

Winter 2022 Horizons Newsletter



Autism Support of Michigan
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Special Announcement from ASM:

We are pleased to inform you that the name of our organization has been changed from Autism Society of Michigan to **Autism Support of Michigan (ASM)**.

We ensure you that this rebranding will not change our mission or availability to help those on the spectrum, their families and professionals that assist these individuals.

Our contact phone number, website, email and mailing addresses will remain the same. Please feel free to contact us at: 517-882-2800 or asminr@autism-mi.org with any questions, or concerns.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Last updated: February 4, 2022

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability resulting in communication, social, and behavioral difficulties. ASD impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, resulting in communication and social interaction issues. Autism spectrum disorder may include limited or repeated types of behavior. However, the term “spectrum” in ASD means a wide range of symptoms and severity of the disorder.

Specific vital abilities like thinking, learning, and problem-solving of those with ASD can vary from gifted to severely affected. Some patients need a lot of support in their daily lives, while others may not need any.

Autism can have a serious impact on education and employment. In fact, 85% of college-educated people with autism are unemployed. The level of support provided by the national and local authorities, and societal attitudes are crucial factors in determining the quality of life of those with ASD.

Diagnosis:

At well child visits, the pediatrician evaluates their behavior and development. If there are any developmental delays or behaviors that signal autism, the pediatrician will provide a referral to a developmental pediatrician or pediatric neurologist. There are screening tests for autism like the M-CHAT that is given to toddlers. However, the diagnosis of autism is missed or delayed in many people, particularly girls and women.

There are no blood or medical tests to diagnose the disorder. The symptoms and signs of ASD can be identified by collecting information and testing. Surveillance and developmental monitoring is an ongoing and active process of watching the growth of a child. Encouraging conversations between family and support providers about the abilities and skills of the child is key.

Autism Spectrum Disorder can sometimes be detected at the age of eighteen months or earlier. When a child is two years of age, a diagnosis by an experienced doctor can be very reliable. Many children, however, don't receive a final diagnosis till an older age. This delay with children suffering from ASD can deprive them of the early help they need.

Children with autism are able to interact and communicate well if they are given timely access to psychosocial interventions based on evidence. It is very important to monitor the effects of autism on children's development to ensure child's health care. Advocating for a loved one or patient with ASD is key.

Signs and symptoms:

ASD is a spectrum disorder, meaning that every individual with autism has a separate set of strengths and problems. Those with autism may struggle with communication, emotional, and social skills. The determination of severity can be difficult owing to the mixture of symptoms in every child. It is normally based on the level of impairments.

People with ASD also have different ways of paying attention, learning or reacting to others. Symptoms of autism start during early childhood and can last till the end of life.

Sometimes children show signs of autism spectrum disorder in early childhood. This can include reduced eye contact, indifference to caregivers, or lack of response to their name. Other autism-affected children may develop normally at an early age, but they suddenly become aggressive or withdrawn or lose language skills. These signs and symptoms can be seen by the age of two years.

Some children, suffering from autism, have difficulty in learning, while some show lower than normal intelligence. Some have normal to high levels of intelligence, and learn quickly, yet have difficulty in communicating and applying their skills in daily life and adjusting to various situations. Some common signs shown by those with autism spectrum disorder are as follows:

Social Communication and Interaction Skills:

Interaction and social communication skills can be challenging for those with autism. They may show the following signs:

- Avoids or does not keep eye contact
- Cannot start a conversation or keep on going, or only starts on to make a request or label an item
- Resists holding and cuddling, and seems to prefer playing alone, living in his/her own world
- Speaks with an abnormal tone, like monotone, or rhythm
- Unable to play simple interactive games like pat-a-cake by one year of age
- Use few or no gestures by twelve months of age
- Does not wave goodbye
- Shows little interest in children of his age
- Does not play games with turn-taking
- May not respond to questions or directions
- Has difficulty in understanding others' feelings or talking about own feelings
- Does not show facial expressions like sad, angry, surprised, or happy

