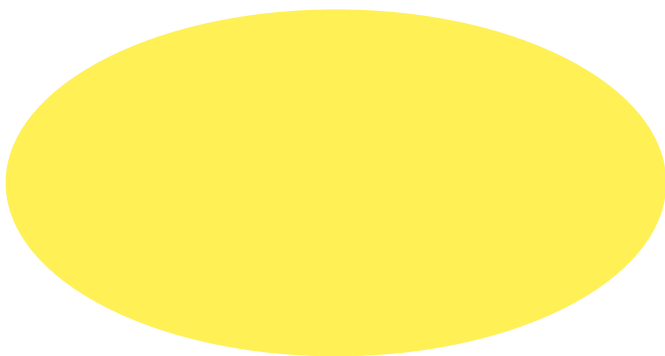


# Sensory Philosophy

exploring the margins of speech and silence  
situational mutism (aka selective mutism) and access in the arts

*They're not speaking English to us, they're speaking stone and symbolism  
and texture...*

Artists, Dalziel + Scullion comment on the Aberlemno Stones (ca.500-800 AD)  
BBC2 (Apr 2022), *Art That Made Us — Lights in the Darkness*



created neurodivergently

Supported by a bursary from

a-n The Artists Information Company @an\_artnews

[a-n.co.uk](http://a-n.co.uk)



## Preface

My experience of Situational Mutism has led me to question the way our society is based on the assumption of universal access to language and speech.

Being made to communicate in neurotypical ways is disabling for many and these unspoken assumptions are never questioned.

By foregrounding the challenge of Situational Mutism to arts practice for myself and others, I am seeking to highlight and counter disabling expectations and the dominance of speech for artists to gain recognition and a voice in the arts, which can also support those with other communication disabilities.

**Author: Sonja Zelić**

*I absolutely recoil from self promotion, yet here I am....*

Sonja Zelić (she/her) is a British artist and filmmaker, who has been advocating for and raising awareness of Situational Mutism since 2015 via ISpeak, founded by Carl Sutton, (see **Resources** p20 for links). My lived experience of Situational Mutism, plus activism and collaboration with peers brings authenticity and a depth of knowledge to this work. I have become expert in my field through experience.

The bursary has brought my creative practice and advocacy together, integrating two, once separate, domains.



Having spent much of my life wondering how we communicate, finding languages and spaces in which to collaborate and communicate meaningfully with others is important.





In many ways my work as an artist has developed from being unable to speak in certain environments, and put what I am feeling into words. My arts practice is a space to express thoughts, information, and experiences — visually, poetically, philosophically, sensorily, metaphorically, and indirectly — and without the pressure to speak and translate into accepted neurotypical ways of communicating.



*'Selective mutism presents challenges to a speaking world which is frustrated by those with it. And it presents challenges to those living with it in a speaking world.'*

Donna Williams, Foreword, *Selective Mutism In Our Own Words, Experiences in Childhood and Adulthood*, by Carl Sutton and Cheryl Forrester

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**“SM is an early warning system for when I don’t feel safe”**

Kieran Rose, *Situational mutism, with Senka, Harry & Kieran: Aucademy in discussion*, Sep 2020

## 1. Introduction

Except when quoting from other sources, my Sensory Philosophy document will refer to ***Situational Mutism*** rather than ***Selective Mutism***, or use the abbreviation **SM** which covers both terms.

‘*Selective*’ Mutism is the current official medical term (originally ‘*Elective*’ Mutism), however, *selective* implies we have a choice, that we **select** when and when not to speak, which is not the case. The assumption causes misunderstanding and many of us have experienced the incredibly undermining comment (said, thought, or implied) — *How come you can speak now but you couldn’t before?*



The term *Situational* Mutism is preferred by many people with lived experience of SM. *Situational* is empowering because speaking or not depends on specific situations or people and is certainly **not a choice**. For example, as a child I spoke at home but could not speak at school, or many places outside home. As an adult I find speaking in front of a group of people I don’t know well, difficult — including on Zoom.



as an artist

**how well can you talk?**

?



## 2. What is situational mutism?

### SM is officially classed as a disability

As a disability SM is under represented and misunderstood. Children and adults do not get the adjustments they urgently need in education or work.

