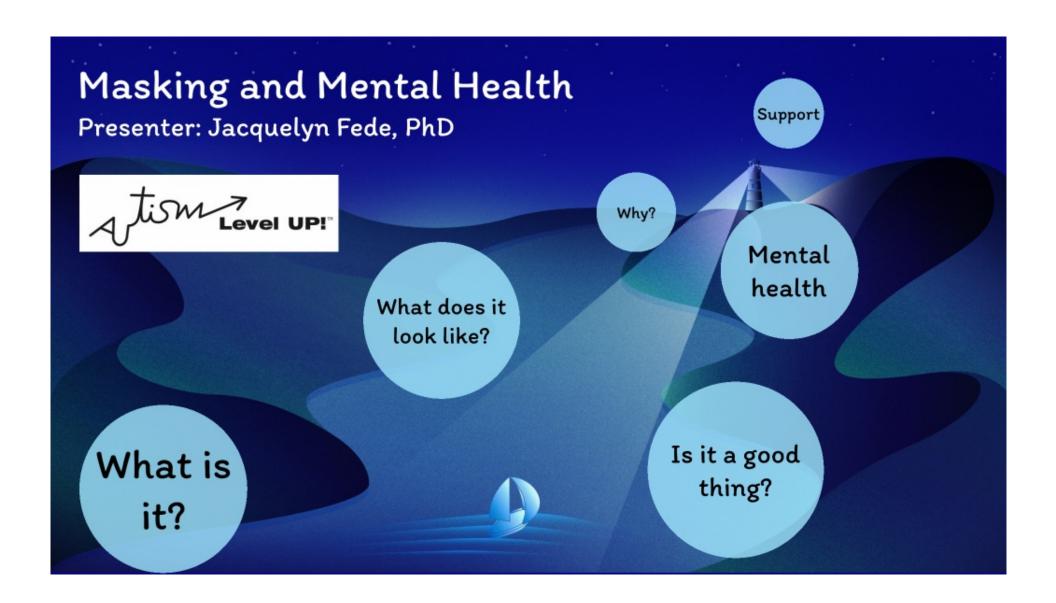




What say you, Autistics? Why do you mask??

There are MANY reasons (Cage et al., 2019)!

- -to be taken seriously
- -to fit in
- -to get a job
- -to be be able to get along with peers/co-workers
- -to reduce awkwardness (for others)
- -to perform well at work
- -to NOT be called out / to go unnoticed



What does it look like?

Masking can take many forms

Can be learned implicitly through observation of peers, pop culture / media

Can be learned explicitly and linked to goals/objectives

To others:

Common Strategies



Hovering near others

Relying on others to talk or lead / always following

Neglected not rejected

You may not notice at all

PARENTS often report lower social awareness

Better in games with rules than "free-form"

*Some are so good they are described as charismatic and very in tune to social

Common Strategies:

Resisting / holding in natural responses

Not letting energy or emotion show at all ("stoic")

Mimicking / memorization

Researching pop culture / engaging in non-preferred convos

Resisting one's own needs and preferences

Going with the flow / anything not to stand out

Attempting to control all aspects of a social situation

Participating in activities and conversations not of interest

*Note

Important Note!

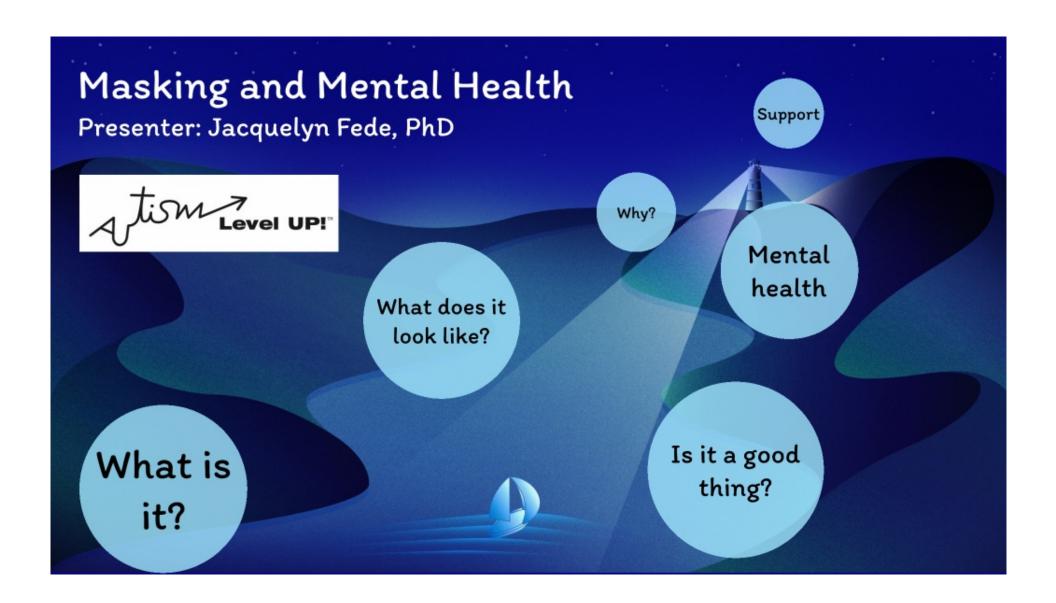
It is not just one of these!

