



Autism misconceptions

10 common myths, busted.

There is a saying that if you have met one person on the autism spectrum, you have met one person on the autism spectrum. Every individual is unique, with their own idiosyncrasies, interests and hobbies, whether they are on the autism spectrum or not! In this information sheet, we address a few common misconceptions about autism.

- **Autism only affects boys.**

While autism is more commonly diagnosed in boys, there are many girls on the autism spectrum. One of the reasons many females aren't diagnosed (or are diagnosed later in life) is simply that they're better at masking their Autistic traits.

- **Everybody on the autism spectrum has superpowers.**

The movie 'Rain Man' is largely responsible for this myth, thanks to the exceptional mathematical skills of Dustin Hoffman's character in the film. The truth? Some Autistic individuals do have incredible talents in specific areas, such as maths or music, but this isn't true for all. Autism is a spectrum, and abilities differ widely across the board.

- **Everyone is 'a little bit Autistic'.**

Most people can relate to or understand some Autistic experiences. However, just because we can relate to something doesn't mean we fully understand someone's situation. Although it is good to try to find ways to connect with people, some Autistic people feel this saying diminishes the challenges they face, so their problems aren't taken seriously.

**Our purpose
a different brilliant®**

Understanding, engaging
and celebrating the strengths,
interests and aspirations of people
on the autism spectrum.



- **Autistic people lack empathy.**

Autistic people do experience the full range of human emotions, including empathy, however they might show their emotions differently.

- **Parents are to blame for autism.**

There is no single known cause for autism. Research is emphatic that bad parenting does not cause autism. Autism is a complex, neurodevelopmental condition with a genetic basis, and parenting has no role in its development.



- **Autism is caused by vaccines.**

There is no credible research to suggest a link between autism and vaccines.

- **Autism can be cured.**

As a brain-based difference, autism cannot be cured. That said, there are some therapies and supports that can help Autistic individuals develop skills and improve their quality of life.



- **All people on the autism spectrum are non-verbal.**

Again, there's a wide variety in how Autistic people communicate. Some are very verbally articulate, while others use different methods to 'speak', such as sign language or pictures.

- **Autistic people are anti-social.**

It's true that some social situations and interactions are challenging to certain Autistic people, but most desire social connections and relationships just as much as anyone else.



- **Autistic people cannot form relationships.**

Individuals on the autism spectrum can and do form meaningful relationships. With the right support and understanding, they can develop deep connections with others.

- **Autism is something you 'grow out of'.**

Unlike some childhood conditions, autism is lifelong. Autistic children grow up to be Autistic adults.

Further reading

Book

Growing in to Autism

by Sandra Thom-Jones.

Web

Aspect podcast: aspect.org.au/about-autism/podcasts

Based on the idea of a different brilliant®, Aspect's approach:

- Respects difference and diversity
- Builds a person's skills based on their strengths, interests, aspirations and support needs
- Develops autism-friendly environments
- Supports others to understand and embrace autism and to develop respectful supportive interactions.