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## Answering comments and questions about your medical or physical health condition

People who have a medical or physical health condition can sometimes be asked questions about it and it can be hard to know how to answer to these questions. It can be easier if you think of some ways you could answer **before** someone asks.

In this leaflet there are some ideas for answers to questions and comments that you could try. Some of these might suit you better than others. It might be helpful to try them out with someone you trust, when you're in a good mood to see which are best for you. You may also want to add your own as you practice.

As well as being prepared for questions, it is also good to remember that people sometimes ask questions because they are just curious, or because they don't know what else to say. Usually, they are not trying to upset you.

In situations where it seems that people are trying to upset you on purpose, a different answer is needed. In this case, the leaflet on '**bullying and teasing**' on our website might be helpful.

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One way to do this is to answer questions with a **brief** and **clear** explanation. It's important to think of answers that suit you and your health condition. The more you practice hearing and answering these questions, the more confident you will feel.

*You could try saying...*

“Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_\_. I have a health condition called \_\_\_\_\_. This means that \_\_\_\_\_. I manage this by doing \_\_\_\_\_. That’s all.”

Try to fill in the blanks, change the sentence, or come up with whatever suits you! Practice saying this at home with someone who you know well and trust. You could write it out, or make it into a colourful poster.

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Another way to respond is to give a short **explanation** and then to **change the subject**. For example:

- “It’s just \_\_\_\_\_. Did you see that film last night?”
- “\_\_\_\_\_ sometimes affects \_\_\_\_\_. I have ways to manage this, though.”
- “Have you done that maths homework yet?”
- “I don’t want to talk about it at the moment. Isn’t Mr John a nice teacher?”
- “I have/I am \_\_\_\_\_. Have you ever met anyone with this condition before?”

## Responding to Unkind Comments and Questions

Sometimes people ask questions that seem a little rude and don't consider your feelings. When this happens, a firm response can show that these questions are not welcome. Here are some examples:

- “Nothing’s wrong with me.”
- “I don’t really want to talk about that because people always ask me.”
- “That’s a bit of a personal question”
- “I don’t need to explain that if I don’t feel like it”



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## Positive Self Talk

It can be upsetting when people ask questions about your medical or physical health condition. In these situations, saying positive things to yourself can help you to cope. This is called ‘positive self-talk’. Here are some examples:

- People asking unkind questions is their problem, not mine.
- People ask questions because they want to know about me.

- That boy was just curious. He was not trying to be nasty or to upset me.
- My condition or problem does not define me. I am good at lots of things like drawing and football.



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