

# Celebrating Diversity: Autism

Sharing stories from Creative Support staff and service users



#CelebrateDiversity

creative  
SUPPORT

April 2021

## Welcome to our Autism newsletter!

As part of our yearly theme #CelebrateDiversity, this month we have been celebrating autism and neurodiversity! We have created this Autism Month newsletter with help from our fantastic colleagues and service users, in order to share information, resources and stories, providing a platform for people to share their own unique experiences and perspectives of autism!

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), affects approximately 1 in 100 people in the UK. There are lots of myths about autism, many of which feed into outdated stereotypes. Throughout this newsletter, we hope you find the pockets of mythbusting articles on gender, employment, race, and relationships interesting and insightful! We want to listen to people's personal experiences and make their voices louder in order to better appreciate and support our autistic service users, colleagues, friends, and family.



## Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorder

- There are an estimated 700,000 people in the UK who have been diagnosed with ASD.
- One in 100 children in the UK have been diagnosed with ASD.
- The ratio of men to women who have been diagnosed with ASD is approximately 3:1.
- Four out of five adults have found difficulty in getting a diagnosis of ASD because of a lack of research into how ASD affects adults.
- The word 'autism' comes from the Greek word 'autos' which means 'self'. The term was first used by Eugen Bleuler, a Swiss psychiatrist, who started using the term in 1911 to refer to a group of symptoms related to schizophrenia.
- The jigsaw piece which many charities and organisations used to represent Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is no longer accepted and is considered offensive. The jigsaw piece represents viewing ASD as a 'puzzle' or 'mystery' which needed to be solved, which is hurtful and untrue.
- The term 'Aspergers' is no longer used as a term to describe some people with ASD. The name comes from Dr Hans Asperger who coined the term. This term is no longer used in medical diagnoses because of Asperger's history, but some people who have been diagnosed with Asperger's continue to use the term.

#CelebrateDiversity #AutismMonth

# History of Autism

**16th Century** One of the earliest known occurrences of someone writing about a person with autism is found within the Table Talk writings of Reformation monk Martin Luther. The book contains reference to the story of a 12-year-old boy who is believed to have had autism.

**1747** One of the earliest well-documented stories of a person with autism is that of Hugh Blair Borgue. Hugh's story was detailed in a court case in which his brother successfully fought to annul Hugh's marriage in order to gain Hugh's inheritance.

**1911** The first use of the term 'autism' was used by Eugen Bleuler, a Swiss psychiatrist who initially used the term to refer to a group of symptoms related to schizophrenia.

**1938** 'Autism', as we know it defined today, was first used by Hans Asperger in a lecture about child psychology.

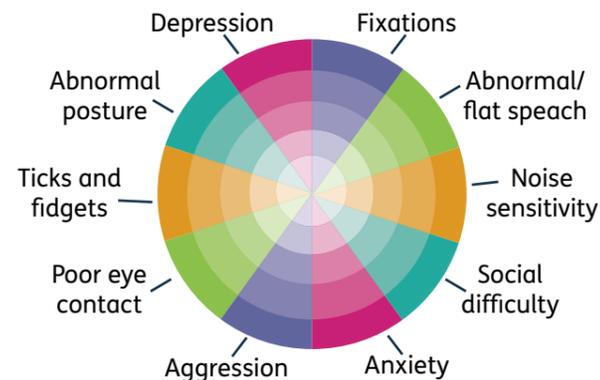
**1943** Leo Kanner published the earliest known description of early years autism. His case study was entitled 'Autistic Disturbances of Affective Contact'.



What people think the autism spectrum looks like:

'More autistic'                      'Less autistic'

What it can actually look like:



**1995** Sula Wolff in Edinburgh spent over 30 years studying children who had difficulty with social interaction but didn't fit into the 'triad of impairments' model of diagnosis. She also helped further define and identify characteristics of autism which we still use today.

**1979** Lorna Wing and Gould looked at cases of children with autism in the London borough of Camberwell. They developed the term 'autism spectrum' to show how autism can affect people differently. They also coined the term 'triad of impairments' which is when children have difficulties with social interaction, communication, and imagination.

**1944** Hans Asperger coined the term 'Asperger's' when he published the first definition of Asperger's Syndrome in his scientific study of children with autism. This term is no longer used in medical diagnoses, and is considered part of the autism spectrum.

**2007** The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Society, the main monitors of trends in England's mental health, included autism for the first time. They found that approximately 1% of the population have autism.

