



Autism Society

Colorado

Autism 101

2023



Learning Outcomes for Today

- I can identify general characteristics of Autistic individuals.
- I am knowledgeable about what barriers exist for Autistic people to access healthcare and vaccines.
- I know some specific techniques to support people with Autism while they are receiving their vaccine.

NeuroDiversity



Autism and Neurodiversity

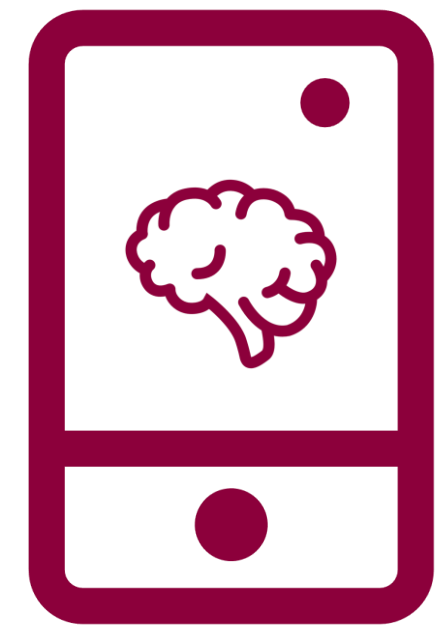
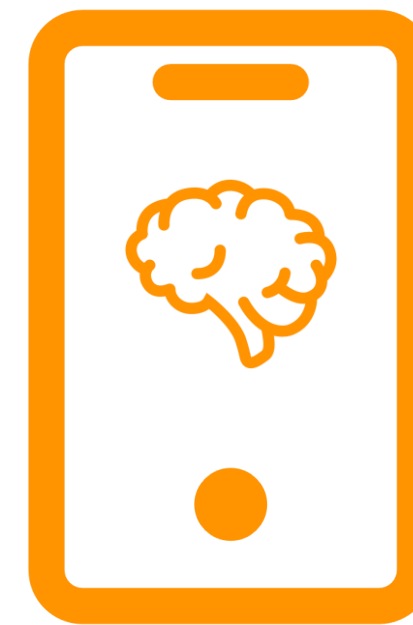
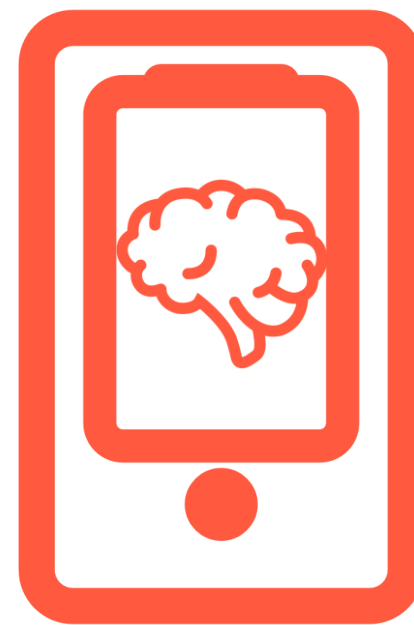
"One way to understand neurodiversity is to think in terms of human operating systems. Just because a PC is not running Windows doesn't mean that it's broken."

-Steve Silberman

Author of Neurotribes

Neurodiversity

Just as computers and phones have different operating systems, so do brains.

