

Autism and Aspergers Community Resources and Info

Prepared by Noah Adams
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Welcome to the autistic community!¹

Autism is defined clinically in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) V. However, as a social construct, this definition can change over time and from person to person. The DSMs definition, for example, primarily relies on a specific set of traits and characteristics and doesn't line up very well with a neurobiological understanding of the brain. At the end of the day, you may want to think of the diagnostic label of autism as more of a tool than an indication of your limits or potential. By all means, use it to help you find your people and make political and social connections, but don't let it tell you who or what you have to or can't be.

A formal diagnosis can be time consuming, invasive, and very expensive and many feel that it's not important unless they need to access services, accommodations, or professional advice. After all, if you think you are Autistic, you're probably correct! This knowledge is certainly good enough to participate in all the social/cultural Autistic spaces and to find information. The following resources should also help you get started.

Groups

- Academic Autistic Spectrum Partnership in Research and Education (AASPIRE)
<http://aaspire.org/>
An academic partnership with autistic individuals to create and co-author research on autism. The website contains a wealth of materials and resources, both resulting from this partnership and not.
- Association for Autistic Community
<http://autisticcommunity.org/>
Organization that supports autistic folks to grow and learn from each other. Offers a yearly multiday event.
- Autism Acceptance Project
<http://www.taaproject.com/>
- Autism Aspergers Spectrum Coalition for Education Networking and Development (AASCEND)
<http://www.aascend.org/>
San Francisco based organization, which offers a lot of meetings and activities. Also includes some information on the site.
- Autism Friends Network
<http://autismfriendsnetwork.biz/portal.php>
This is an offshoot of the now defunct Aspies for Freedom, with a fairly active forum.

¹The intro was adapted from Musings of an Aspie (<https://musingsofanaspie.com>) and <http://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WTTAC-Adult-FINAL-2.pdf>

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- Autism National Committee (AUTCOM)
<http://www.autcom.org/>
Founded in 1990, AUTCOM advocates for autistic civil rights.
- Autism Network international (ANI)
<http://www.autreat.com/>
One of the oldest organizations created and run by and for autistics, they were founded in 1992 and have been putting on a conference for people with autism, called Autreat, since 1996. This conference inspired the creation of <http://www.utscape.org/> in Europe.
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
<https://autisticadvocacy.org/>
Founded in 2006, ASAN advocates nationally (in the US) for autistic rights. They lobby for discontinuing aversives (e.g. shocks), restraints and seclusion in autism treatment and education, and against the idea of curing autism generally. They have successfully lobbied against campaigns that portray autism negatively (e.g. Autism Speaks, PETA). They also run the Autism Campus Inclusion (ACI) Summer Institute, which is a week-long training for Autistic college students.
- Autism Women's Network
<http://autismwomensnetwork.org/>

Online Resources

- Altogether Autism
<http://altogetherautism.org.nz/>
A New Zealand-based magazine on autism.
- AutismNow
<http://autismnow.org/>
A national resource centre and clearing house for information on autism for autistics, their families, and other stakeholders.
- Autistic Survival Guide
https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Autistic_Survival_Guide
This book is an open crowd-sourced continuation of Marc Seger's *A Survival Guide for People with Asperger Syndrome*. It outlines just about everything you would ever want to know about being autistic and how to do social interaction. That said, every person with autism (or aspergers) is different, so don't take this book literally.
- Boycott Autism Speaks
<http://www.boycottautismspeaks.com/>
Website hosting information on the Boycott Autism Speaks campaign
- Empowering Leadership: A Systems Change Guide for Autistic College Students and Those With Other Disabilities
<http://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Empowering-Leadership.pdf>

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- Interactive Autism Network (IAN)
<https://iancommunity.org/>
This site provides information on autism research for the autism community.
- Navigating College, Autistic Self Advocacy Network
<http://navigatingcollege.org/>
- NOS Magazine
<http://nosmag.org/>
Web magazine with articles by and for autistic folks.
- Ontario Adult Autism Research and Support Network
<http://www.ont-autism.uoguelph.ca/>
Website with lots of information and materials on autism for those with autism, as well as their family, caregivers and support people. Not Ontario specific.
- Relationships and Sexuality: A Handbook for and by Autistic People
<http://autismnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Relationships-and-Sexuality-Tool.pdf>
- The Thinking Person's Guide to Autism
<http://www.thinkingautismguide.com>
Guide and blog on information for autistic people, professionals, and parents.
- Wrong Planet
<http://wrongplanet.net/>
Great website and very active online forum by autistic people, for autistic people.