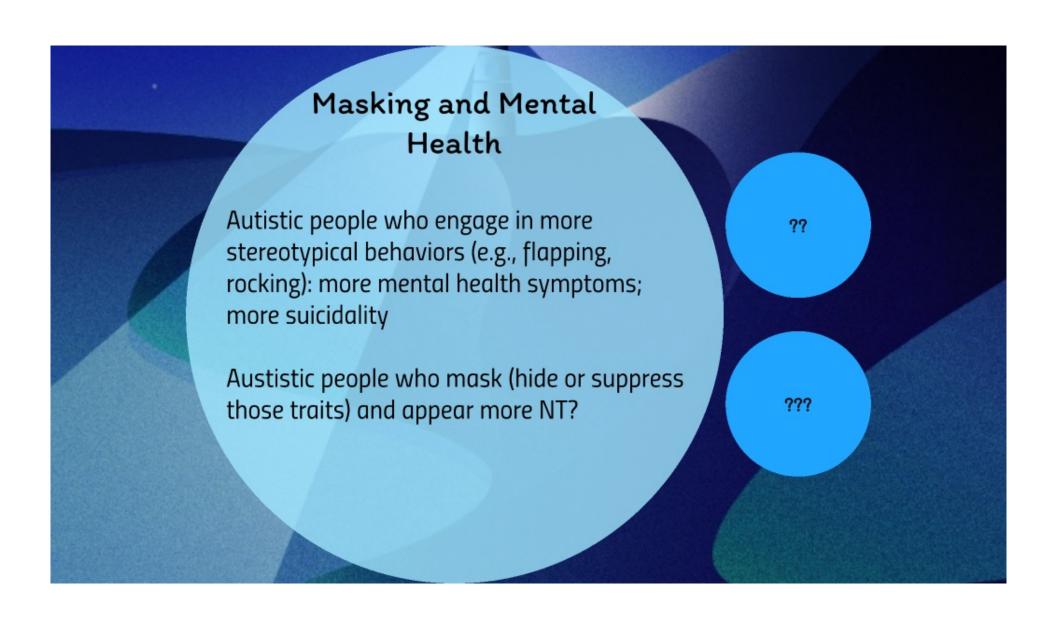
Masking is the combination of these strategies (and more) for prolonged periods of time