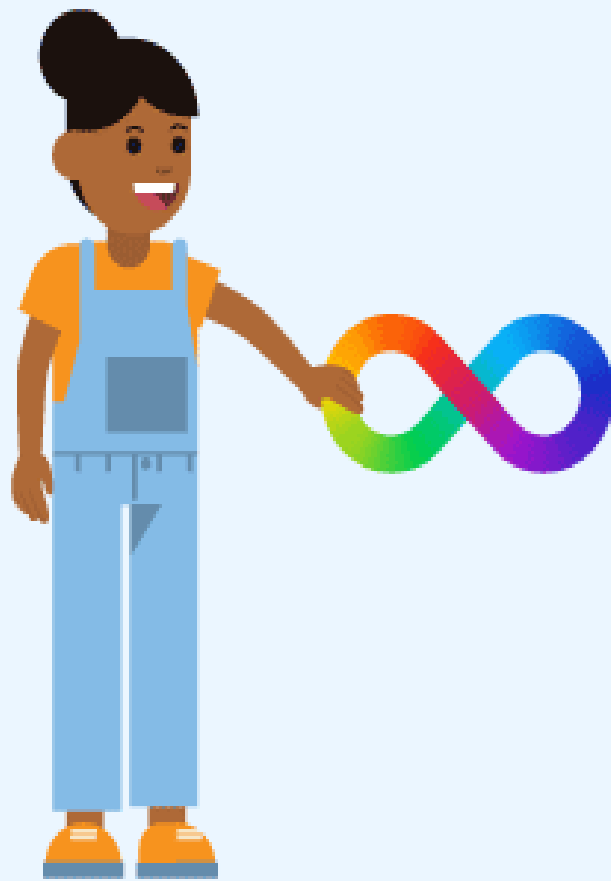


One isn't better than the other, **they are different.**

Adapted from @Morethanonenotype

Representation in the Autism Community

Person-first language



"I am a person with autism"

