

# Myth conceptions vs Truths

As you probably know, there are many myths and misconceptions about autism. By spreading awareness about the realities of autism, together we can create a more inclusive world.

**Myth: Autism is a form of intellectual disability**

**Truth:** While intellectual disability and autism do sometimes co-occur, autism is not an intellectual disability. Many people on the autism spectrum have normal to high IQs but learn differently to others.

**Myth: There is a simple spectrum of autism with 'high functioning' at one end and 'low functioning' at the other**

**Truth:** This is a simplification. The risks are that we overlook the support needed for people described as 'high functioning' and underestimate the potential of people described as 'low functioning'.

**Myth: Autism is something to be ashamed of**

**Truth:** Autism, disability or difference, is never anything to be ashamed of. For many autistic people, autism is an important part of their identity and a simple fact like hair colour.

**Myth: Everybody on the autism spectrum has a special skill like Dustin Hoffman's character in Rain Man**

**Truth:** Although every person on the autism spectrum has their own strengths and interests, less than one third have what are known as 'special skills'.

**Myth: All autistic people are violent**

**Truth:** People on the autism spectrum are far more likely to be the victims of others' aggression.

**Myth: You can't be autistic because you talk/make eye contact/are a girl**

**Truth:** Autism occurs in all populations and expresses differently in each individual.

**Myth: People on the autism spectrum don't experience emotions**

**Truth:** People on the autism spectrum experience the full range of human emotions, but may show their emotions in their own way.

**Myth: "Everyone is a little bit autistic" (when this is said as a means to diminish the challenges faced by people on the spectrum)**

**Truth:** Most people find at least some typically autistic experiences a bit understandable and relatable. Although it is good to try to find ways to connect with people, don't dismiss the isolation, discrimination, stress or disrespect that people on the autism spectrum can experience. Autistic people often feel their problems aren't taken seriously enough, and phrases like the above can contribute to this.

These were developed in conjunction with people on the autism spectrum.



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