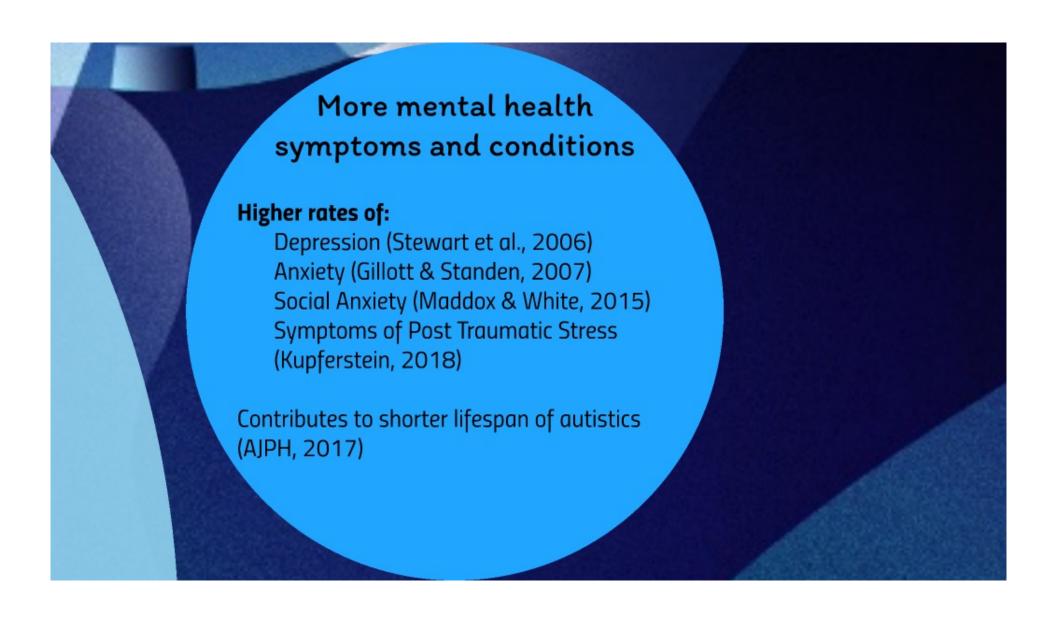
Several, all and others are used

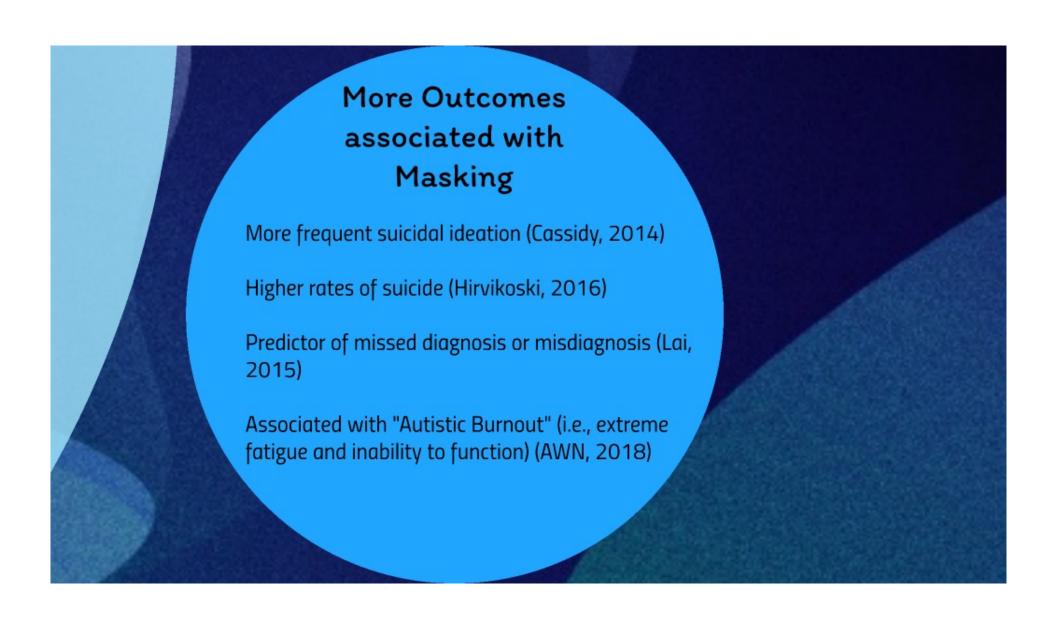
They are often used for long durations

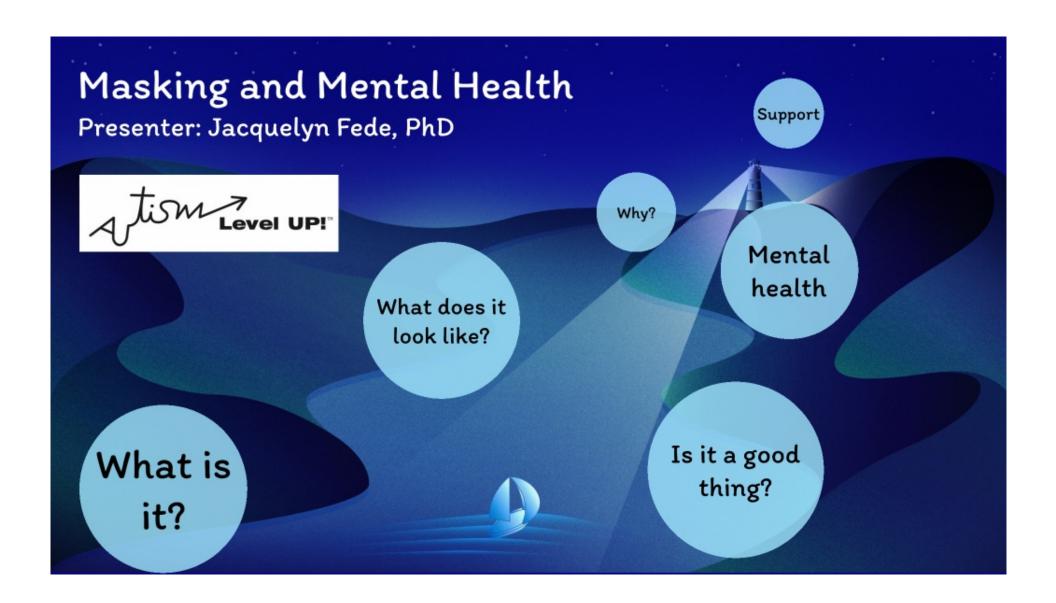
They are expertly crafted and highly accurate