Identity-first language

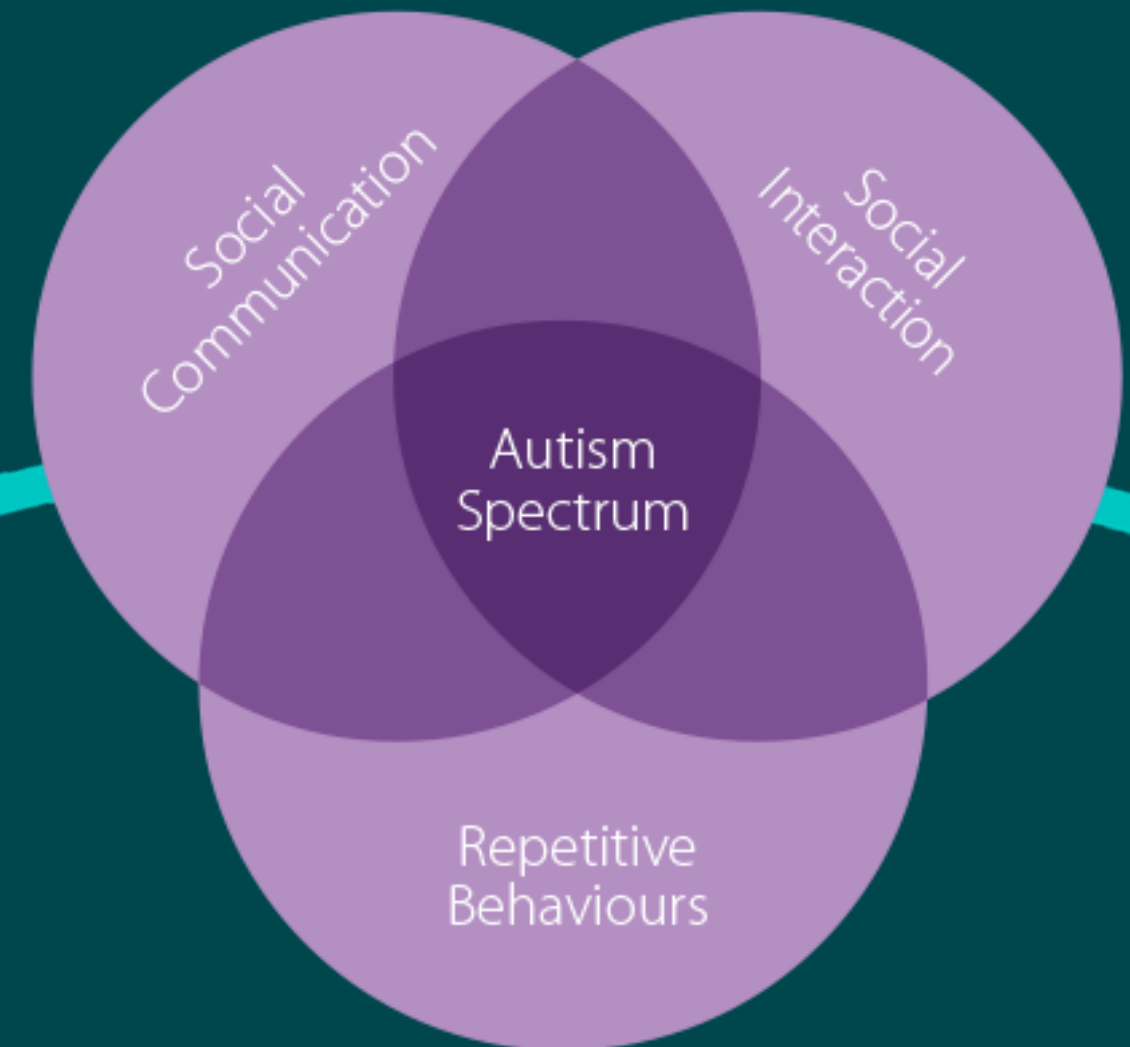


"I am autistic"

What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complex, lifelong developmental condition that typically appears in early childhood and can impact a person's **social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation.**

