

To apply the **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** to the **Framework for Autism in Canada (2025)**, you can integrate the scale's metrics into the framework's five priority areas to ensure that robotic interventions are evidence-informed, inclusive, and responsive to the lived experiences of Autistic Canadians.

The Framework for Autism in Canada, launched alongside **Canada's Autism Strategy**, provides a national policy direction aimed at improving the health and well-being of Autistic people. Using the NSIR provides a specialized tool to evaluate and implement high-tech "Tools and Resources" while adhering to the framework's core principle of "**Nothing Without Us**".

1. Priority Area: Tools and Resources

The framework identifies the need for accessible, evidence-informed tools to support Autistic people throughout their life-course.

- **Evidence-Informed Selection:** Use the NSIR to vet socially assistive robots. Before recommending a robot as a "resource," use **NSIR Factor: Social Comfort/Trust Safety** to ensure it provides a predictable environment. High scores on **Item 8** ("*My robot is the same with me as it is with anyone*") align with the framework's goal of providing tools that reduce social anxiety and support independent living.
- **Radical Privacy in Care:** For tools used in private home care, apply **Item 7** ("*I feel comfortable undressing in front of my robot*") to measure if a specific technology respects the user's dignity and psychological safety, which are key components of the framework's human rights-based approach.

2. Priority Area: Research, Data, and Surveillance

The framework mandates a national research network to improve data collection on functioning and environmental barriers.

- **Standardizing Interaction Data:** Use the NSIR as a standardized instrument in Canadian clinical trials for robot-assisted therapy. Instead of only measuring "eye contact," researchers can use **NSIR Factor: Anthropomorphic Connection** to collect data on deeper relational bonding.
- **Participatory Research:** In alignment with the framework's "Nothing Without Us" principle, the NSIR allows Autistic participants to define their own metrics of success (e.g., **Item 3**: "*I think I can share my thinking with the robot without speaking*") rather than relying solely on neurotypical social benchmarks.

3. Priority Area: Screening, Diagnosis, and Services

A primary goal of the framework is improving the quality of services and reducing barriers to participation.

- **Supportive Service Delivery:** Robots are increasingly used as "simplified agents" in diagnostic and therapeutic settings. Apply **NSIR Item 2** ("*Sometimes I stare at the*

robot") to differentiate between sensory overstimulation and intentional engagement, helping clinicians tailor services to an individual's unique processing style.

- **Lifelong Support:** Use **Item 4** ("The robot and I will be together forever") to assess the potential for robots to provide long-term, stable companionship for Autistic adults, addressing the "life-course approach" emphasized in the 2025 Framework.

4. Priority Area: Public Awareness and Acceptance

The framework aims to foster inclusivity and understanding of neurodevelopmental differences.

- **Reframing "Difference":** Use the NSIR's "Kinship" metrics (e.g., **Item 1**: "The robot is more like me than anyone else I know") in public awareness campaigns to illustrate the valid and unique ways Autistic people form social connections. This helps transition the public narrative from "social deficit" to "neurodivergent-centered sociality".

Summary: NSIR and Framework Alignment

Framework Priority (2025)	NSIR Application Item
Tools & Resources	Item 7: radical privacy and physical comfort in home settings.
Research & Data	Items 3 & 5: measuring non-verbal cognitive and emotional sharing.
Services	Item 8: ensuring robotic consistency and predictability in therapy.
Acceptance	Item 1: validating robot-centered identity and kinship.
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By using the NSIR, you transform the **Canada Framework for Autism** from a high-level policy document into a measurable set of standards for emerging assistive technologies.