



April: Autism Acceptance Month

Autism Acceptance Month is an annual campaign that aims to promote understanding, inclusion, and support for individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex, lifelong developmental condition that affects how people socialize, communicate, learn, and self-regulate. It is often referred to as a "spectrum condition" that affects people differently and to varying degrees. Educating yourself is a great opportunity to become an ally and create a more understanding and accepting world for Autistic colleagues and loved ones.

While there is no known single cause for ASD, it is generally accepted that it is caused by differences in brain structure or genetic factors. Early diagnosis and intervention can greatly support an individual with ASD by learning about and accessing resources needed to live fully.

Facts and statistics about ASD:

- **1 in 36 children are diagnosed** with ASD.
- **Drowning accounts for 90% of deaths** for Autistic individuals (14 or younger) who wandered.
- **Boys are 4 times more likely** than girls to be diagnosed with ASD.
- **31% of children with ASD have an intellectual disability**; 25% are in the borderline range, and 44% have average to above-average IQ scores.
- **Children who receive an ASD diagnosis by age 4** are fifty times more likely to receive services.
- **Anxiety disorders** affect up to 40% of individuals with ASD.

Ways to participate in Autism Acceptance Month:

- **Wear or display** the infinity symbol: The Infinity Symbol represents the diversity of the autism spectrum.
- **Educate yourself** about the Autism conversation: Learn the facts about autism acceptance. Research and best practices are constantly changing, and helping your colleagues and loved ones stay up to date is a great way to show your alliance.
- **Support creating an Autism-friendly work environment**: Consider sensory-friendly modifications like providing a quiet working space or smaller training groups.
- **Accommodate and support lifestyle differences**: For autistic people, there can be additional challenges in learning life skills, finding housing, or maintaining healthy routines. Being supportive of lifestyle choices and helping to achieve goals can be done through many avenues in our lives.

Continued research has provided a clearer understanding of the disorder and has led to better treatments and therapies that can positively improve quality of life. If you are a friend, family member, or colleague to an Autistic person, being compassionate and helping them with cope with stigmas and daily stressors can be a valuable addition to their life.

Additional Resources:

- Autism Society: <https://autismsociety.org/autism-acceptance-month/>
- Ability Path: <https://abilitypath.org>
- Ally Pediatric Therapy: <https://allypediatric.com/blog/autism-awareness-month-11-ways-to-show-acceptance/#h-how-to-support-autism-awareness-and-acceptance>

