



Reporting about autism and Autistic people

The media provides a platform for Autistic people to share their life experiences, and generate widespread and greater understanding and acceptance of autism and Autistic people. This factsheet provides some advice on setting up an interview with an Autistic person along with language guidelines and some hints and tips for a successful interview.

Our purpose a different brilliant®

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

Preparing for an interview

- When scheduling an interview, give the interviewee as much notice as possible. Avoid changing plans at the last minute to decrease anxiety. If plans do change, make sure to take the time to explain the changes and ensure the interviewee understands the information and new schedule.
- Provide the option to conduct the interview in person, or via video call, phone or email.
- If possible, schedule the interview at a time that causes minimal disruption to the interviewee's routine.
- Ask how the interviewee would like to be described and their preferred pronouns and terminology (see Language preferences).

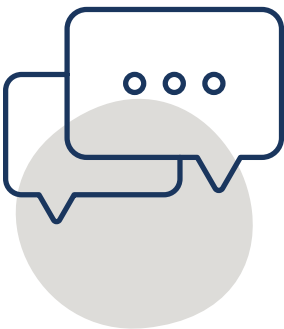
Send an interview confirmation email to:

- Advise the interviewee who is interviewing them and anyone else who will be present, their job titles and if possible, send photos of the interviewer.
- Include a copy of the interview questions. Make sure the questions are specific and logical.
- Ask the interviewee what accommodations, sensory aids, or supports they may need.
- If the interview is face to face, give the interviewee clear information about how to get there (public transport options, parking, access points).
- If the interview is conducted via Zoom, include detailed instructions about how to log on and use the online software.
- Provide the interviewee with a guide of what to wear.
- Provide best contact for any questions.



Top tips for respectful reporting

- Autistic people are people (please be respectful)
- Don't use us as inspiration
- Focus on strengths
- Don't stereotype
- Respect language preferences



Language preferences

Autistic people use a variety of different terms to describe themselves (i.e. pronouns and Autistic identity) or autism. The language used by the media should always respect the Autistic interviewee's preferences. However, research¹ tells us there are language preferences shared by most of the Autistic community and it is recommended that the media takes note of these preferences.

Potentially offensive	Autistic preferred
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	Autism, Autistic
Person-first language (person with autism)	Identity-first language (Autistic person)
Autism symptoms and impairments	Specific Autistic experiences and characteristics
At risk of autism	May be Autistic, increased likelihood of being Autistic
Co-morbidity	Co-occurring
Functioning (high/low functioning) and severity (mild/moderate/severe) labels	Specific support needs
Cure, treatment or intervention	Specific support or service
Restricted interests and obsessions	Specialised, focused or intense interests
Normal person	Allistic or non-Autistic

References

1. Monk, R., et al. (2022), [The use of language in autism research](#). *Trends in Neurosciences*.

Aspect offers a comprehensive approach, based on the idea of a **different brilliant[®]**, that:

- 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.



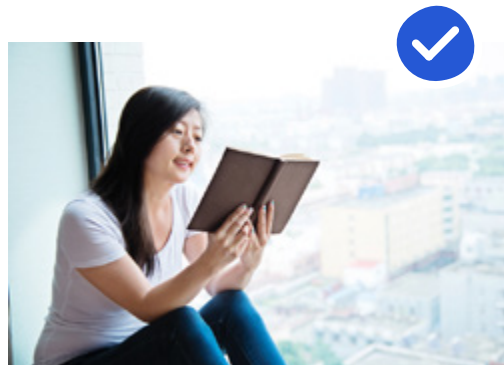
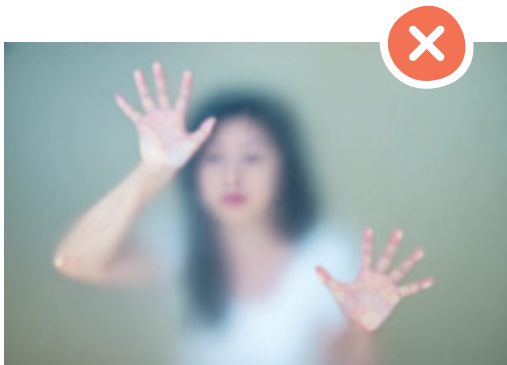
Image guidelines

The way Autistic people are visually represented in film and photos is just as important as the language used to describe them.

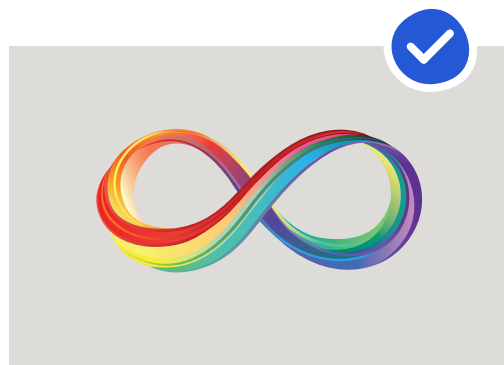
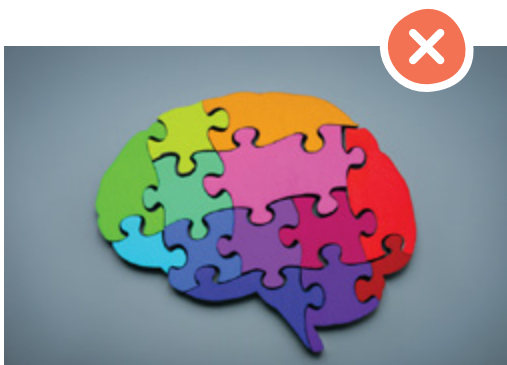
The images on this page outline some of the principles of respectful visual representation of Autistic people.



- Use images that portray the Autistic person in a positive and respectful light.
- Show the Autistic person as part of the community.



- Avoid images that reinforce negative stereotypes of autism, e.g. hidden, blurred or in the dark.
- Photograph Autistic people in a way that highlights their unique character, personality or interests.



- Use autism-positive symbols such as the neurodiversity rainbow infinity symbol.
- Many Autistic people find the puzzle piece imagery offensive, autism is not a puzzle that needs to be solved.