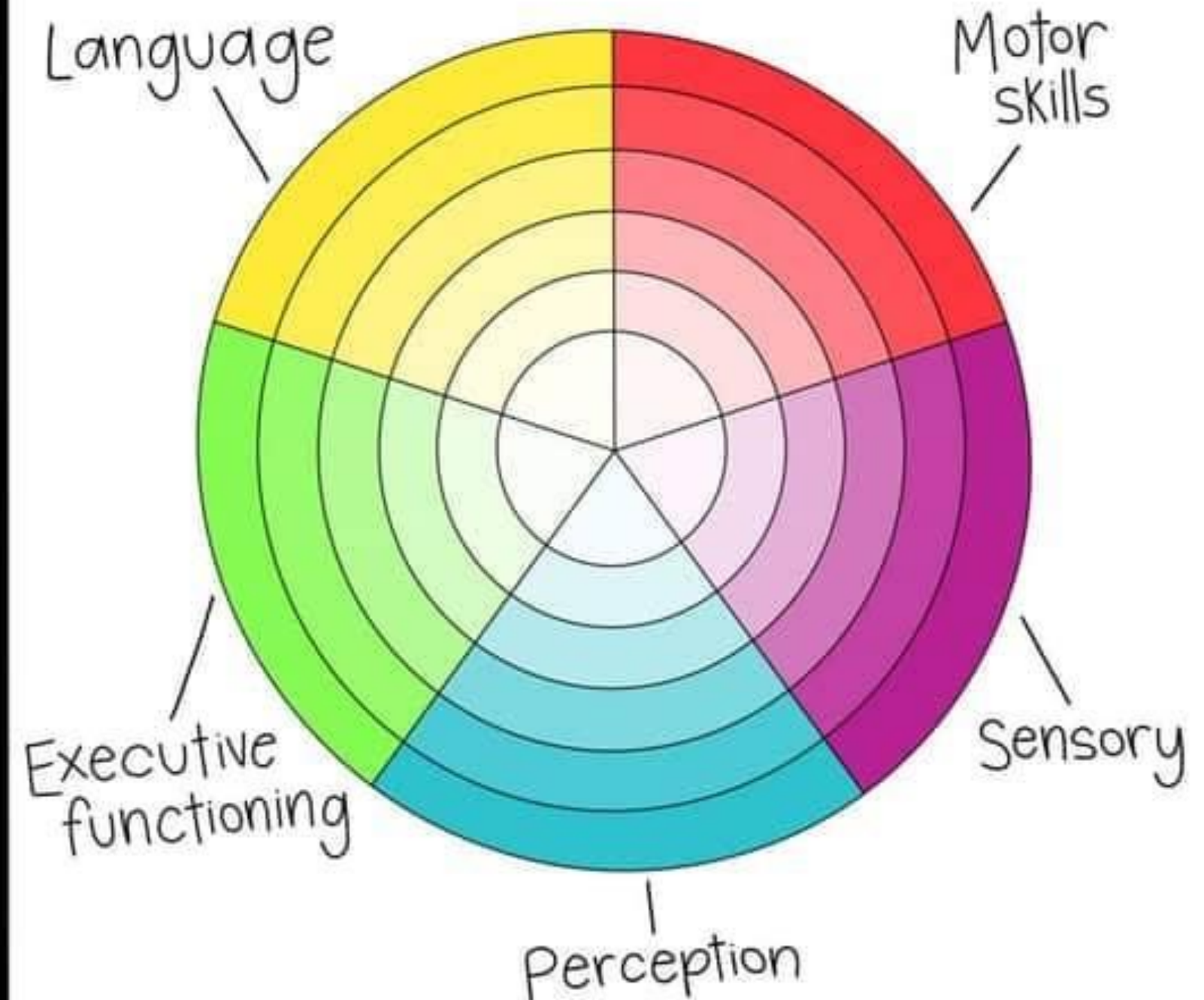
- The Autism experience is different for everyone.
- It is often referred to as a “spectrum” condition.
- Autism affects people differently and to varying degrees.
- Autism looks different at different ages.