**2007** The UK Government's Department of Health funded a project to help adults with autism. This included people in residential care and people with complex needs. Professor Brugha from the University of Leicester lead the study and found that approximately 1.1% of the English population has autism.

**2009** The UK Government passed the Autism Act 2009. The act was proposed to tackle the lack of support for people with autism and improve understanding of ASD. It required the Government to introduce an 'adult autism strategy' which was published in 2010 and updated in 2014.

**2020** The UK government has introduced mandatory training on learning disabilities and autism for all health and social care staff. Trials began in April 2020 and a report is set to be released soon.

**2019** The UK Government published several objectives in its NHS Long Term Plan. It introduced a 'digital flag' on patient records to ensure staff know a patient has autism so they can provide them with better support. Another objective was to make reasonable adjustments so that the NHS and other services can better support people with learning disabilities or autism. The Government also aims to pilot health checks for people with autism by 2024.

**2019** The government launched a review of the autism strategy and has extended it to include children and young people for the first time. A consultation was launched in 2019 and the government is expected to release the revised strategy soon.

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On social media, we have been sharing **#AutismMonth** **#CelebrateDiversity** facts and figures, and are hosting social media takeovers by some of our brilliant services and service users!

If you would like to get involved with Autism Month in any way, it's not too late! If you would like to share your story, a book recommendation, or more, then please get in touch with us via email at [marketing@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:marketing@creativesupport.co.uk) and we'll do our best to share as much as we can!

## What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term for certain conditions related to the brain. If someone is neurodivergent, it means that their brain functions, learns, and processes information differently to what is considered 'typical'. Neurodiverse people can have alternate thinking styles and different methods of communication, or maybe seen to act differently.

There are many conditions which fall under the neurodiversity umbrella. These include Autism, ADHD, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyslexia, and dyscalculia. Some organisations also include Tourette's Syndrome under the umbrella. If someone isn't neurodivergent, they are referred to as 'neurotypical'.

The neurodiversity movement started in the mid 90's by sociologist and autism rights activist, Judy Singer.

The movement was started in order to celebrate and better understand neurodivergent conditions and appreciate people as individuals rather than focussing on their conditions. Singer, who also has autism, fought for more research, education, acceptance, and support for people with conditions such as autism. She also encouraged the move away from the idea of a 'cure' for neurodivergent conditions which many find offensive.

It is estimated that approximately one in seven people in the UK are neurodivergent. Some neurodiverse people may have similar experiences or face common challenges, but it is important to remember everyone experiences things differently. Expecting someone to act, look, or behave a certain way, can be insulting and upsetting.

Neurodiversity is part of human life, and we should celebrate this diversity however we can. Being neurodiverse doesn't define a person, but it is a part of who they are and we need to continue learning in order to better support and empower people in every aspect of their lives.

### Find out more:



Health Assured, our employee assistance programme offers helpful information and further support if you would like it. You can access eight free counselling sessions through Health Assured, and their My Health Assured App provides free mindfulness and wellbeing tips.

## AUTISM MYTHBUSTING

### EMPLOYMENT

People with autism can be a great addition to a workplace! However some frequently find themselves shut out of typical routes of employment due to lack of thought regarding the recruitment process and workplace environment. The Office for National Statistics shared data in February this year that shows 22% of adults with autism are in employment, compared to over 80% of allistic people.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) said that this report is "evidence of just how concerned the Government should be about helping people with autism into work." The NAS said the Government needs to "make sure the upcoming autism strategy sets out clear actions to improve employer understanding of autism and better support people with autism seeking jobs or in employment."

To find out more info about this, you can read the NAS comments on the employment gap [here](#), and find info about support at work [here](#).

## Craig's Journey

### Can you tell us about your career?

I always wanted to work in health and social care, and started in the sector in 2001. I initially started working in care homes and learnt lots on the job. Now I'm a senior support worker in Middlesbrough. I started working for Creative Support in February 2016, so just over five years now.

### How did you find the process of getting diagnosed with autism?

I was diagnosed with autism two years ago. The doctors knew from my history that I displayed symptoms, such as constantly washing my hands and doing other rituals.

I was referred to the autism services by my CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse). After this, specialist doctors have to come and see you and see you doing stuff in your house. Sometimes they come to your workplace if they're allowed. Then you have to go to the services and sit a series of tests and they interview your parents and go through your school results. They also contacted my GP as well and asked me to write stories, do mathematics tests, memory games, colour games - all sorts!

