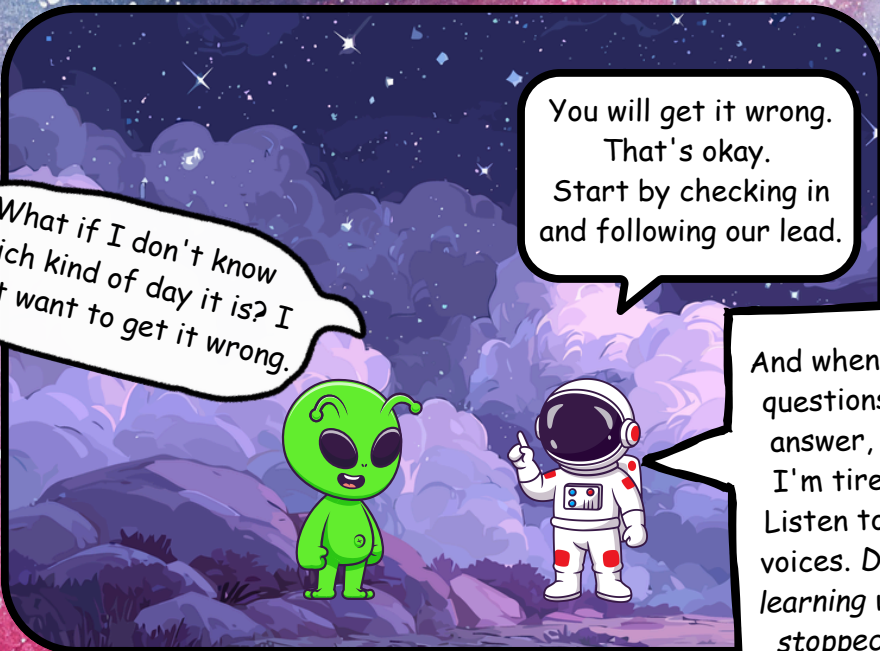
Give us extra time to respond. Silence isn't awkward, it's us processing. Pausing helps our brains find the right words.



Orbit uses their tablet: "Treat us as capable. Always. Especially when we're communicating differently."



Nebula writes Blip a note: "Support me on the hard days too. Don't only believe in me when I'm at my best."



What if I don't know which kind of day it is? I don't want to get it wrong.

You will get it wrong. That's okay. Start by checking in and following our lead.

And when you have questions I can't answer, or when I'm tired, read. Listen to autistic voices. Don't stop learning when I've stopped talking.



### Blip's New List

- Give more response time
- Ask people, don't assume
- Lead with curiosity
- Treat them as capable, always
- Show up on the hard days too
- Meet them where they are
- Keep learning & don't put it all on them
- Kindness over perfection



## For people close to an autistic youth - Help Blip report back

What surprised you in this story?

What is one thing you want to try differently?

What question do you want to ask the autistic person in your life?

## For autistic readers — Help Blip understand **YOUR** experience

What do you wish the people close to you understood about being autistic?

What is one thing that really helps you?

What would you add to Blip's mission report?



This isn't the end of the mission. It's the beginning.



See ya soon!

I came here with a full notepad of things I thought I knew, and I'm leaving with one line: **keep learning**

Thanks for visiting!