Autism, *the basics.*

Autism is a lifelong neurological difference in how a person experiences the world — especially sensory input, communication, social connection, focus and routine. It's a **difference, not a disease**: something to understand, not something to fix.

A NOTE ON WORDS

"Autistic person"

Many autistic people prefer identity-first language. When in doubt, ask what someone prefers.

The spectrum isn't a line

NOT THIS

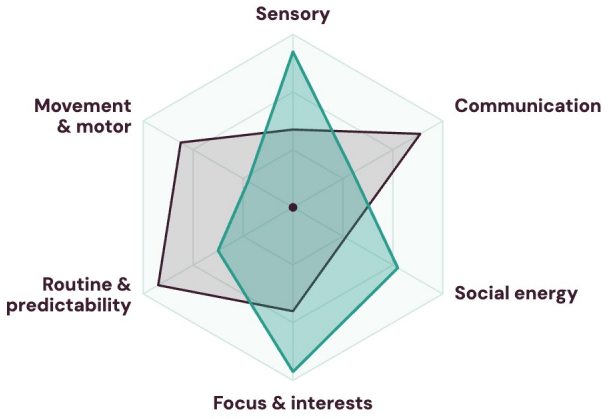


A line suggests someone is "a little" or "a lot" autistic — flattening a whole person into one number.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Picture six areas. Each autistic person has their own shape — and it can shift with the day, stress and setting.

IT'S A SHAPE



Neither shape is "more" autistic.

One person's shape · Another person's shape

Myths *vs.* what's true

Myth	What's true
~~Autistic people lack empathy~~	Many feel deeply; expression can differ.
~~Only boys are autistic~~	Autism shows up across all genders.
~~Everyone's a little autistic~~	Traits vary; autism is a whole neurotype.
~~You'd be able to tell~~	Many autistic people mask their traits.

Common strengths

Many autistic people describe...

- Deep, sustained focus
- Noticing fine detail
- Spotting patterns
- Honesty & directness
- A strong sense of fairness
- Loyalty
- Rich, lasting passions
- Original ways of thinking

Continued on back: go deeper →

Your own *shape.*

Take these slowly — alone, in session, or with someone you trust. Whether you're autistic, wondering, or supporting someone, there are no wrong answers. Skip anything that doesn't fit.

1 *If you drew your own six-area shape, where would it reach furthest? Where would it stay close in?*

2 *Which sounds, textures, lights or places help you feel settled — and which wear you down?*

3 *Which myth from the front have you heard most? How has it shaped the way you, or others, see autism?*

4 *Where might you be masking or holding yourself in? What would it take to feel safe unmasking there, even a little?*

5 *Which strengths on the front feel true for you or someone you love? How could they get more room to show up?*

TRY THIS WEEK

Notice one moment you felt most at ease. What made it feel that way?