Growing up I used to walk on my tiptoes and I didn't talk until I was three-years-old. I would also never get mucky and was obsessed with hoovers, not toys. I went to a specialist school for a few days a week and also went to regular classes. I was given extra time on exams and things because I'm dyslexic and also have OCD. I also used to finger flap as a kid and now I touch objects as I go down the road or tap it twice. I also check the doors are locked. If something hasn't gone the way I'd thought it was going to, it agitates me and I do more of this. It's part autism and part OCD.

I had difficulties if the routines changed in school. I had a school counsellor who would help me cope with the changes.

### What do you wish people knew about autism?

People judge you so much and say things like "you don't look autistic" and people have said that I'm weird over certain routines. People do stereotype and they think that because you talk that you're not autistic. There isn't much representation in the media of autistic people, and in general people seem to act like autism is a taboo subject. Sometimes you feel the resentment when you tell people you're autistic, like they wish you hadn't brought it up. Allistic people (people without autism) just presume that you can't function because they don't understand the spectrum and that autism affects everyone differently.

### Are there any autism organisations or charities you would like to highlight?

The National Autistic Society does a lot of good. You can go on their website and check out their supported living services too, some of which include jacuzzis! Creative Support also listens to what you need and asks what they can do to help. We recently got new carpets, repainted the walls, and had our garden done - it's looking nice! My line manager, Adam, has also been very good with my autism and helps me a lot.



# Ashleigh

We spoke with artist, designer, and cartoonist Ashleigh. You may know her from our Black Lives Matter issue of Creative Life which she designed the cover for!

## Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I'm Ashleigh, I'm 29-years-old and I'm currently unemployed but am slowly becoming a freelance artist! I was inspired to be an artist as I grew up watching a lot of cartoons, anime, Warner Bros movies, and Disney. My favourite Disney films are The Little Mermaid, The Princess and The Frog, and Tangled!

## What do you wish people knew about Autism?

I really want people to know that autism isn't just for boys and men. Men are diagnosed four times more than women, but from my experience that's because a lot of women 'mask' as standard as part of our society and the expectations surrounding women. Women and girls are constantly under pressure to fit into everyday society, whether they are diagnosed with autism or not.

Autism also varies on a spectrum. Something which annoys me is when I mention that I'm on the spectrum and people say that I don't look autistic. What's an autistic person supposed to look like?! Autism isn't just a physical thing, it's an emotional and mental thing too. I'm fairly independent, but when it comes to something new or something I'm not confident with, I might need some guidance. There is also an assumption that people with autism are disruptive or immature, and that's not true all the time. Some people with autism are very mature for their age.

I used to work in a high-street retailer which ended up being very toxic. One of the managers betrayed my trust after my third emotional breakdown. I had a meeting with her, explained my autism, and apologised. I'll never forget the fact that she said "it's not acceptable." I was horrified and betrayed by her choice of words, and you think hopefully people would be more empathetic.

## How did you get diagnosed with Autism?

I was diagnosed with autism when I was two. According to my mother, I went silent after I was a year old and babies at that age usually babble. I was a normal baby until I was one-year-old. My mother took me to get diagnosed, and the first doctor just assumed I had dodgy hearing and it took a while to get a proper diagnosis. They ended up going to another doctor who diagnosed me with mild autism.

I'm grateful to my mother for spotting the symptoms, but not so grateful that she didn't tell me my diagnosis until I was older. Growing up I knew I was different. I was applying for things when I was 18 and the forms always included a section about disability so I asked my mother about it. She then told me that I was on the autistic spectrum which left me feeling a bit disheartened. She had told the schools, and my primary school years were fairly decent as the teachers were really helpful. Secondary school was a bit trickier for me though.

## Does being creative help you?

Being creative helps me to confess my true feelings, which is something I've found increasingly difficult lately. Being creative helps me express my thoughts and feelings to avoid being misunderstood and miscommunications. I always draw until I feel better when I'm down in the dumps.



My hope with my artwork is to inspire other women, including women of colour to express themselves and their feelings about pressure from either society or their families.

## In your Instagram bio you said that your goals are "raising awareness of autistic girls/women", could you tell me more about this?

I didn't have any difficulties with autism until my educational years as I attended a mainstream school in Surrey as there wasn't one closer. I experienced a little bit of bullying alongside casual racism and an identity crisis. I really want society to keep up with their research into autism and how it affects the Black community and other people of colour. Autism is not just a Caucasian thing, it's a universal thing. I don't want people of colour to go through the same experiences I have.