What People THINK the autism SPECTRUM LOOKS Like:

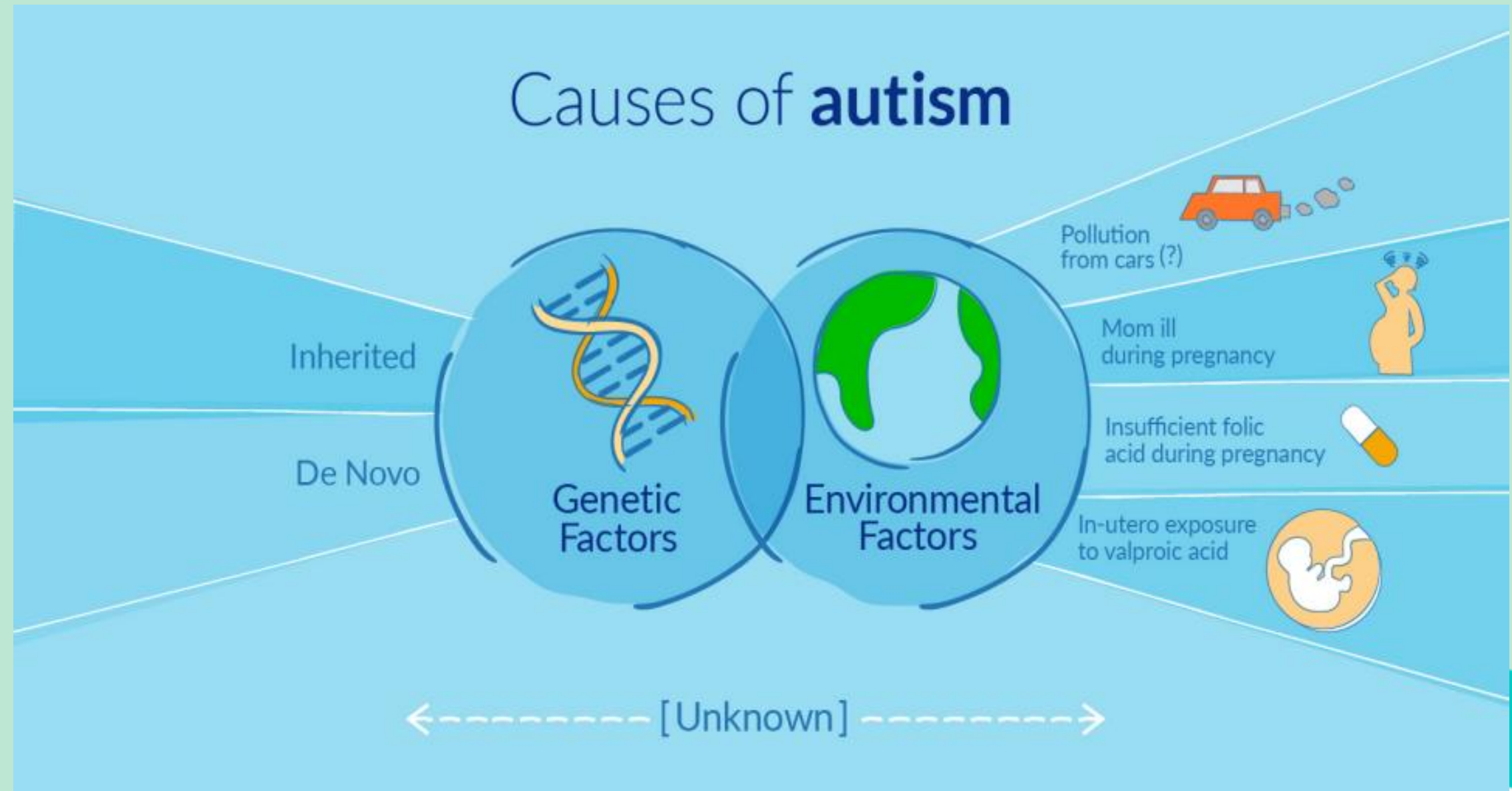


What it CAN actually LOOK Like:



Autism is NOT

- A disease
- Caused by bad parenting
- Caused by vaccines or nutrition
- A childhood disorder
- Something you can outgrow
- An intellectual disability



Facts & Statistics

It is estimated that over 7 million individuals in the United States are on the Autism spectrum; Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the US.

- **1 in 36** children are diagnosed with autism by the age of 8.
- **Boys are 4 times more likely** than girls to be diagnosed with autism.
- Autism affects **ALL** ethnic and socioeconomic groups.
- Vaccines do not cause Autism.
- Over the next decade **1 million Autistic** teens will enter adulthood and age out of school-based services.



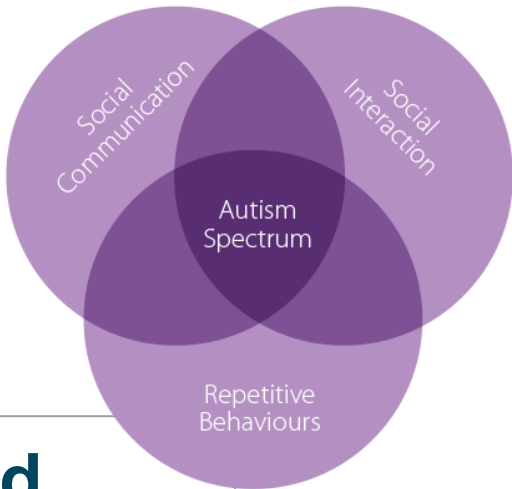
51%

are estimated to have an average or above-average intelligence quotient (IQ)

70%

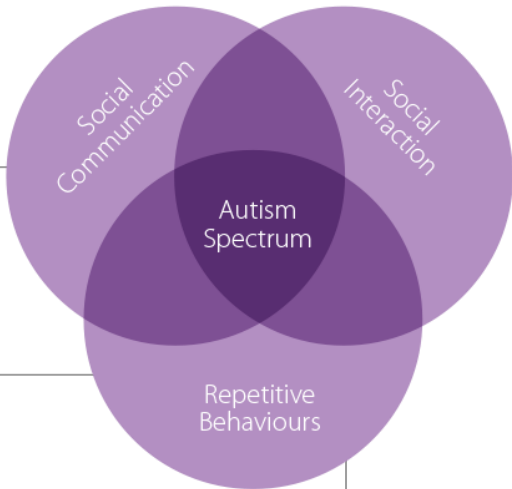
are also diagnosed with co-occurring diagnoses; ADHD, anxiety, depression

Autistic Traits and Differences



Social Communication/ Engagement	Repetitive Behaviors/ Regulation	Social Interactions and Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Atypical social communication to non-speaking● Difficulty understanding or expressing feelings● Repertoire of gestures, eye contact and integration of these with the communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Insistence on sameness and routines● Rigid thinking● Sensory processing differences● High interest in particular subjects, ideas and activities● Self-stimulating and self-injurious behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social initiations● Shared enjoyment related to other’s interests● Managing feelings and understanding how others feel● Problem-solving skills such as reading the context, dealing with disagreements or making decisions in a social situation