Restricted or Repetitive Behaviors or Interests:

Those with autism have unusual interests or behaviors. A child or adult with ASD may have repetitive patterns or limited activities, interests, or behaviors, including any of these signs:

- Arranges toys or other items in an order and gets upset when the order changes
- Develops certain rituals or routines and shows anger at any change
- Plays with toys the same way daily
- Repeats words or phrases over and over
- Is focused on parts of objects, like wheels
- Gets upset with minor changes
- Has obsessive interests
- Rocks body, flap hands, or spins self in a circular motion
- Is usually sensitive to light, touch, or sound
- May be indifferent to temperature or pain
- Has unusual reactions to the way things smell, taste, sound, look or feel
- Has certain food preferences, such as eating only selected foods and refusing others

Risk factors:

The number of children with autism spectrum disorder is on the increase. It can't be clearly said whether this is due to better diagnosing and reporting or there is a real increase in the number of cases or both. It affects children of all nationalities and races.

- Boys are 4 times more likely to develop ASD than girls
- Families with one child with ASD are more likely to have another child with the disorder.
- Children with other medical conditions have a relatively higher risk of ASD.

Winter

Winter is one of the four seasons. Winter includes the months of December, January, and February. Winter is the coldest season that leads to spring.

Winter is a time when people spend more time indoors.
There is less sunlight in the winter.

winter



Winter is a time to enjoy snow and cold weather.
Some people like to ski and go sledding in the snow.
Some people like to build snowmen and play in the snow.
Some people stay inside and stay warm, instead.
People try to stay warm in the winter.
They usually wear coats and hats and gloves or mittens.

snowman



In the winter, there are a lot of holidays that people like to celebrate. Some people celebrate holidays and spend extra time with their families.
Most schools have a short break from school in the winter.
There are a lot of fun things to do in the winter.
Playing inside and outside can be fun!

holidays



Winter is the coldest season of the year.
Near the end of winter, people are usually excited for warm weather and ready to play outside.
When winter is over, it will be spring, and it will be time to enjoy warmer days and sunshine again.

spring



Created by: Kristi A. Jordan, OTR



Will I Ever Grow Out of Autism, Or Will Society Allow Me to Grow?

Meg Horan

Sometimes I wondered if I would ever get better or outgrow autism as I grew older.

I really knew I could never outgrow autism, especially when I got older. However, the older you get the more you realize you know how to deal with stuff better without having an anxiety rush.

It's more about the acceptance.

When you get older you know things will change as our body is always changing. Like, when I was younger, I ate meat. Now as an adult I hardly do. No idea why, I just don't. When I was young, I was okay with loud noises. Now as an adult I hate loud noises and I bring ear defenders when I go out to big, crowded places.

Being an adult with autism means that things can change, and some things stay the same.

That does not stop me from moving forward and enjoying life. Most of the time society isn't always built for autistic people and some things are much harder to achieve. Something I am struggling with now is getting more support in math and English in college. That's the biggest hurdle, especially being an adult, as people forget that we don't grow out of autism once we hit 18. Some people just don't take us seriously enough or even brush it off as being an adult. As an adult you're meant to do things independently. You should achieve the pass grades at school without having to redo them. The services don't support those who are adults as they only do teenagers or children.

Do I wish to outgrow autism?

Part of me says yes. I don't want to have these big hurdles to get the support. I need to prove to them that I am autistic, and I need help.

And part of me says no. I prefer to be me, and without it I would be stuck.

That's the thing with autism you must be a lot more determined to fight these services for support and not give up and that's what I am. Determined.

Part of me also knows how hard and how long it took to get the diagnosis, so that's why I know that I am determined and some things I can get better at.

Like socializing with the right group of friends. Which I have made and so far, they have been so supportive and just a fantastic group to hang out with.