*Selective Mutism (SM) is a situational 'anxiety disorder' which affects both children and adults. Children and adults with SM are physically capable of speaking. However they are persistently mute or struggle to speak in certain situations (in the presence of certain people, for instance, or in certain environments) due to a complex, 'stable' system of anxieties which differs from person to person. The condition generally starts in early childhood but can (contrary to popular belief and even misinformation on other well-known Selective Mutism websites) continue into adulthood.*

Carl Sutton <http://www.ispeak.org.uk/>

*Through anxiety, children and adults with SM find initiating speech / being overheard consistently difficult / impossible in certain situations. Children with SM, for instance, are often unable to speak in the school environment / in public. Likewise adults with SM are also often unable to speak in public / key situations.*

Carl Sutton <https://www.facebook.com/ispeaksm/>

**my life outside home has been dominated by anxiety about whether I will be able to speak or not**

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Sonja

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**it's all about how well you can talk**

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while SM principally affects speech, it can be an anxiety disorder affecting all forms of communication

People with SM —

- may not be able to put pen to paper, particularly when writing about themselves. Thus SM can affect written language.
- may feel (instinctually) that their own body movements expose their anxieties, so they tend to move rather woodenly or freeze. Thus SM can affect body language.
- tend to (instinctually) hide their true emotions facially, in trigger situations, hence they might tend to either smile incessantly or maintain fixed facial expressions, regardless of how they are truly feeling. Thus SM can affect expressive body language.

One can think of SM as an instinctual need to “hide” and to be invisible in given situations, which is very much based on the fight or flight response...

- **Flight:** Something people with SM would prefer to do, had they the chance - running off into the distance! For children, having to go to school precludes this, unfortunately - which can make a school environment extraordinarily stressful resulting in the necessity for some children with SM to be home schooled.

Carl Sutton <http://www.ispeak.org.uk/Overview.aspx>



## a reminder to readers...

**TW!**

Speech is a constant demand on us all, and the consequences of this for SMers can be severe. Unsupported SM can have life long consequences.

*For a child (or adult) with SM,, speaking can feel like a very intimate, unnerving, embarrassing, threatening act. ...and it often feels much safer to keep shtum. So much so, that speaking at all, in a trigger situation, can be unfeasible. Carl Sutton (2016) P28*

*Anecdotally speaking, SM is a misnomer, because it can affect communication in all its guises eventually – including speech, body language, and even written forms of communication. Carl Sutton (2016) P120*

*One of the worst aspects of SM, from a sufferer's point of view, is that the condition can prohibit asking others for help via any method (not just speech). For young adults who are selectively mute (particularly those who do not have the support or awareness of their parents), this is a dangerous and exceedingly mentally injurious position to be in. Carl Sutton (2016) P120*

***my life outside home has been dominated by anxiety about whether I will be able to speak or not***

*...there are rare cases, for instance, where rather than ask for help, young people have tried to take their own lives in the knowledge that (a) if they die they do not need the help; (b) if they live they will get the help without asking and speaking. The fear of breaching one's silence can feel so insurmountable that suicide and other desperate measures can seem logical at the time. Carl Sutton (2016) P120*

*One, perhaps, would have to personally experience SM to understand how distressing it can be to be trapped in such a way. Compounding that distress, however, is that SM can engender very little sympathy or support because it is wrongly perceived to be a choice — namely a 'refusal to talk' when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. Carl Sutton (2016) P29*

*...from my own experience: when someone is "trapped in silence" in this way, SM can cause acute existential stress. Carl Sutton (2013) P154*

**how well can you talk?**

**?**

# how well can you talk?

*I was severely bullied by people who didn't even KNOW me because I didn't talk - and even by teachers*

Leanne (2011) [ispeak.org.uk/Videos](http://ispeak.org.uk/Videos)

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*A teacher in secondary school regularly went round the class, asking everyone in turn to read a paragraph from a book, out-loud. I dreaded this. I physically trembled with fear. I barely got a word out and felt such shame about not being able to speak, and about shaking. One of many similar incidents at school and at work resulting in cPTSD.*

Sonja

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## ***I was guilty of being quiet***

Kimberly, *Selective Mutism, In Our Own Words*

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## other communication disabilities

SM can also co-occur with other communication disabilities such as CAPD\*, Receptive Language Disorder, Aphasia, and for autistic people the effect of sensory overload on communication, (processing speech, speaking, writing and access to words), and/or other neurodivergencies such as ADHD. There is still so much to achieve in terms of access for all kinds of communication disabilities and particularly for non-speaking autistic people.

Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) can impact the ability to take part in conversations and process speech.

Amythest Schaber explains - [What is Central Auditory Processing Disorder?](#)

## negative associations with not using mouth words

unable to speak lacking the power of speech absence of speech  
 felt or experienced but not expressed refusing to plead directly  
 remaining silent undiscovered or unrecognised inarticulate  
 speechless voiceless wordless unspoken incapable of speech  
 unvoiced aphonic tacit taciturn reserved uncommunicative in  
 speech clam up tongue-tied tight-lipped close-mouthed  
 unspeaking reticent unforthcoming unresponsive secretive  
 inarticulate reserved withdrawn introverted retiring antisocial  
 unsociable distant aloof stand-offish cold detached dour sullen  
 silent quiet speechless wordless voiceless



*...imagining a different mode of social organization — indeed, an entirely new political ethos — that would not be structured around the assumption of universal access to language and speech.*

Leon Hilton on Fernand Deligny (2015)

?

*...my supporters tell me that there is a place in London called 'Speakers Corner' – an area of public park where Extroverts stand. But why do the people not notice the corner instead of the speaker? We speak from the corner.*

Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

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**my life outside home has been dominated by anxiety about whether I will be able to speak or not**

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*Article 12*

*Any past declarations, resolutions and motions made on a stage or raised platform will be regarded as void and illegitimate.*

Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

I tried to make other people feel less uncomfortable about me

*We speak from the corner*

Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

## 3. Actions for change + access

### help for adults

**TW!**

There's still very little awareness of SM in adults. Sources of help are available for children with SM. However, help for young adults and adults with SM is currently sparse.

*Adults with SM are significantly less likely to have received diagnoses or help as children. (Carl Sutton 2013)*

The majority of SM support organisations are child focused and led by parents and / or SLT (Speech & Language Therapy) professionals. The accepted model of support / treatment for SM in children is deficit based and favours behavioural interventions with the aim of getting us to speak more. Accommodations can be seen as supporting the unwanted behaviour.

As for the future, one idea being considered by researchers looking to improve the quality of SM research, is wearable tech that monitors and measures the amount and quality of a child's speech. Truly a dystopian nightmare.

### how well can you talk?

There is a very real lack of understanding of SM lived experience in health and education. SM adults (SMers) have a history of being misunderstood and misrepresented, this can deeply affect a person's sense of self, resulting in lifelong trauma.

*....adults with SM were much more likely than the general population to develop other mood-related and anxiety-related conditions. Most notably, this included depression, anxiety, panic disorder, social anxiety, and PTSD.*

(Carl Sutton 2013, P99)

My contact with SM adults and parents via ISpeak and my own lived experience, has shown that many of us suffer PTSD (or complex PTSD).

*at the age of 8 in primary school, I was hyper aware that I made others feel uncomfortable because I didn't speak, to the extent that I felt sorry for anyone who had to sit next to me*

Sonja



## support with mental health

*If you can speak to therapists, you may find some benefit in accessing a talking therapy such as counselling or CBT. In general, therapists working with adults will have not have encountered SM before, and you might find yourself educating them. You may be able to access talking therapies through IAPT Services / your GP. You may benefit most by interacting online with other adult sufferers of SM.*

Carl Sutton <http://www.ispeak.org.uk/WhereToGetHelp.aspx>



**What would be profoundly helpful to us as adults is for trauma to be acknowledged, and our experience validated via appropriate trauma treatment suited to our specific neurology.**



## access informed by the social model of disability

Understanding and access, informed by the *Social Model of Disability* (rather than the medical model) needs to be addressed urgently for SM.

