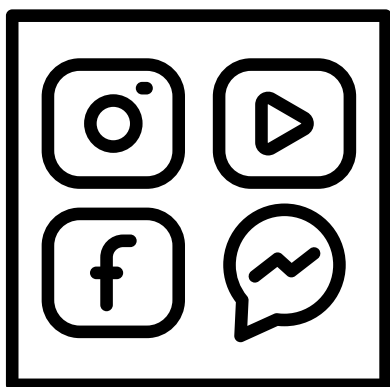




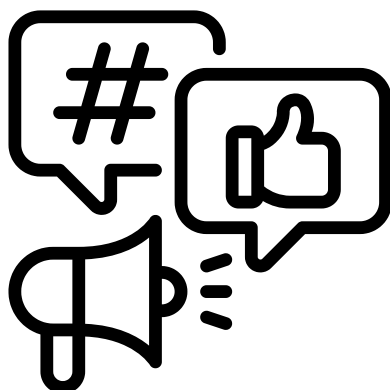
COMMS

TIPS FOR ALLIES



Thank you for caring about Autistic and neurodivergent individuals and their families in your community.

If you're in communications, you have a powerful opportunity to educate and influence public perception through your speech writing, social media content and/or media releases.



Don't let the changing landscape of preferred language and symbols discourage you from honouring World Autism Day or championing inclusion and acceptance of Autistic community members.

For us, accessibility and inclusion are closely linked to understanding, support, and acceptance within our close social circles and society.

While recent years' discussions shine a welcome light on Autistic children, autism doesn't end at 18 or any other age. Please ensure your content reflects autism across the life span.



This document shares current neuro-affirming practices that Autism Home Base endorses and promotes to reduce and repair stigmatization.

PERSON-FIRST OR IDENTITY-FIRST?

How to refer to autism is an ongoing discussion among self-advocates and academics.

Person-first language makes sense where an illness or condition is considered an impairment or deficit. Because the person is more than their diagnosis.

Autistic self-advocates want you to know that autism is considered a neurotype referring to the way a person's brain processes sensory information. Different, not less. We proudly identify being Autistic as inherent to our identity and appreciate you recognizing and reflecting this in your communications.

While Autism Home Base encourages any and all positive conversation about autism, and while we are happy to adjust our language in conversations to reflect the preference of individuals we're speaking with, when we are sharing information in writing or in presentations we are intentional in our use of identity-first language.

The Autistic community favours capitalizing "Autistic" to reflect the unique culture shared by Autistic people involved in disability rights and Autistic rights. When "autism" appears in the middle of a sentence, it should be treated as a common noun and should not be capitalized, unless it's part of a title or a specific name.



person with autism
person who has autism



Autistic person
Autistic community
Person on the spectrum

CHOOSE NEURO-AFFIRMING LANGUAGE

Deficit-focused language and labels that emphasize negative perspectives are harmful by reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Please do not use language such as 'at risk of' or 'suffering from.' Autism is not something to be 'cured.' No more than you are looking to be cured of your skin or hair colour.

Phrases like behaviour intervention have an oppressive tone. We do appreciate skills development, tools, adaptations or strategies that can help us be more autonomous and successful in the community. So conversations should focus on positive outcomes instead of diminishing or quashing interests, routines or characteristics that are intrinsically tied to individual preferences and happiness.

We invite you to reframe your discussions to highlight the experiences of specific Autistic individuals. This helps create spaces where people feel welcome and are more likely to participate in a meaningful way.



disorder
dysfunction
disease

behaviour intervention

meltdown



neurotype
neurological difference

support needs

overwhelmed

SYMBOLS AND BIOLOGY

The puzzle piece, often widely associated with autism, has a complicated history with the autism community due to its origins and affiliations.



In 2005, the infinity symbol was proposed as an alternative, to direct conversations away from puzzling traits or not fitting in or not being complete.

At Autism Home Base, we recognize the underrepresented lived-experience narratives. We support and promote the multi-coloured infinity symbol signifying inclusion and acceptance.

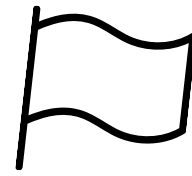
We recognize autism as neurobiological.

There are real differences with the Autistic brain. These differences are externally visible through a diagnostic criteria that includes -

1. Differences in social interactions
2. Differences in spoken or non-spoken communication
3. Restricted or repetitive interests and activities

There are often differences in motor skills and executive functioning too, but rather than discussing the biology of autism, we invite you to talk about the human condition and specific similarities or differences among people.

HONOURING AUTISM



World Autism Day on April 2nd is recognized by the United Nations ‘as a means to affirm and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for Autistic people on an equal basis with others.’

When considering a flag raising or a proclamation, think about adaptations you can make to your ceremony or event to make it more inclusive and sensory-friendly. Be a model of acceptance for your community.

- Invite Autistic individuals and allies to lead and participate in the ceremony, and follow their lead.
- Avoid loud speakers or provide a quiet or private viewing area.
- Invite the audience to wave their hands in support, instead of clapping.
- Provide seating so that community members who have a hard time with crowds can claim a safe space where they won’t be jostled.
- Autistic community members may not be comfortable with social greetings. Adjust your expectations and be accepting of their experience.

YOUR THOUGHTS?

Communications are tricky because they can be subject to scrutiny. We’re on your side and appreciate your best efforts to move autism acceptance forward.

If you have questions or comments, or need more information, or want to add your unique perspective to the conversation, please reach out to info@autismhomebase.com

Thank you for caring about families like ours.

ABOUT AUTISM HOME BASE

We are Autistic adults across the spectrum and their friends and families. We create and promote opportunities to build lifelong relationships, expand our supportive networks, and develop new skills and interests. We exist to combat the debilitating effects of social isolation that many Autistic individuals experience.



ASK ABOUT OUR TRAINING AND E-LEARNING CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The 'Lived Experience Autism Perspective' (LEAP) training can help your team

- Demystify autism
- Brainstorm strategies
- Develop inclusive solutions

Learn more at autismhomebase.com/LEAP_workshops/

**FOR ADVICE PLANNING YOUR SENSORY-FRIENDLY SPACE OR
INCLUSIVE PROGRAM OFFERINGS, EMAIL [KELLY@AUTISMHOMEBASE.COM](mailto:kelly@autismhomebase.com)
TO BOOK A PRIVATE CONSULTATION.**




OTHER TRUSTED RESOURCES

[Autism Alliance of Canada](#) is a pan-Canadian network of Autistic people and their families and support persons, as well as clinicians, researchers, policy influencers, service providers from across Canada.

[The Sinneave Family Foundation](#) is dedicated to collaborating with individuals, communities, and organizations across Canada with a vision that people live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities, and realize their desired futures.



a registered Canadian charity #81352 5797 RR0001

   @AutismHomeBase
www.autismhomebase.com
Admin: 289-278-3489
Hub landline: 905-419-7900
132 Church St. 2nd Floor
Bowmanville, ON L1C 1T5