Also, being able to get myself two jobs. I must keep being determined to prove that I have so much experience. Prove to them that autism cannot, and will not, stop me from achieving.

I am also getting better at knowing what my triggers are. Whether it's being overtired or knowing what causes my anxiety and having strategies put into place when it gets too much.

The goal is really to understand me better and know things can be changed.

Reprinted from: www.findingcoopersvoice.com

Calming Cinnamon Milk

A calming and relaxing warm cinnamon milk with a touch of vanilla and honey.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk or unsweetened almond milk, I use unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 1-2 drops of pure vanilla extract, you can skip if you use unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 1 t honey or to taste
- 1 generous pinch of ground cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Heat milk in a microwave safe mug for 1 to 2 minutes (just until milk starts to foam).
2. Stir in the vanilla (if using) and honey.
3. Sprinkle the cinnamon on top.
4. Enjoy!



Reprinted from: www.tabsandtidbits.com

AUTISM SIGNS IN ADULTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN MISSED AS KIDS

SOCIAL SIGNS

- **MAY FEEL LIKE YOU BECOME WHOEVER YOU'RE AROUND MOST.
- **MAY CONSTANTLY REHEARSE CONVERSATIONS OR INTERACTIONS.
- **MAY FEEL AS THOUGH YOU ARE ALWAYS ON A STAGE.
- **MAY HAVE A FEW CLOSE FRIENDS NOT MANY ACQUAINTANCES.
- **MAY SEE THE WORLD LITERALLY AND IN BLACK AND WHITE.
- **MAY STRUGGLE WITH OTHER PEOPLE BREAKING RULES.

SENSORY SIGNS

- **MAY BE A VERY PICKY EATER WITH FEW PREFERRED FOODS.
- **MAY STRUGGLE WITH NOISES, TOUCHING, OR SENSORY INPUT.
- **MAY SEEK OUT SQUEEZING HUGS WHEN OVERWHELMED OR UPSET.
- **MAY CHEW, RUB, OR TAP CERTAIN MATERIALS OBSESSIVELY.
- **MAY STRUGGLE TO PROCESS VISUAL OR AUDITORY INFORMATION.
- **MAY STRUGGLE TO SETTLE BODY DOWN ENOUGH FOR RESTFUL SLEEP.

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- **MAY OFTEN FIDGET, CHEW, TAP, OR OTHER REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS.
- **MAY GET MORE OR LESS UPSET AT SOMETHING THAN IS "APPROPRIATE"
- **MAY BE VERY INVOLVED IN SPECIFIC HOBBIES OR INTERESTS.
- **MAY STRUGGLE TO ADJUST WHEN PLANS CHANGE WITHOUT WARNING.
- **MAY HAVE ROUTINES THAT DON'T SEEM TO HAVE A REAL PURPOSE.
- **MAY STRUGGLE IN SITUATIONS THAT ARE UNFAMILIAR.

COMMUNICATION SIGNS

- **MAY EXPERIENCE PAIN OR DISCOMFORT DURING EYE CONTACT.
- **MAY STRUGGLE TO KEEP TRACK OF A FAST CONVERSATION.
- **MAY TAKE JOKES VERY LITERALLY, AND NOT UNDERSTAND TEASING.
- **MAY MISS SARCASM OR SUBTLETIES WHILE OTHERS ARE SPEAKING.
- **MAY PREFER TO COMMUNICATE OVER TEXT OR EMAIL.
- **MAY NOT UNDERSTAND WHY BLUNT HONESTY IS SEEN AS RUDE.

With Special Thanks To:

In Dedication to Thomas Aaron:

Sylvia Stevens

In Honor of Auti Miller:

Steve Hager

In Memory of Douglas Hicks:

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Christine Impens
Joan Impens

In Memory of Paul Kuiper:

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In Memory of Charles Monaghan:

Nina Zarro

In Memory of Susan Punch:

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Barbara Yakes & Allen Jankowics

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Thank you!!!