Support Strategies

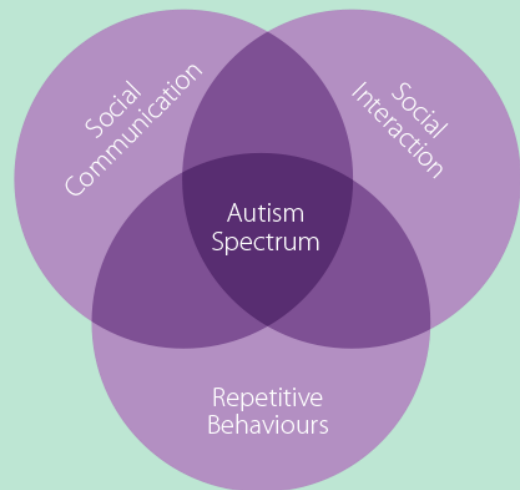


Social Communication/ Engagement	Repetitive Behaviors/ Regulation	Relationships
<p>Assume competence</p> <p>Allow for thought processing and response time</p> <p>Use concrete simple wording (avoid idioms, sarcasm and cliché)</p> <p>Acknowledge and accommodate sensory needs</p> <p>Give choices instead of asking open-ended questions</p> <p>Talk less, show more- use visuals</p> <p>Have direct explicit rules</p> <p>Self Advocacy-Ask Autistic individuals what THEY need; help them identify their strengths and needs and advocate for them</p>	<p>Assume Competence</p> <p>Reduce sensory overload</p> <p>Provide structures and routines- use schedules</p> <p>Give ample notice about change</p> <p>Acknowledge and accommodate sensory needs</p> <p>Allow for breaks</p> <p>Talk less, show more- use visuals</p> <p>Be Kind, Not Judgmental</p>	<p>Assume Competence</p> <p>Explicitly teach social expectations</p> <p>Provide lots of opportunities to practice throughout the day (with different people, in different settings)</p> <p>Break down complex skills and teach each step</p> <p>Use special interests to motivate students (pair yourself with their special interests to facilitate genuine bonding)</p> <p>Have direct explicit rules (write them, post them, show them)</p> <p>Validate-Listen-Validate-Listen</p>

Strategies to Increase Accessibility



Accessible Vaccination



BARRIER

Communication Access

SOLUTIONS

- Symbol-support resources
- Plain language resources
- Translated resources
- Communication board
- Health preferences/profile

BARRIER

Needle Anxiety

SOLUTIONS

- Social narratives
- Video modeling & prep
- Visual barriers & distractors
- Pain barrier/"shot blocker"
- Car or home vaccination

BARRIER

Social Anxiety

SOLUTIONS

- Reduce crowding
- Offer space & time
- Social narratives
- Support dogs on site
- Car or home vaccination


Communication Supports




Autism Society

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Symbol-Supports




Healthcare Communication Board




10
Worst Pain Possible




9




8




7
Severe Pain




6




5
Moderate Pain



4




3
Mild Pain




2




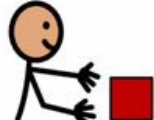




















1
No Pain



YES




NO


 <p>OW! HURT</p>	 <p>HELP</p>	 <p>STOP</p>	 <p>WANT</p>	 <p>WHEN</p>	 <p>NURSE</p>
 <p>NEED A BREAK</p>	 <p>TOO LOUD</p>	 <p>TOO BRIGHT</p>	 <p>DON'T WANT</p>	 <p>WHERE?</p>	 <p>VACCINE</p>
 <p>BRAVE</p>	 <p>NEED TIME</p>	 <p>DRINK</p>	 <p>SNACK</p>	 <p>WHAT?</p>	 <p>BANDAID</p>
 <p>DON'T KNOW</p>	 <p>BATHROOM</p>	 <p>FAMILY</p>	 <p>FIDGET</p>	 <p>WHO?</p>	 <p>WAIT</p>

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Letter Boards




Healthcare Communication Board

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H				
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P				
Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X				
Y	Z	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
.	,	!	?	YES	MAYBE	NO					


6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 305, Rockville, Maryland 20852 | (800) 328-8476 | info@autism-society.org | www.autismsociety.org




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Getting My COVID-19 Vaccine



I want to protect myself and people around me from getting sick from COVID-19.