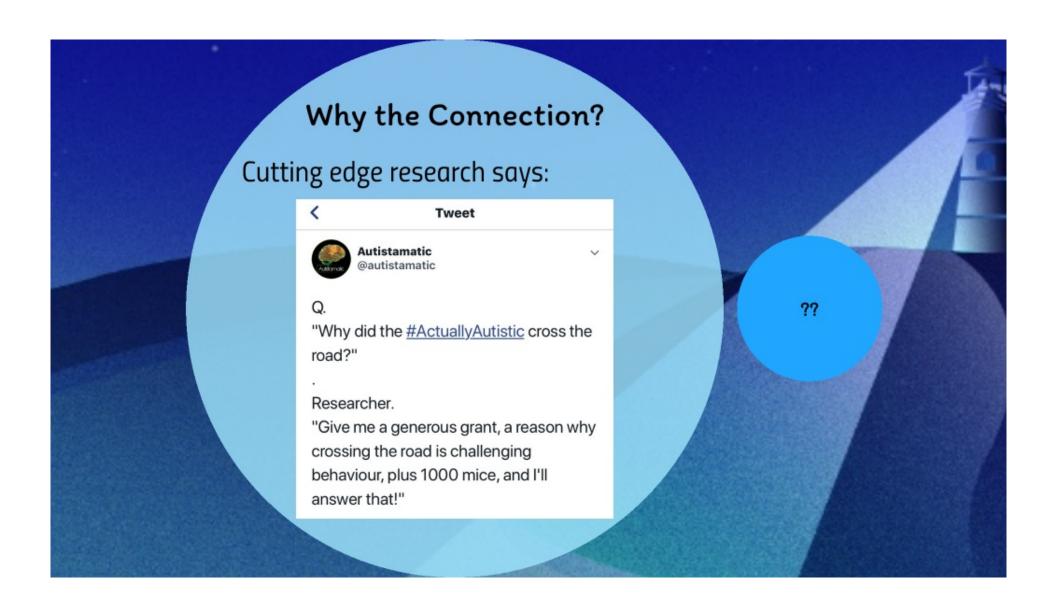


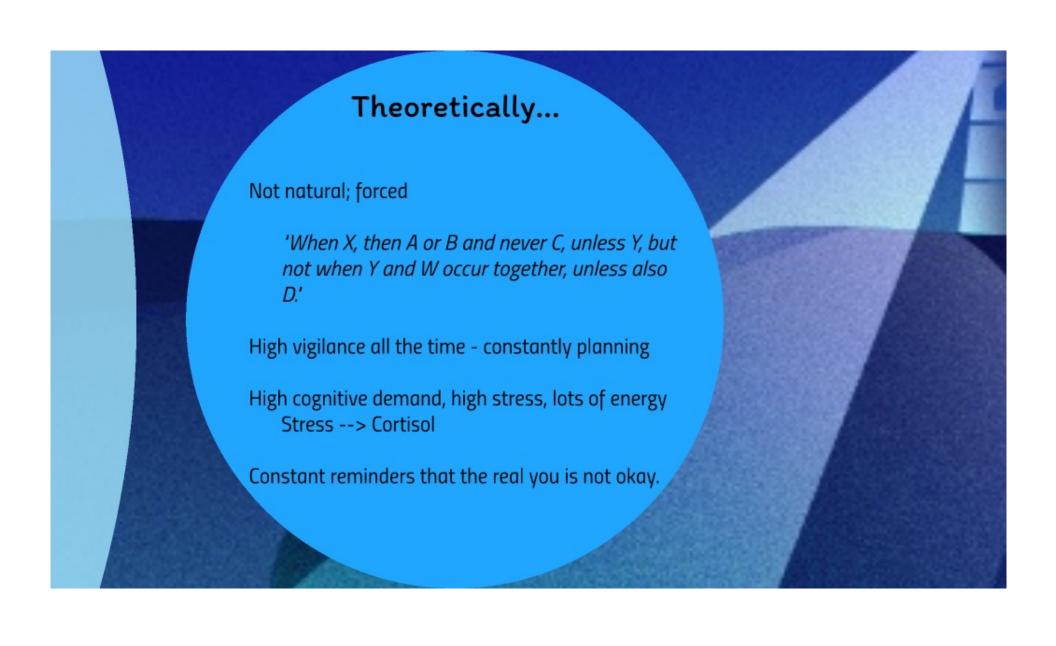


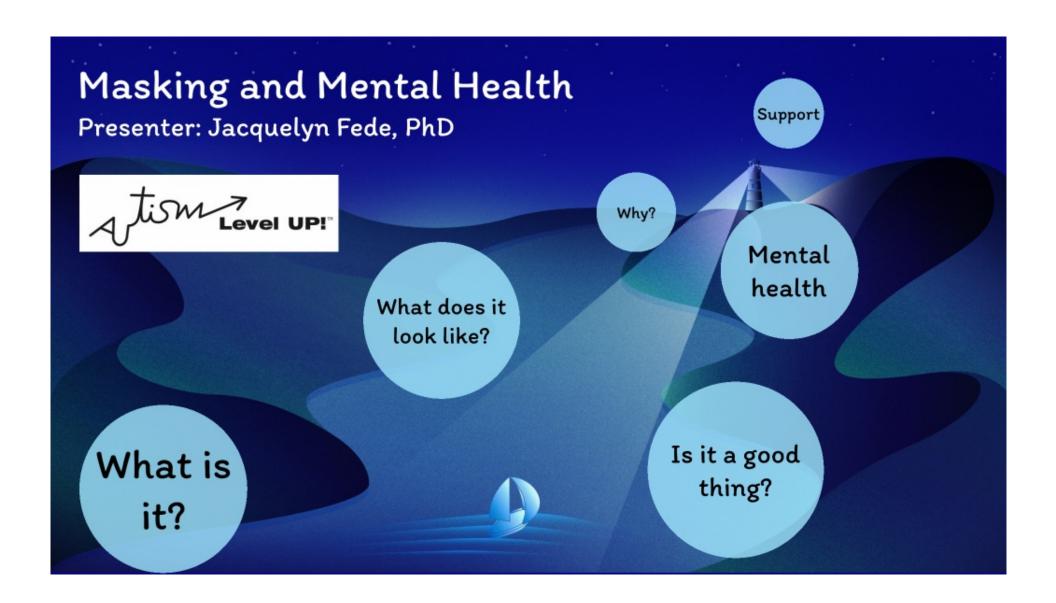














Validate!

All behavior serves a function and may be the way an autistic person communicates their energy or emotional state.

Strive to understand NOT change.

Learn from the experience of autsitic people rather than comparing to NT experience

**If someone is "taking off the mask," what you thought you knew might not be valid

Question!

Be critical of any programs, therapies, interventions, strategies and plans that attempt to get rid of or reduce different behaviors.

There is a lot of emphasis on "normal," but this is the root of the problem BOTH for those who do and do not mask!

**Damned if we do, damned if we don't

