

How Autism Affects People

Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month - Week 2

Everyone Who Has Autism Experiences It Differently

- Autism is often harder to diagnose in women because it can present differently for men and women and men's symptoms are studied more in medicine.
- Autism often affects people's social skills, relationships, emotional regulation and responses, communication skills and the pace of how they learn.
- Often people with autism struggle with the unexpected, change, sudden movement, and loud noises.
- Symptoms can be noticed in early childhood
 - But people can also be diagnosed later in life, after living without the support they need.

Characteristics of Autism

- Focused and dedicated interests:
 - Very strong passion for a hobby, an entertainment figure or series, or an academic interest.
- Possible repeated movements and behaviours known as stimming:
 - Such as hand flapping, hair twirling, spinning around, tapping, or listening to something on repeat.
- Preference for order, predictability or routine:
 - Such as wanting to know what is going to happen in detail, for rules to be the same for everyone, and having the same routine or meals each day.

Terms

- Masking:
 - When people with autism try to act like neurotypical people in order to try to fit in. It is more common in females and LGBTQ people. It can lead to a large array of mental health problems, like low self-esteem, burnout, and self-harm.

Terms pt. 2

- Communication Styles:
 - People with autism may have different communication styles, skills and preferences to others. They may use and understand words, tone of voice and body language – such as gesture and facial expressions – differently.
 - Some autistic people may communicate in other ways:
 - Sign language
 - Through gesture or sounds
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), such as picture cards and/or high-tech devices

Terms pt. 3

- Sensory:
 - People with autism can be much more or less sensitive than others to the five main senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.
 - They can also have increased senses for balance, movement, spatial awareness and awareness of internal states.
 - Sensory overload can result in irritability, restlessness, increased stimming, need to escape or avoid, everything moving too fast, headaches, freeze response, instant fatigue.

Terms pt. 4

- Social Norms:
 - Unwritten rules tend to be broken by Autistic Individuals because their brains are much more “Black-and-White” thinkers, meaning it needs to be written or explained to make sense logically.

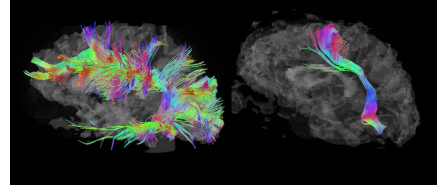
Differences in Symptoms Between the Genders

- Autism is three to four times more common in men than women.
 - Autism in women is overlooked – they exhibit symptoms that could be easily confused with other conditions and camouflage symptoms.
- Takes more genetic difference for autism to affect females.
 - One more gene change on average.

Differences in Symptoms Between the Genders pt. 2

- When looking for genes that may cause autism, researchers found seven when only looking at women, three when only looking at men, and fifteen when looking at both.
 - Further study revealed that five of seven of the female-specific genes were found on the X chromosome, meaning that it could provide an explanation for the difference in autism between genders.

Differences between People with Autism and Neurotypicals



People with autism may have:

- Medical disorders and learning disabilities
 - Autistic people learn at different rates - some need some more help than others to be able to exceed.
- Better memory, ability to mentally picture three-dimensional objects, and the ability to mentally solve complex mathematical equations.

Mary Temple Grandin

- Born August 29, 1947.
- She was fortunate enough to have early speech therapy.



Grandin blazed a unique trail in the animal sciences. Her unique abilities to think visually and precisely allowed her to design more humane livestock handling equipment, revolutionizing the industry. Today, more than half of all cattle in North America run through a system Grandin designed.

Greta Thunberg

- Born January 3, 2003 in Stockholm, Sweden.

Accomplishments:

- Through her dedication to the cause of climate change, she was able to gather the attention of the whole world.
- She became the youngest person to be Person of the Year on the Times magazine.
- She took a year off of school to talk at international conferences, shaming world leaders for not caring about the climate so badly, that a literal child had to address this issue to them.



Greta Thunberg pt. 2

Contributions to Society:

- She founded “Fridays for Future”(also known as School Strike for Climate), a movement that consisted of skipping school on Fridays to protest about Climate change
- Wrote *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*, and *The Climate Book: The Facts and the Solutions*.



“I have Asperger's, and that means I'm sometimes a bit different from the norm. And, given the right circumstances, being different is a superpower...”

Greta Thunberg pt. 3

Experiences on the Spectrum:

- Due to having Asperger syndrome, Greta became hyper fixated on climate change early on in life; this ended up helping her tremendously in her goal to reverse climate change.
- Even though she was bullied and harassed by world leaders and influential people, she held strong and replied with “when haters go after your looks and differences, it means they have nowhere left to go. And then you know you’re winning ... being different is a superpower.”
- Instead of viewing it as a disease, Greta views her Asperger's syndrome as a strength.

Weekly Discussion Question

What do you see as a superpower of autism?

Sensory-Friendly Spirit Day

raises awareness of sensory sensitivities common in autism. Wearing comfortable, soft clothing helps promote understanding and inclusivity.

This Friday!