The Social Model of Disability is clear that —

*'it is the physical and attitudinal barriers in society — prejudice, lack of access adjustments and systemic exclusion — that disable people.'*

*Social Model of Disability*, Shape Arts



**Access and accommodations for SM must be the first point of call — SM itself is not a mental health issue.**

*...what if I hadn't been so ashamed all my life of suffering from SM? What if I had felt that it were more acceptable to be different to everyone else? I could, in fact, have lived relatively happily with an inability to speak, if I had never perceived other people to see it as an issue. After all many people happily live with deafness, encountering many of the same barriers in life that sufferers of SM do.*

Carl Sutton (2016)

**Acceptance is what's needed. If society is so against you for just existing and being who you are, that doesn't help someone who is anxious to speak more easily.**

Brilliant fish NYC @brilliantfishny

**how well can you talk?...**

**in my language... is this my language...?**

## can we overcome sm?

A well-meaning booklet written by Speech & Language Therapists recommends ways for situationally mute adults to overcome their anxiety, but with no mention of access. It contains instructions about body posture\*, breathing, positive memories, and ways to act and look confident (or perhaps how to mask your way out of it to make other people feel comfortable?) The instructions are overwhelming...but maybe I'm just not fully committed to 'overcoming' SM...?



*In my view, this is simply an example of unwitting ableism and does nothing to further the cause of SM adults, especially in the arts where so much is predicated on networking.*



Sonia Boue, @an\_artnews Board Member Consultant for Neurodiversity in the Arts

\*Introvert body postures —

*The language of political communication is evolving.*

*As an organic development of the Introfada, a new democratic language is improvised as novel forms of representation are sought.*



- a) staring at the floor
  - b) droop hands to the side
  - c) turning back
  - d) curling up on the floor
  - e) staring up at the sky
  - f) sighing
  - g) palms to open a book
  - h) curling fist in front of mouth...
  - i) rock hand
  - j) averting eyes...
- Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

## clear reference to access and accommodations

SM is a disability which is very under-represented.



**Whenever help for SM is mentioned or offered — access and accommodations (equitable requirements) should be clearly referred to,** be the first point of call for all ages, and mandatory for all SLT contexts and organisations providing advice and / or support.



## pressure on artists to be 'visible' to advance careers

An emphasis on communicating orally and confidently, dominates education, employment and professional settings, and of course the art world. The public school idea of 'oratory' has permeated these sectors. For children and adults with communication disabilities, or even for those who are 'quiet', the pressure to perform and conform can be unbearable.



**it's all about how well you can talk**

## how well can you talk?

**my life outside home has been dominated by anxiety about whether I will be able to speak or not**



**in my language... is this my language...?**

*I wish neurotypical people didn't believe that real time, face to face interactions are inherently more genuine and intimate than interactions that occur with time delays or via text.*

Devon Price @drdevonprice Twitter, 15 July 21



## things you come across in an arts practice that disable you

my life outside home has been dominated by anxiety about whether I will be able to speak or not

I have been unable to develop my career in the way that I thought — to present to other professionals in my field, or attend an interview without suffering severe and disabling anxiety. As an artist you have to network / speak, or you don't 'get on'. I have been invited to talk about my work and to be on panels with other professionals at conferences, but I have had to turn these opportunities down and not be able to explain why. I have applied for commissions and have been shortlisted, but I can't communicate well / at all, at formal interviews, particularly panel interviews.

When my work was selected for *New Contemporaries* I was invited to be part of an artists panel at one of the venues. I went through a week of torture and frustration before declining — knowing how important this is for an artist's career, but also knowing I would be unable to speak or process what was said / be able to respond to questions in the expected way...so we miss out on opportunities.

*...professional spaces can be scary + galleries can be intimidating.*



*We speak from the corner*

Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

## delivering arts workshops and participatory projects

In a past role as Community Arts Worker, most projects were co-delivered with an artist from another discipline. This not only gave the the project more 'depth', eg as a visual artist I worked with dance artists, writers and drama artists, (mostly extroverts!) so I didn't need to speak so much.

In following years working in community engagement, support from a colleague when running busy workshops was standard practice. There's so much to keep on top of to get the most from the limited time of a workshop.

