

April Tool Kit: Autism Awareness

California Nursing Students' Association
April 2020 | Community Health

Autism Awareness



IN THIS TOOLKIT:

1. WHAT IS AUTISM?
 - A. SIGNS/SYMPTOMS
 - B. DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT
 - C. CAUSES & RISK FACTORS
2. AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH
3. RESOURCES

What is Autism?



- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability related to communication and behavior.
- Cognitive abilities vary from gifted to severely challenged.
- "If you've met one person with autism, you've met ONE person with autism."
- There is nothing about the way people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people.
- A diagnosis of ASD now includes: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger's syndrome.

What is Autism?

Signs and Symptoms:

- typically start in early childhood
- repetitive behavior
- delayed speech and language skills
- might not want to change daily routine
- different ways of learning and interacting

Children/adults with ASD might:

- not point at objects to show interest
- avoid eye contact or want to be alone
- not understand other's feelings
- prefer not to be held or cuddled
- repeat or echo words, phrases, or actions
- have unusual reactions to smells, tastes, sounds
- flap their hands, rock their body, spin in circles

What is Autism?



Diagnosis

- based on behavior and development
- can be detected at 18 months
- many aren't diagnosed until older

Treatment

- early intervention (birth to 3 years old)
- services to help with walking, talking, and interaction
- speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy

What is Autism?



Causes and Risk Factors

- biologic, genetic, environmental
- siblings with ASD
- other genetic or chromosomal conditions such as fragile X and tuberous sclerosis
- valproic acid and thalidomide taken during pregnancy
- being born to older parents

Who is Affected

- boys are 4 times more likely to develop ASD
- affects 1 in 59 children
- affects all racial, ethnic, & socioeconomic groups

Autism Awareness Month

- April is National Autism Awareness Month (NAAM).
- April 2nd is World Autism Awareness Day.
- The goal of NAAM is to increase awareness for signs/symptoms & opportunities for those with ASD.
- For more information on how to get involved visit <http://www.autismawarenessmonth.org/>



NAAM

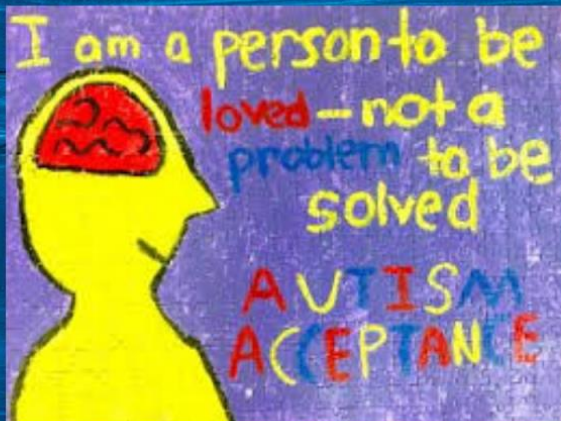
TAKE THE PLEDGE!

#CelebrateDifferences for
National Autism Awareness Month.
Spread awareness, promote
acceptance, ignite change!

Autism Awareness Ribbon & Wearing Blue



- The color blue is associated with Autism Awareness Day.
 - People can wear blue or put up blue lights in support.
 - The puzzle pattern represents the complexity of ASD.
 - The bright colors and different shapes represent hope and the diversity of people with ASD.
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- Views about the ribbon and wearing blue are diverse and wide-ranging.
 - Some people feel the puzzle piece ribbon means they are not alone, and it shows the uniqueness of ASD.
 - Others don't like the symbols because they bring about feelings of isolation (missing puzzle piece) and sadness (the color blue).



"I am different,
not less."
Temple Grandin

Autism Society of America (2020). The Autism Awareness Ribbon. Retrieved from <https://www.autism-society.org/about-the-autism-society/history/autism-awareness-ribbon/>

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2019). Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