A vaccine is a medicine that gets put into my arm to protect me from getting sick from COVID-19



I can get a COVID-19 vaccine at any pharmacy, doctor, or clinic.

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What to expect with your Covid-19 Vaccine

Before | During | After



- Make a vaccine appointment online @ [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).
- Pfizer & Moderna require two shots so make sure you have two appointments scheduled.



- Do you need help with the application or transportation Call DIAL: The Disability Information and Assistance Line: 888-677-1199



- The Vaccine is free.
- You will need to show your ID.
- You do not need insurance, a driver's license or a social security number.




- Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose.
- Wear a t-shirt, the shot will be in your upper arm.



- Learn what will happen during and after the appointment and plan ahead: Bring anything that may help ease anxiety like a fidget spinner, squishy, comfort item, preferred video, etc.


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Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine


1




1 Check in at the vaccine clinic




2 Follow a helper to a room



3 Sit down and roll up sleeve



4 Nurse cleans arm with a wipe



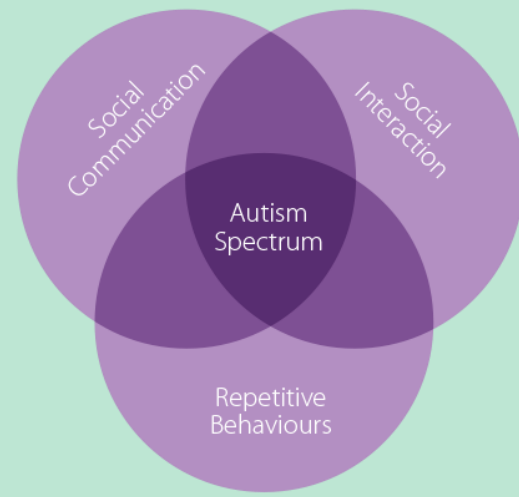
5 Nurse will give the shot

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Social Narratives & Visual Schedules

Accessible Vaccination



BARRIER

Timing and Waiting

SOLUTIONS

- Use visual timer
- Offer fidget tools
- Offer "waiting" devices
- Offer space & time
- Car or home vaccination

BARRIER

Sensory Stimulation

SOLUTIONS

- Sound & light buffers
- Visual stimulation tools
- Offer music
- Reduce crowding
- Offer space & time

Sensory Accessible Environments

- Reduce fluorescent lights
- Variety of seating options
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Sensory/fidget tools
- Visual barriers and boundaries
- Reduce crowding
- Allow for music/videos
- Additional time







What ONE person
may need

ALL
can benefit from.



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Provider Supports

Considerations for Immunizers





Restraint

One of the most common vaccine barriers shared by participants is anxiety/PTSD related to restraint.

We aim to reduce anxiety at every stage.

Replacing restraint with alternative strategies are KEY to our training and the success of the VEI model.

Restraint is a LAST RESORT



The Six P's

- Plan Ahead
- Predictability
- Patience
- Passions
- Power
- Positive Reinforcement





Autism Society

Colorado

Thank You.

**For communication boards and
sensory kits please contact our
Program Director
Shannon -
program@autismcolorado.org**





Get Connected

Autism Society of Colorado

www.autismcolorado.org

info@autismcolorado.org

Jennifer Korb- director@autismcolorado.org

Shannon Phen- program@autismcolorado.org

The connection is you.



The Autism Society of America thanks our partner, USAging, for their continued support of our participation in the Aging and Disability Vaccination Collaborative (ADVC).

The Playbook, this presentation, and any supporting documents are supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) through USAging as part of a financial assistance award to USAging totaling \$74,999,835 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement, by USAging, ACL/ HHS, or the U.S. Government.

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