Autistic Authors

Books listed here include a sample of the authors work, which may not be everything they've written.

- David Eastham
Understand: Fifty Memowriter Poems
- Donna Williams
<http://www.donnawilliams.net/front.0.html?&L=0>
Nobody Nowhere
Somebody Somewhere
Like Colour to the Blind
Everyday Heaven
- Dr. Temple Grandin
<http://www.templegrandin.com/>
Emergence: Labeled Autistic
Thinking in Pictures: Other Reports from My Life with Autism
Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Autism
Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior

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The Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships: Decoding Social Mysteries Through the Unique Perspectives of Autism

The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger's

Animals Make us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals

The Autistic Brian: Thinking Across the Spectrum

Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships

- Jim Sinclair
Don't Mourn for Us @ http://www.autreat.com/dont_mourn.html
- John Elder Robison
<http://www.johnrobison.com/>
Look me in the Eye
Be Different
- Marc Seger
A Survival Guide for People with Asperger Syndrome
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20060207094807/http://www.autismandcomputing.org.uk/marc2.en.html>)
The Battles of the Autistic Thinker
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20060206231230/http://www.autismandcomputing.org.uk/marc1.en.html>)

And more @ <http://archive.autistics.org/library/booklist.html>

Autistic Bloggers

- Allie Brosh
<http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.ca/>
Comic blog
- Emma Zurcher-Long
<https://emmashopebook.com/>
- Joel Smith
<http://evilautie.org/>
<http://crimeagainstnature.org> (LGBT blog)
- Judy Endow
<http://www.judyendow.com/blog/>
- Julia Bascom
<https://juststimming.wordpress.com/2011/04/05/the-obsessive-joy-of-autism/>
- Lydia X.Z. Brown
<http://www.autistichoya.com/>
- Star Ford
<https://ianology.wordpress.com/>
- Timotheus "Pharaoh" Gordon
<http://blackautist.tumblr.com/>

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Artistic Artists and Musicians

- Govy
<http://www.dontstareatthesun.com/>
French visual and design artist
- Ladyhawke (Phillipa Margaret "Pip" Brown)
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladyhawke_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladyhawke_(musician))
New Zealand Musician
- Seetoh Sheng Jie
https://www.theartfaculty.sg/product_info.php?products_id=755
South Korean designer
- Stephen Wiltshire
<http://www.stephenwiltshire.co.uk/>
English visual artist

Resources on Neuro/Trans overlap

- Ask an Autistic
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Bk0GbW8xgvTgQlheNG5uw>
- Dr. Aron Janssen
28 minute podcast @ <http://ackerman.podbean.com/e/the-ackerman-podcast-22-gender-dysphoria-autism-with-aron-janssen-md/>
- Suzannah Weiss
Meet the People Being Left Out of Mainstream Conversations about Autism
<http://www.complex.com/life/2016/04/autism-women-poc>
- Sydney Parker
Autistic and Queer: Coming Out on the Spectrum
<http://www.afterellen.com/people/424935-autistic-queer-coming-spectrum>
- Zinnia Jones
Playing both sides: Trans people, autism, and the two-faced claims of Ken Zucker and Susan Bradley.
<https://genderanalysis.net/2017/02/playing-both-sides-trans-people-autism-and-the-two-faced-claims-of-ken-zucker-and-susan-bradley/>

And more @ <http://the-art-of-autism.com/>

Movies and TV

- *Adam*
- *Autism is a World*
- *Autism: The Musical*
- *Citizen Autistic*
- *Community* (TV show)
- *Mary and Max*
- *Mozart and the Whale*