For every workshop that I planned to the nth degree, I also had a detailed script printed on a sequence of A5 sheets stapled together. These were not prompts but the exact wording for what I needed to say, from the basics of introducing myself and others, to what I needed to say to actually run the workshop, that I could glance at while presenting. Once I'd got over the initial talk it was practical and helping people 1-1 which was fine. My co-workers/work colleagues who knew me well seemed to know how and when I was struggling/needing help without me having to direct.

Then my job changed, with the expectation to run workshops with minimum or no support, my mental health deteriorated. I felt in danger of losing my job because of any potential 'failures', and that doing twice the amount of work of my neurotypical colleagues would no longer be enough. I did continue to deliver successful work but the stress was unbearable.

None of this involved access I had requested, however when I did eventually request an accommodation for a particular situation, it was met, but I felt, with an underlying reluctance that I was exploiting the situation and getting preferential treatment.

*We have all experienced access that has left us feeling like a burden, violated or just plain shitty. Many of us have experienced obligatory access where there is no intimacy, just a stoic counting down of the seconds until it is over.... So many relationships where I knew I could only ask for or share so much, without getting snapped at, chided or being punished with reluctant passive aggressive access. So many times where I was too afraid, because of the lack of access intimacy, to speak up and voice what I needed or what I couldn't do, resulting in being isolated or getting very badly physically hurt from pushing myself too hard, in some of the worst cases.*

**Mia Mingus Access Intimacy: The Missing Link**





## 4. What needs to happen in the arts / recommendations

### SM = NEURODIVERGENT

I'd like to see SM being included under *neurodivergent* like ADHD, autistic, dyspraxic, dyslexic, etc



*The assumption is that disabled people know what their access requirements are, that we somehow automatically know what we need... I've only learned what my access requirements are by having them well met. In order to know what we need, we need to experience good quality support, and we need time and space and connectivity with other people to work out what we need.*

*Neurodiversity Talks with: Jess Thom aka the Tourettes Hero*



...for workplace accommodations, I like to call them 'equitable requirements', as they make the workplace equitable  
Anonymous, conference chat, *PARC 2022*

When you are fitting in to neurotypical environments (as most are) things take more time than anyone will ever think you need.



Imo most late dx autistic people become proficient at meta cognition. We have to think about how we think, and then think about how NTs think, and then think about how we can bridge the gaps.

Jenni @AnAutisticWitch Twitter 3 Dec 2018

### Article 12

*Any past declarations, resolutions and motions made on a stage or raised platform will be regarded as void and illegitimate.*

Hamja Ahsan, *Shy Radicals, The Antisystemic Politics of the Militant Introvert*

## accommodations support communication + mental health

I am still learning what works  
Sonja

### Listen in group meetings (face to face or online / Zoom) without feeling pressured to speak out / take notes\*

Use chat on zoom — meeting organiser to ensure chat is read out at appropriate times. Often access to language/words is difficult in fast moving group conversations — by the time we can contribute the conversation has moved on.

*I just gave some feedback for the last board meeting in which I suggest that people understand difference of pace for people who are typing rather than speaking.*

Sonia Boue, @an\_artnews Board Member Consultant for Neurodiversity in the Arts

### Get used to talking to people on a one to one basis\*

### Put things in writing when it's hard to initiate conversation\*

I've often used email to 'speak' to people in the same office — this works well because neurotypical people do it anyway!

### Nod or shake my head when talking is difficult\*

### Be included in conversations, even though I may not talk straightaway\*

\*SM Talking Circles, 2019

### Flexible in communications / preferred modalities

Phone calls can be stressful, particularly with new people, email or text preferred

### Provide printed notes or minutes for meetings

### Give instructions in writing, eg via email

### Get rid of verbal intros at start of meetings !!

Written agenda with short intro for each person attending ahead of meeting

*We speak from the corner*

Hamja Ahsan, (2017) *Shy Radicals*

## Alternatives to verbal presentations / artists talks / participating in panel discussions

Eg. pre prepared video presentation — this does not need to be a talk or a ‘talking head’, but can feature text and subtitles rather than voice + text to voice apps (+ time to prepare).

