

Autism Myth Busting

Easy Read Version





Autistic people say they feel misunderstood and misrepresented.

This is because of the myths around autism



The **Different Minds. One Scotland**

campaign aims to clear up these myths.

It also helps people in Scotland to understand autism better.



Autism is a part of everyday life in Scotland.

1 in 100 people are autistic.



Autistic brains work differently to non-autistic brains.



Autistic people, see and experience the world differently to non-autistic people.

It's important that we all understand more about autism.



Autistic people in Scotland have talked about the myths in this booklet.



Everyone is a little bit autistic.

Not true.



“Everybody has autistic traits, and everybody presents autistically at different times to a certain extent, but you’re only autistic if your brain is built in that way.”

Marion, Autistic Person Organisation CEO & Autistic Advocate



Some people have autistic characteristics.

This could be something like being very focused or following strict routines. That does **not** make them autistic



Autism is about how the brain works. It is about how you:

- Think
- Communicate
- Process information
- Have differences in sensory experiences





Autistic and non-autistic people can share similar characteristics, but autistic people see and experience the world differently



**Autism is a mental health condition.
Not true.**



“Autism actually is a cognitive difference between you and I. It’s not something that should be viewed as flawed or problematic or wrong or something that needs treated. It’s just how I view the world and how you view the world. And that’s ok.”
Jasmine, Autistic Student & Autistic Advocate

Autism is a neurological difference.



This means autistic brains and non- autistic brains work differently when they receive and process information.



Many autistic people do develop mental health problems. About 40% of autists have at least one anxiety disorder.

Autistic people are more likely to experience depression.



Mental health issues can often stem from a lack of understanding of autism.



**Autism mainly affects young children.
Not true.**



"I would say, in some ways, that as an adult, being autistic in a 'neurotypical' world, is actually more difficult than it was when I was a child. And obviously I've been autistic all my life. I spent the first two years after my diagnosis looking back and working out all the things that were probably due to me being autistic."
John, Autistic Advocate, Mental Health Professional & Father



People are born autistic. Some people do not get a diagnosis until adulthood.



They have still been autistic their whole lives.

Many autistic adults try to hide their autism. They feel they cannot be the real version of themselves for:



- Fear of judgement
- Lack of understanding



Autistic people do not feel empathy.

Not true.



“Not true. Autistic people feel empathy just the same as everyone else does.

Many autistic people report that they’re actually often overwhelmed by other people’s emotional states because they feel so strongly. But we may not always demonstrate our empathy in the way that you might expect.”

Catriona, Researcher, Advisor & Charity Lead

Many autistic people feel empathy for others.

They might respond differently from non-autistic people. They might:



- Share a similar experience of their own to show support
- Offer practical help
- Freeze and do nothing because they’re unsure a response is wanted or needed





All autistic people have a learning disability.

Not True.



“This is a total myth. Many of us, autistic people have learning differences. Some of us might require a little bit of extra support, but what we do need most of all is just your patience and your understanding.”

Gyll, Autistic Advocate, Trainer & Charity Trustee



Some autistic people have a learning disability, and some do not.

Some autistic people do learn differently.

Autistic individuals are just that: individuals.



Some might need extra support for some things. This is different from person-to-person, just like non-autistic people.



All autistic people have special skills like Rainman.

Not true.



“This isn’t true either. A small percentage of autistic people are Savants, which means they have mathematical skills beyond compare or can produce incredible artwork. However, most are regular folk.”

Thomas, Photographer



Experiencing the world in a different way,
could be seen as a special skill.

If everyone embraces and understands that
it can bring something brilliant to every
aspect of life.



**You can tell someone is autistic by
looking at them.**

Not true.



*“Well that’s not true. There are autistic people in all
walks of life. In different professions, of different ages,
genders, ethnicities and religions. Autism does not
have a look. Nor does it always have visible identifying
characteristics. And when it does they do not apply to
all autistic people.”*

Jacqui, Retired Accountant & Mother

It can be upsetting for autistic people to:

- Share they are autistic with someone new
- Be told that they don’t look autistic



Autism is a unique part of that person.

It will not always be visible to anyone else.



Autistic people like to be on their own.

They are anti-social.

Not true.



“Autistic people can find socialising more tiring than non-autistic people, particularly if we have to hide our autism in order to blend in. However, we are not being anti-social. We are actively making an effort to socialise.” Christopher, Software Testing Consultant



Some non-autistic people love socialising, whereas others would prefer a quiet night in with a book. It is the same for autistic people.



Some autistic people find socialising more tiring. Sometimes it can take them time to recover their energy after socialising.

They are not being anti-social. They are actively making an effort to socialise.



Autism can be cured.

Not true.



“No it can’t. That’s not true. It’s not an illness. You can’t cure or grow out of autism. It’s part of a brain difference. We are the beautiful people we were born to be. Value us for who we are. Don’t try to cure us. Let’s work together to make the world a more understanding and caring place.” Rosie, Cattery Owner



Autism is not an illness to be cured.

It is part of who a person is. It is not something that can change or that you can grow out of.



Each day autistic people develop skills to cope with the world. Sometimes they need support to do this.

More people accepting and understanding autism is needed.



In a world where everyone thought the same nothing would ever change.



To understand more about autism visit differentminds.scot.