## Are there any organisations or charities related to autism you would like to highlight?

The National Autism Society are very informative and teach families whether they have children or know adults who are on the spectrum. They're my go to charity for information. I used to read a lot on mental disorders and I did a course at a hospital to better educate myself.



To see more of Ashleigh's art, visit: <https://ashjeftay91.wixsite.com/akmdportfolio>

## AUTISM MYTHBUSTING

### RACE

There has been little research into how autism affects Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people. This lack of research, combined with a lack of representation in the media, has led to the assumption that autism primarily affects white people. However, recent research conducted by the University of Cambridge has found that autism is more common in Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people than first thought, and that rates of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are higher amongst Black school children (2.11%) than their white classmates (1.84%). The study also found that 0.85% of Roma and Irish Traveller pupils have ASD.

The National Autistic Society have pledged "to do more to create a society that works for Black autistic people, and autistic people from other ethnic minority backgrounds." Their plan includes developing an Equality and Inclusion plan as part of their new strategy, and calling for Black, Asian, and minority ethnic equality to be included as a key action within England's new autism strategy.

You can read more about Cambridge University's research [here](#), and about the National Autistic Society's commitments [here](#).

### GENDER

Current research shows that the male-to-female ratio of people with autism is approximately 3:1. There is an assumption because of this that autism is a 'male' condition. Women and girls are more likely to 'mask' (see: Glossary on the back page) and adhere to social expectations in order to 'fit in'.

There is also a lack of research in how autism affects people of genders other than male or female. Researchers have found a link to autism and gender dysphoria.

To read more about this, check out our article on autism and gender on the next page.

## Autism and Gender

Autism is often thought of as a condition which mainly affects males and not so much females, but this is a misconception! If you read our article on the 'History of Autism' on pages 2 & 3 you can see that we've only really just begun to better understand Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in the past 100 years. Before this, there wasn't even a term to describe autism and there was barely any understanding of it despite people living with ASD throughout history.

The understanding we have of autism today mainly comes from research done in the past 30 years. It's no wonder then that people may still have misconceptions or outdated ideas about autism!

Research can take years to complete, analyse, and come into practice in diagnoses and support. There has been a drive in the past two decades especially for more research, but it will take a while for this to be delivered in a way that can help further our understanding of the condition and better support people with ASD.

To read more about how our understanding of autism has changed over the years, click the link [here](#).

Most studies on autism continue to find that males are more likely to be diagnosed with autism, but there has been a flood of awareness in the past decade that has found females are more likely to be overlooked for an ASD diagnosis by education and health professionals.

In 2017, Loomes and her research group combined the results of 54 recent studies and found that on average, there is a ratio of three males to every one female diagnosed with ASD. Loomes also looked at how these previous studies collected their information and came to their conclusions. She found that there is a "diagnostic bias against females." This means that females are less likely to be diagnosed with ASD for a variety of reasons.



Some of these reasons include:

Girls may be more likely to hide their difficulties with social interaction. As they grow up, girls learn that it is important to be social with other people as there is a societal expectation for girls and women to behave a certain way. A lot of people believe females are better communicators than males, so there is this added pressure for girls to conform. This can result in girls making greater efforts to hide difficulties.

With the pressure to appear as good communicators, autistic girls might become very good at mimicking communication habits. This could be using certain tones of voice, facial expressions, or body language, and is known as 'masking'. When girls do this successfully, they may feel better about 'fitting in' to society.

Symptoms of how autism affects females may be more likely to be attributed to other conditions. To come to a diagnosis of any mental health condition, professionals often rely on people reporting their symptoms or explaining their everyday difficulties. However, if women hide their difficulties, or the health professional has less awareness of how autism affects women, they may draw conclusions to other diagnoses.

## Examples of misdiagnoses in women

Anxiety around social situations, changing routines or life events	>	Often misdiagnosed as generalised anxiety or depression
Having rigid routines or behaviours	>	Can be misdiagnosed as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Neglecting personal hygiene or chores due to intense special interests taking priority	>	Can be misdiagnosed as depression or obsession with the special interest
Over-sensitivity to light, sound, taste, or touch	>	This can be dismissed altogether, or misdiagnosed as a sensory processing disorder
Struggling to manage emotions	>	Often misdiagnosed as a mood disorder
Picky eating and ritualistic eating behaviour	>	Can be misdiagnosed as an eating disorder

Autism is usually diagnosed at an early age, as parents, teachers, and health professionals are more aware of the signs during childhood. This means that those who mask their outward symptoms, may consequently struggle to receive a diagnosis as an adult.