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- *My Name is Khan*
- *Snow Cake*
- *Stand Clear of the Closing Doors*
- *The Story of Luke*

Books

- *A Field Guide to Earthlings* by Ian Ford
- *And Straight on Till Morning: Essays on Autism Acceptance* by Julia Bascom
- *Aspergirls: Empowering Females with Asperger Syndrome* by Rudy Simone
- *Autistic Planet* by Jennifer Elder
- *Different Like Me* by Jennifer Elder
Children's book, which talks about the achievements and characteristics of historical figures with (or who probably had) autism.
- *Elijah's Cup* by Valerie paradiz
- *From Anxiety to Meltdown* by Deborah Lipsky
- *I Love Being My Own Autistic Self* by Landon Bruce
- *Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking* by Julia Bascom
- *Managing Meltdowns* by Deborah Lipsky
- *Neurotribes* by Steve Silberman
- *No You Don't: Essays from an Unstrange Mind* by Sparrow Rose Jones
- *Rules* by Cynthia Lord
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Mark Haddon

Adaptive tools

- Apps for Autism
<http://www.appyautism.com/en/>
Website that lists various apps for folks with autism.
- Vibes Earplugs
<http://www.discovervibes.com/>
<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2017/07/24/earplugs-autism/>
Many autistic folks experience hearing sensitivity. Vibes earplugs are designed to allow their user to limit outside noise to a comfortable level and many autistic folks are finding them useful.
- Vibrating pillows
<http://www.adaptivemall.com/senseez.html>
Many folks appreciate the sense of vibration and pressure.

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Myths and Realities²

Myth: Autistic people only think they're transgender because they're autistic.

Reality: This myth comes from research that attempts to make sense of the seemingly high number of autistic people who are also transgender. It suggests that by asserting yourself as transgender (or as a gender other than the one assigned to you at birth), you are exhibiting a fixed idea, which is characteristic of autism. In other words, you're not transgender, you're just autistic and that's why you won't stop talking about your gender. This myth is both transphobic and ableist, as it both dismisses the legitimacy of transgender identity and your ability, as an autistic person, to identify your own gender.

Myth: More transgender people are autistic

Reality: The juries still out on this one, but at present, this seems to rely on a number of transgender people seeming to have more poorly developed social skills. While this may indeed be true, remember that transgender people are also subject to tremendous amount of stigma and discrimination, which might make it hard to get out there and develop social skills.

Myth: Autism is an epidemic

Reality: There is a public perception that autism diagnosis is rising rapidly and that it is caused by everything from 'toxins' to environmental pollution and gluten. While the actual occurrence of autism may or may not be on the rise, greater societal awareness and new diagnostic criteria are almost certainly leading to higher rates of diagnosis. This doesn't necessarily mean that the people being diagnosed aren't autistic, but it does mean that these individuals might not have been diagnosed at an earlier time. Dr. Roy Grinker debunks this myth more completely in his book *Unstrange Minds*.

Myth: Most autistics are 'low functioning'

Reality: Autistic people are as diverse in abilities as neurotypical people and while someone may be low-functioning in some areas (like math), they might also be very good in others (like writing). Furthermore, being classified as 'low functioning', which is usually based on one's ability to talk and interact in a socially typical fashion, does not preclude a person from being able to communicate, express their worldview, and interact with the world. It's also worth noting that 'low functioning' is a term often used by non-profit organizations looking to 'cure' autism to scare people into making donations.

²

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Myth: Autism is caused by mercury

Reality: Long story short it's not. It's also not caused by vaccines or 'toxins'. Whatever they are.

Myth: Autism can be cured by (insert unapproved treatment here)

Reality: There are snake oil salesmen on every corner looking to peddle their 'cure' to scared parents, so let me be clear, while negative symptoms can be treated (e.g. self harming behaviors), Autism can't be cured. In any case, treatment should only happen with the full consent and engagement of the Autistic person. MMR, chelation therapy, and Lupron will not cure Autism, but are super dangerous and, if forced on a minor, child abuse.

See more at http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Autism_and_pseudoscience