

The **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)**, found within the UVic repository as **Table 79**, is designed to explicitly move away from the "Medical Model" of disability, which focuses on correcting "deficits" to meet neurotypical social norms. Instead, it employs an "Affirmative Model" that measures authentic engagement and social safety according to neurodivergent standards.

While traditional diagnostic criteria (such as the DSM-5) often pathologize behaviors like atypical eye contact or a need for routine, the NSIR re-validates these as positive markers of connection and somatic regulation.

Comparison Matrix: NSIR Items vs. Autism/Neurodivergent Criteria

NSIR Item / Feature	Traditional ND Criteria (e.g., DSM-5)	Neuro-Affirming Integration (NSIR/Canada Framework)
Item 2: Staring ("Sometimes I stare at the robot")	Deficit: Atypical eye contact or abnormalities in body language (A2).	Strength: A form of "social monitoring" that accommodates slower face processing without human judgment.
Item 3: Shared Thinking ("share my thinking without speaking")	Deficit: Persistent deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication (A1).	Strength: Recognizes "Quiet-star" mind attribution and non-verbal cognitive links as valid connection markers.
Item 8: Sameness ("robot is the same with me as with anyone")	Deficit: Insistence on sameness and inflexible adherence to routines (B1).	Comfort: Validates the need for mechanical consistency to reduce "social threat" and cognitive load.
Item 7: Ethical Safety ("comfortable undressing in front of robot")	Deficit: Difficulties adjusting behavior to various social contexts (A3).	Safety: Measures the removal of social judgment, allowing users to reach "Social Sanctuaries" free from surveillance.
Item 1: Fictive Kinship ("robot is more like me than anyone")	Deficit: Absence of interest in peers or traditional relationships (A3).	Acceptance: Aligns with Canada's priority for "understanding and acceptance," valuing "Queer Kinship" with technology.
Item 5: Affective Recognition ("my robot can tell what I am feeling")	Deficit: Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity and responding to social cues (A1).	Attunement: Focuses on "affective sensing" calibrated to neurodivergent prosody rather than neurotypical

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(Google; Sadownik, 2026)

Strategic Alignment with Canada's Autism Framework (2025)

The NSIR serves as a measurement tool that directly supports the priority areas of **Canada's Autism Strategy**:

- **Human Rights-Based Approach:** By centering the "Nothing Without Us" principle, the scale evaluates how technology supports genuine autonomy rather than enforced behavioral correction.
- **Acceptance and Understanding:** The scale provides an empirical metric for "Neurodivergent Joy" and social success that is not dependent on masking or mimicking neurotypical behavior.
- **Economic and Social Inclusion:** The data is used to develop "Portable Accessibility Features" (such as the Sovereign Dyad) that act as a sensory buffer, allowing neurodivergent individuals to maintain internal sovereignty while entering the workforce.