



# AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL 2024



# INTRODUCTION

- April is Autism Awareness Month.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> of April is recognised by the United Nations as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD).



# HISTORY

- The first Autism Awareness Month began in America in the 1970s. as part of a nationwide campaign to raise awareness.
- The United Nation founded World Autism Awareness Day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2008.
- There is a movement now to renaming this World Autism Understanding Day to acknowledge that we need more than just awareness.

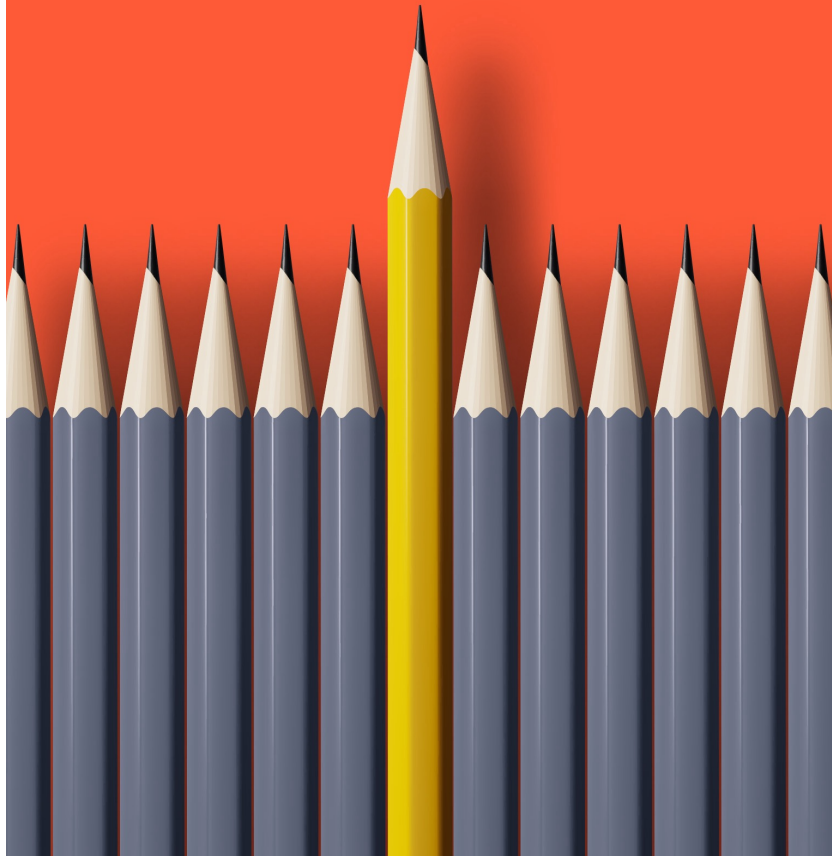


## STATISTICS

- Recent estimates suggest that the number of people that have Autism is somewhere between 1 in 100 ( ABS SDAC 2018 – Autism in Australia) and as high as 1 in 70 ( Aspect July 2018).
- This means there were 205,200 Australians with Autism in 2018. This number continues to climb.
- The numbers are even higher in children – some sources suggest as high as 1 in 25 ( smh 2023).

# INCLUSION

- There are many barriers to inclusion for those on the Spectrum.
- Many of these barriers are hidden.
- They often result from outdated thinking and prejudice.
- Recognizing and challenging these barriers can change the ways we approach education and employment.





# OPENNESS

- Everyone experiences the world differently.
- Yet we often expect people on the spectrum to meet our expectations.
- Changing this expectation of conformity is a great step towards understanding and acceptance.



## SENSORY AWARENESS

- Sensory issues frequently impact those on the Spectrum.
- Changing the physical environment to decrease sensory overload can make spaces more welcoming.
- Autism friendly spaces and practices are important for an inclusive society.



## LEARNING AS WE GO

- Positive and inclusive media representation is also vital for the development of positive attitudes to Autism.
- There is a wealth of great information available on the internet in relation to Autism.
- Educational training tools can have a positive impact on reactions to and engagement with individuals who have autism .
- Learning more about Autism is a great way to support those on the Spectrum.





## CELEBRATE

- For years stories about Autism have focused on deficits and how to fix Autism.
- The theme for the 2023 World Autism Awareness Day was “Toward a Neuro-Inclusive World for All” with a move away from simple awareness to accepting, supporting and including autistic people and advocating for their rights.
- A focus on the contributions of Autistic people make to the world.



# NEURODIVERSITY

- Neurodiversity movement celebrates autism for the differences it brings to society.
- Changing the way that Autism is perceived by society from autism as a deficit to autism as difference has wide ranging impacts.
- The use of identity first language (autistic person) rather than person-first language (person with autism) as a way of claiming ownership.





# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY 2024

- This year the theme is “Awareness - Acceptance- Appreciation: Moving from surviving to thriving.”
- A number of organisations are running events and providing information to support others to do so as well. These include Aspect, the UN, Strive.
- Take action this April.
- Choose one thing to do and make it a priority.
- Listen, Speak up and Support.