*..if the arts continue to rely on face-to-face networking, then gifted autistic creatives will continue to be overlooked. An ability to talk up your practice isn't a sign of talent, commitment or quality.*

Katherine May, writer and blogger, author of *The Electricity of Every Living Thing* and *Wintering*

## Improving the sensory environment

### Decreasing ambient noise

### Interviews / panel interviews

Eg. interviewer and interviewee sitting side by side rather than opposite facing across a table. See also the brilliant *SM Adjustment Template* on p21 below in [Resources](#)



## What has helped in trigger situations is TIME

A recent mentoring session with a new person took place via 3 emails over 3 months instead of 45 mins face to face on Zoom — with thanks to my mentor and supported by [@BOMlab](#)

This had benefits on both sides. I got so much more from the conversation via email rather than face to face — slowing communication down and reducing the sensory overwhelm of new people, resulted in a far more meaningful exchange.

Mentor —

*“it's been a learning experience for me too. I found it very good in fact, not just to be introduced to your work but also because my thoughts can sometimes come quite slowly, so it's great to think in a different timeframe than a fast moving 45 minute conversation.”*

*I wish neurotypical people didn't believe that real time, face to face interactions are inherently more genuine and intimate than interactions that occur with time delays or via text.*

Devon Price @drdevonprice Twitter, 15 July 21



## 5. Resources

### access + empowerment — sm voices

ISpeak was founded and set up in 2012 by Carl Sutton (SM) and Cheryl Forrester, to support adults and teenagers with Selective Mutism, and their parents. Before ISpeak there was very little out there by / for / about SM adults.

[ISpeak website](#)— info, help and resources for adults and young people.

[ISpeak Facebook](#) — since Carl Sutton stepped back in 2016, Sonja Zelić helps co-ordinate the page when time allows — posts about SM from an activist perspective.

[ISpeak Twitter](#)— InOurOwnWords@selmutism

ISpeak, together with Carl's study *Selective Mutism in adults* and book *Selective Mutism In Our Own Words* has been key to advancing understanding and support for adults and young people

eternally grateful to Carl for his work

*Selective Mutism in adults: An exploratory study*, Sutton, C. (2013)

MSc Dissertation, Dept of Psychology, University of Chester

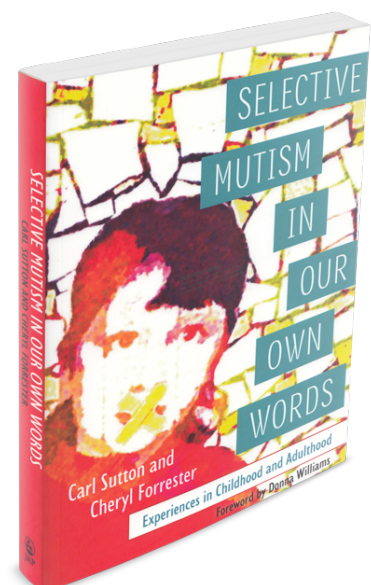
[Download Dissertation pdf from this link](#)

There is very little out there which actually includes the first-hand experiences of those with SM and asks for their viewpoint rather than the professionals or researchers opinion. Until this study most experts/specialists did not acknowledge that SM adults actually existed. 83 participants.

[Selective Mutism In Our Own Words, Experiences in Childhood and Adulthood,](#)

by Carl Sutton and Cheryl Forrester (2016) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Featuring the life experiences of around 40 adults and children with personal experience of SM, in their own words.



***Autistic situational mutism: Aucademy in discussion***, Sep 2022

SM info video @ 55:25mins

'What would you want from the NHS?' @ 1.27.05mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ44rHvSdMg>

( [Aucademy - Education for everyone on Autistic experience](#) )

specific clips above, however the whole discussion is important — the neurodivergentle approach asks crucial questions and is so affirming and validating for SMers TY so much Ben, Libby, Si and Chloe

***SM Adjustment Template***, Co-produced by members of the Canterbury branch of <sup>SM</sup>TalkingCircles

Jane Salazar, Founder <sup>SM</sup>TalkingCircles Peer-led Peer Support for Adults with lived experience of Selective Mutism

Email: [info@smtalkingcircles.org.uk](mailto:info@smtalkingcircles.org.uk)

**Talking Circles Template** [Download Here](#)

Or in this link  scroll to bottom of page to download the document

<https://ideas-alliance.org.uk/hub/2019/07/02/guest-blog-co-production-our-daily-bread/>

the template covers different situations — if only I'd had this when terrified attending interviews and in other situations — would have helped so much



**[Selective Mutism and University - My Experience | Christina](#)**

Natasha Dale has also contributed massively to understanding with the blog *I'm Not Shy*, and more recently *ND VoiceBox* with excellent downloadable resources, sadly both sites are no longer online...