Some of these common early year signs:

- Big reactions following specific triggers, such as changes to routine, lots of loud noises, bright lights, and other environmental factors
- Limited interaction with other children, or none at all
- Learning difficulties
- Repetitive behaviours - some of which can be destructive while others are harmless

Some common, easily missed symptoms:

- Special interests if they're socially acceptable (i.e. sports, fashion, etc.)
- Anxiety in social situations
- Difficulties with co-ordination misread as clumsiness

Some think that if someone hasn't been diagnosed with ASD in childhood that they aren't actually autistic, however recent studies show that those who easily hide their symptoms as a child, may struggle to do this as successfully in adult life, when they enter the workplace and navigate relationships.

While there is growing awareness of how autism affects women as well as men, there is less research into how it affects other genders. Recent research has found a link to gender dysphoria (the sense of unease people have when their gender doesn't match their biological sex) and ASD. Due to this lack of research, many trans\*, intersex, and nonbinary people find difficulties in getting diagnosed with ASD. A study found that people who don't identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth are at least three times more likely to have ASD than people who do (cisgender people).

Read more about this [here](#).



## Spencer

**Spencer, a service user in Greater Manchester is a jack-of-all creative trades! He is an artist, an avid music fan, and a life-long Manchester United supporter. We spoke to him about how ASD is part of his life, and how being creative is so important to him.**

### Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Spencer and I'm 46-years-old. Along with Asperger's, I also have Schizoaffective Disorder. I like doing art and painting, along with playing guitar, listening to music, reading books, and playing football. I support Manchester United and have done since I was five-years-old!

### What do you wish people knew about autism?

For me, having autism isn't that disabling really. I can do everything a non-autistic person can do such as cooking, drawing, painting, sports and more. Autism isn't treatable, but I do take tablets for my Schizoaffective Disorder.

I haven't been officially diagnosed with ASD, but my family, friends, and people who have supported me have believed that I am on the spectrum for a long time. My support worker helps me with my finances, helps me with shopping, and we go out socially for meals and a browse around the shops. We also go for long walks to keep fit.

Autism feels a bit like a stranger living inside me, as if it's sort of a disembodied thing that's part of me. You have no real power over it. I feel a lot more positive about my ASD now that I have support which gives me a brighter outlook on life. My support worker is great and he encourages me to get out of the house and do things I like. People with autism are really

special people, and it needn't be disabling or impairing with the right support.



### Does being creative help you?

I think most autistic people have special talents and are gifted at something - my talents are art and playing football. I also like quizzes, especially Countdown. Creativity and doing art helps me because it makes you zone in and totally focus on one thing. It really distracts you from everything that's going on around you and it helps me forget my daily worries.

At the moment I like doing portraits and landscapes. I paint all sorts though such as abstract and surreal things, along with animals. I prefer painting to drawing, but I'm very good at drawing as well. I'm currently working on pieces for the Creative Support Creative Competition!

### Are there any organisations or charities that have supported or helped you learn more about ASD?

The mental health charity Mind and Creative Support have been very helpful. Another charity called Together used to support me and they were really helpful too.

What I like about Creative Support is the friendly support workers. They keep you updated if they're ever running late and they're good at communicating. The service manager always keeps me informed of my weekly visits every Monday and tells me what they're going to be. I am kept well-informed and they also support me with my talents such as art and playing guitar. My dad used to be in a band in the 70's and he taught guitar as a sideline. I've now been playing guitar for about 30 years!



## Luke

**Luke is a service user from Leeds. We spoke with him about what he likes to get up to in a usual day, about his lovely girlfriend Sonja, and what he's looking forward to once lockdown ends!**

### Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Luke and I'm 26. I like going out and doing things, such as going for a drink at the pub! I'm looking forward to being able to go to the pub again and have my favourite pear Kopparberg. I also like collecting things. I've started collecting face masks and currently have ones from Tesco and Asda. I also like to collect beer glasses, beer bunting, beer mats and stuff like that.

### What was the process of getting diagnosed with autism like?

I was diagnosed when I was younger, but can't remember too much about it! My parents took me to the doctors and that's how it started. I always grew up knowing I was autistic. I went to a specialist school who supported me. They gave me longer times on exams and one-on-one teachers. My favourite subject in school was music, and I can play the steel drums and the regular drums. I still like to play music to this day!

