

WHAT IS AUTISM?



Autism is an umbrella term for a range of neurodevelopmental differences which change the way the brain processes and uses information. It impacts everyone differently; sometimes in very visible ways, and other times in subtle or invisible ways.

COMMON AUTISTIC TRAITS:

- Communication Differences
- Autistic Social Communication Styles
- Intense Focus/Passions
- Sensory Processing Differences/Stimming
- Routine/Repetition

Expression of Autistic traits will vary from person to person, and some individuals may not experience all of them.

Because Autism is a dynamic disability expression of particular traits may vary from day to day.

WHO CAN BE AUTISTIC?

Autistic individuals exist in every population.

Autistic individuals are all ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. Current estimates show 1 in 36 children in the US are diagnosed with Autism.

HOW TO LEARN MORE:

Contact the Autism Society of Greater New Orleans at 504-603-6548 or email info@asgno.org



NEURODIVERSITY

Describes the range of differences in individual brain function. There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving; and differences are not viewed as deficits.

NEURODIVERGENT

Someone whose brain differs to the perceived neuro-majority, e.g., if they are Autistic or ADHD.

NON-SPEAKING

Someone who does not use their mouth to speak. Includes individuals who are non-speaking at times or intermittently. The Non-Speaking community prefers this term to the phrase "Non-Verbal"

IDENTITY VS. PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

The majority of the Autistic community and Autistic-led advocacy organizations prefer the use of identity-first (i.e. Autistic Person) over person-first language (i.e. Person with Autism). When asked, Autistic advocates explain that being Autistic is integral to who someone is, it is not an accessory that can be removed and set down, but a permanent, influential part of who someone is.

SUPPORT NEEDS VS. FUNCTIONING LABELS

Using "high" and "low functioning" is an outdated and disrespectful way to talk about people. Instead, talk about an individual's support needs in specific areas. Labels like "high" and "low functioning" are not descriptive of specific needs and can result in lack of appropriate support for labeled "high functioning" and segregation and low expectations for people labeled "low functioning."