

Camouflaging Autistic Traits Questionnaire (CAT-Q)

The CAT-Q is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure social camouflaging strategies in people with autistic traits. It explores the ways in which a person masks, compensates for, or adapts their social behavior in order to appear more in line with neurotypical expectations. It provides valuable clinical information on the psychological cost of social adaptation, social fatigue, autistic identity, and possible gaps between observed functioning and subjective experience.

Number of questions	25 questions
Estimated duration	6 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Camouflaging Autistic Traits Questionnaire
Target audience	Adolescents and adults
Authors	Laura Hull, William Mandy, Meng-Chuan Lai, Carrie Allison, Simon Baron-Cohen, Paula Smith, Michael L. Pellicano (2019)
Category	Autism spectrum

Preview of the 25 questions

When I am interacting with someone, I deliberately copy their body language or facial expressions.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree

I monitor my body language or facial expressions so that I appear relaxed.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree

I rarely feel the need to put on an act in order to get through a social situation.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree

I have developed a script to follow in social situations.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree

I will repeat phrases that I have heard others say in the exact same way that I first heard them.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

The CAT-Q consists of 25 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree"). The results are divided into three subscales: compensation, masking, and assimilation. A high overall score reflects extensive use of social camouflaging. Scores can be interpreted against the means reported in the general and clinical populations.

Scoring example

Scoring

Total score: 108/175

Reference mean scores

	Autistic	Neurotypical
Women	124.35	90.87
Men	109.64	96.89
Non-binary	122.00	109.44

Compensation: 41/63

Strategies developed to overcome social difficulties (scripts, mimicking, explicitly learning social rules).

Reference mean scores

	Autistic	Neurotypical
Women	41.85	27.18

	Autistic	Neurotypical
Men	36.81	30.06
Non-binary	43.50	35.48

Masking: 31/56

Efforts to hide or suppress autistic traits in order to appear neurotypical.

Reference mean scores

	Autistic	Neurotypical
Women	37.87	34.69
Men	32.90	36.34
Non-binary	36.06	38.70

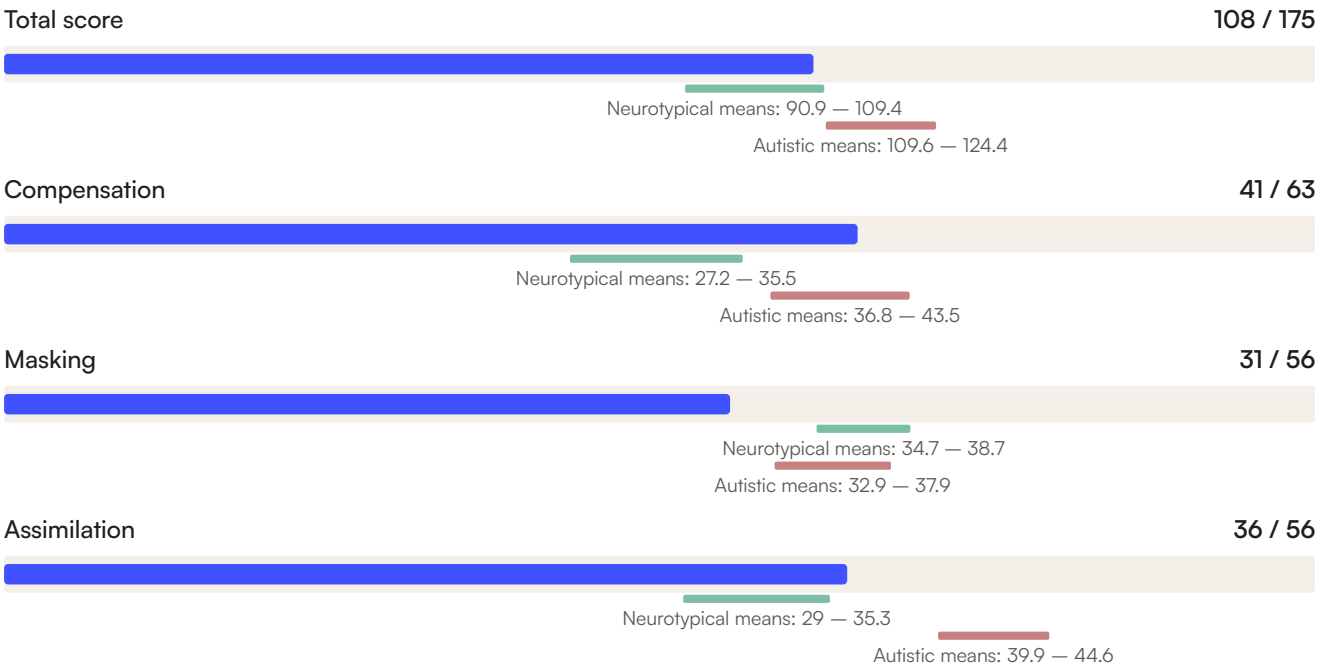
Assimilation: 36/56

Attempts to fit in during social situations by avoiding standing out or forcing interactions.

Reference mean scores

	Autistic	Neurotypical
Women	44.63	29.00
Men	39.93	30.48
Non-binary	39.88	35.26

High compensation and masking scores together with high assimilation may point to exhaustion linked to social camouflaging.



Landmarks: range of the published means, all sexes combined. On masking the two ranges overlap: this subscale discriminates poorly.

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 Romane L. - Online CBT Psychologist