### Can you tell us more about your relationship?

My girlfriend is called Sonja and we go out and do things together. We want to go on holidays together when we can! We've been together for five years and I get two buses to see her as she lives in a different service. I met Sonja when we worked at the same charity shop. We went to a disco together and swapped numbers and that was it! We enjoy watching TV and having meals together.

### Are there any organisations related to autism that you think are doing a good job?

The 'Autism Awareness' campaign is really good. They give good awareness and let more people know about autism because of it. My support is also really good and they always keep me up to date.



## AUTISM MYTHBUSTING

### ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

There is an assumption that people with autism can't and don't have healthy, happy, or functioning romantic relationships, which is simply not true. What works for some people doesn't work for others, and judging people based on 'expected' social norms can be harmful and upsetting. Everyone has the capacity to love and deserves to be loved.

While some people with autism may have troubles with communication or immediate emotional understanding, it is down to them and their partner to do what works for them and what makes them happy. Clear communication, outlining expectations, and navigating what works and what doesn't is an important part of every relationship, but especially for people with autism. Some people may need additional support or guidance, which you can find information on [here](#). Some people may not have 'traditional' relationships or follow typical relationship milestones.

If you are someone with autism and would like additional information on this, check out NAS's interview with Alis Rowe, director of The Curly Hair Project, [here](#) as she explains her own personal experiences with relationships as someone with autism.

We hope you are enjoying reading our Autism Month newsletter and join us in supporting, celebrating, and appreciating our brilliant colleagues and service users with autism!

Let us know what you think by emailing [marketing@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:marketing@creativesupport.co.uk)

# Glossary

**Neurodiverse** - this term is used to describe people who have differences in their thoughts or behaviour, in comparison to expected levels of functioning.

**Neurotypical** - a term used to describe people who function in the expected way.

**Autistic** - a person who has significant differences in functioning, including repetitive patterns of thoughts or behaviour, and difficulties or differences in communication.

**Allistic** - a nonautistic person.

**Masking** - when a (often neurodiverse) person learns to interact socially in the 'normal' way, specifically, when this is at odds with their natural or preferred methods of communication.

**Stimming** - short for self-stimulating behaviour- this is a movement or action which can express emotions and/or soothe oneself.

**Person-first language** - Andy is a person with Autism.

**Identity-first language** - Andy is an Autistic person.

**Asperger's Syndrome** - a diagnosis for autistic people which is no longer used for new diagnoses. People with this diagnosis are not usually expected to receive a different one and it is still valid for them.

**Special interest** - a topic of interest which is very meaningful to a person. Autistic people can become very focused on collecting information on specific topics, usually to a greater degree than allistics.

**Meltdown** - an outburst of emotion and/or behaviour which can be caused by stress or overwhelmed, among other things.

**Shutdown** - a meltdown which is expressed inwardly, often causing withdrawing behaviours or sometimes selective mutism.

**Sensory needs** - a person may have needs relating to their senses, such as self-soothing through chewing items, or other sensory stimulations.

**Selective mutism** - an autistic person may become 'mute' or unable to talk in certain situations. This is not a choice and is not controllable.

## WATCH READ LISTEN



### TV and film

**Atypical** - Bethany in Wolverhampton recommends this show because it *"really tells you what it's like to have autism and shows you his daily life. It's relatable for people with autism, and also helps people without autism to better understand it."*

**Sesame Street** - This classic recently introduced a new character to the show named Julia! She has autism, and in her first episode, the characters explain more about autism. You can watch this intro [here](#).

**The Black Balloon** - This film follows the story of a family as they deal with change, growing up, and hurtful stereotypes. It focuses on the relationship between Thomas and his brother Charlie, who has autism, and how they navigate life together.

### Books

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time** - Author, Mark Haddon tells the story through the perspective of Christopher, who has autism, as he tries to solve the mystery of the death of his neighbour's dog.

**M is for Autism** - An insight into life of a young woman with autism. Written by the students of Limpsfield Grange, a school for girls with autism and communication and interaction difficulties.

### Youtubers and Podcasts

**Kevin Chapman** (YouTube) He does lots of mythbusting in relation to family life and explains the process behind diagnoses too.

**The Aspie World** (YouTube & Podcast) Daniel Morgan features mythbusting videos along with personal videos about his life with ASD.

**Stephanie Bethany** (YouTube) As well as sharing her own videos, she frequently collaborates with other YouTubers with autism!

**Autism Stories Podcast** lead by Dean Davenport who is the father of two sons with autism.