

How to talk and write about autism

Guidelines

The most important thing to remember is that many autistic people see their autism as a fundamental part of who they are, so it's important to use positive language. And if you are referring to a particular person or group, ask them how they would prefer to be described. This preference should take precedence over the recommendations outlined below.

We say	We do not say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autistic adult/people/child• Person/child on the autism spectrum• Is autistic• Autism spectrum disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has autism• People with autism• Auties• Autism community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autistic people, their family and friends• People on the autism spectrum, their families and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People living with autism• People affected by autism• Suffers from, or is a victim of, autism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism is a lifelong condition or disability.• Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. (The term Asperger derives from a 1944 study by Austrian paediatrician Hans Asperger. New evidence has recently revealed his problematic Nazi history, provoking a big debate about the use of the term. However, each person is different, and it is up to each individual how they choose to identify.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism is a disease or illness that can be cured (this is totally incorrect).• Asperger syndrome is a mild/rare form of autism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like all people, autistic people can have their own individual strengths and challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High functioning or low functioning autistic people• Severe or mild autism• Normal autism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not autistic (neurotypical)• Supports or adjustments• Traits or characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat symptoms