...and thank you too to many others... more resources will be added

## access + empowerment — neurodivergent voices

*Access Docs For Artists* Information on writing an access document for disabled artists by Wysing Arts Centre

*“...much easier than I imagined writing an access rider thanks to brilliant resources I encourage anyone who hasn't done this to find the headspace if you can”*

Sonia Boué Twitter, Nov 2022

*Access Intimacy: The Missing Link* Mia Mingus

*beautiful and resonates deeply*

*Neuk Collective's Manifesto for Neurodiversity in the Arts*

<https://neukcollective.co.uk/manifesto/>

<https://neukcollective.co.uk/>

*a must read, and huge thanks for their mention of SM, generally it doesn't get included*

*Neurodiversity Talks with: Jess Thom aka the Tourettes Hero*

*Neurodiversity Talks: with multidisciplinary artist Jae Tawallah and Autism Advocate Tyla Grant*

*Neurodiversity Talks with: Artist Sonia Boué*

*Neurodiversity Talks: discussions on art and inclusivity* is a series of 6 films where BOM (Birmingham Open Media) Fellow & Artist ...Kruse talks with neurodivergent creative practitioners about their practice, their experiences and how cultural organisations can improve their offer for audiences and creatives who are neurodivergent. To find the tips and notes from the full series in PDF form, please go to [bom.org.uk](http://bom.org.uk)

*6 enlightening and empowering talks on youtube*

*Shy Radicals, The Antisystemic Politics of the Militant Introvert*, Hamja Ahsan (2017)

published by Book Works

*Drawing together communiqués, covert interviews, oral and underground history of introvert struggles (Introfada), here for the first time is a detailed documentation of the political demands of shy people.* Book Works

*A deeply-felt work of imagination (as Ahsan notes in the very first sentence: 'this book is written on the back of a lifetime of resentment'), which both expresses a genuine anguish and develops a rich symbolic framework within which that anguish can be borne... I read it with a feeling of recognition, of surprised identification – with resentment, and also a kind of furious joy. – Dominic*

Fox, Review 31, Book Works

*transformative and empowering on so many levels*

*Social Model of Disability*, Shape Arts

great summary by Shape Arts

*The Art World is Social* Sonia Boué, a-n Blogs (2018)

Anglo-Spanish artist researcher & writer. @an\_artnews Board Member Consultant for neurodiversity in the Arts — Sonia Boué called on disability arts organisations to better consider the needs of neurodivergent artists.

Artist, a-n blogger and neurodiversity advocate

an important contribution about access

*"I often struggle to translate my thoughts into either speech or the written word"* *Lost for words* from the blog: *Misadventures of Mama Pineapple*

*"I don't like the phone because it makes me stupid. It makes me really stupid"* *"I do that too"* *The great miscommunication* Rhi Lloyd-Williams. poet, playwright and blogger

Tania Melnyczuk @ekverstania (advocates mainly for autistic non-speakers on Twitter)

Dr Becky Wood @thewoodbug Autism, disability & educational inclusion researcher — (Brilliant work on autistic communication, particularly non-speaking autistics)



*We speak from the corner*

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*Silence and speech are often defined in relation to each other. In much scholarship, the two are perceived as polar opposites; speech enjoys primacy in this dichotomy, with silence negatively perceived as a lack of speech. As a consequence of this binary thinking, scholars remain unable to study the full range of the meanings and uses of silence in human interactions or even to fully recognize its communicative power.*

Kris Acheson (2008) **Abstract**

## **mute** smelten to melt, make fluid

From Old French mu, from Latin mutus silent,  
from Anglo-French \*meutir, short for ameutir,  
alteration of Old French esmeltir, of Germanic origin;  
akin to Middle Dutch smelten to melt, make fluid  
First Known Use: 15th century

