

TO THE BEAT OF MY OWN DRUM

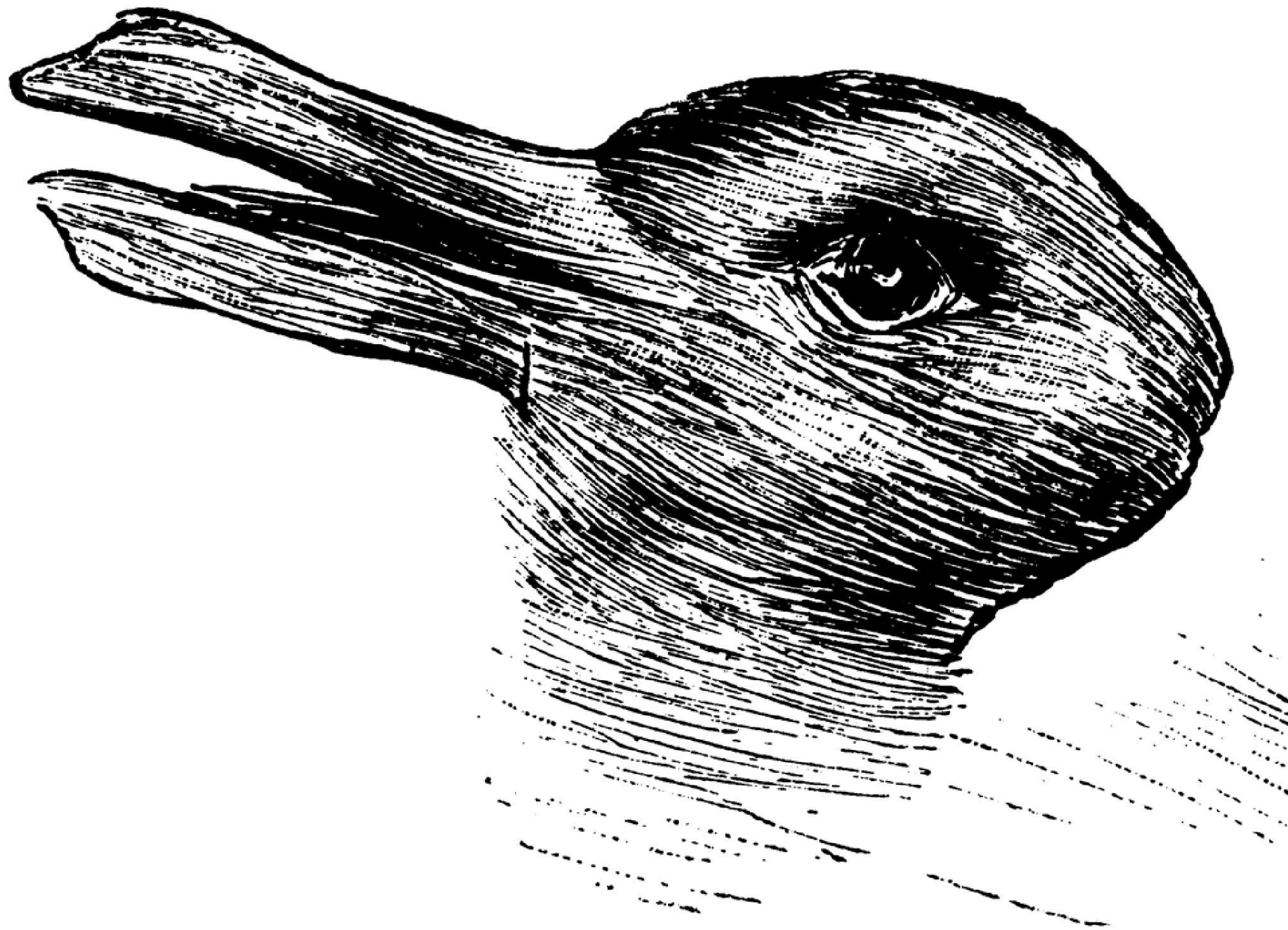
Living my Life on the Autism Spectrum
to its Fullest

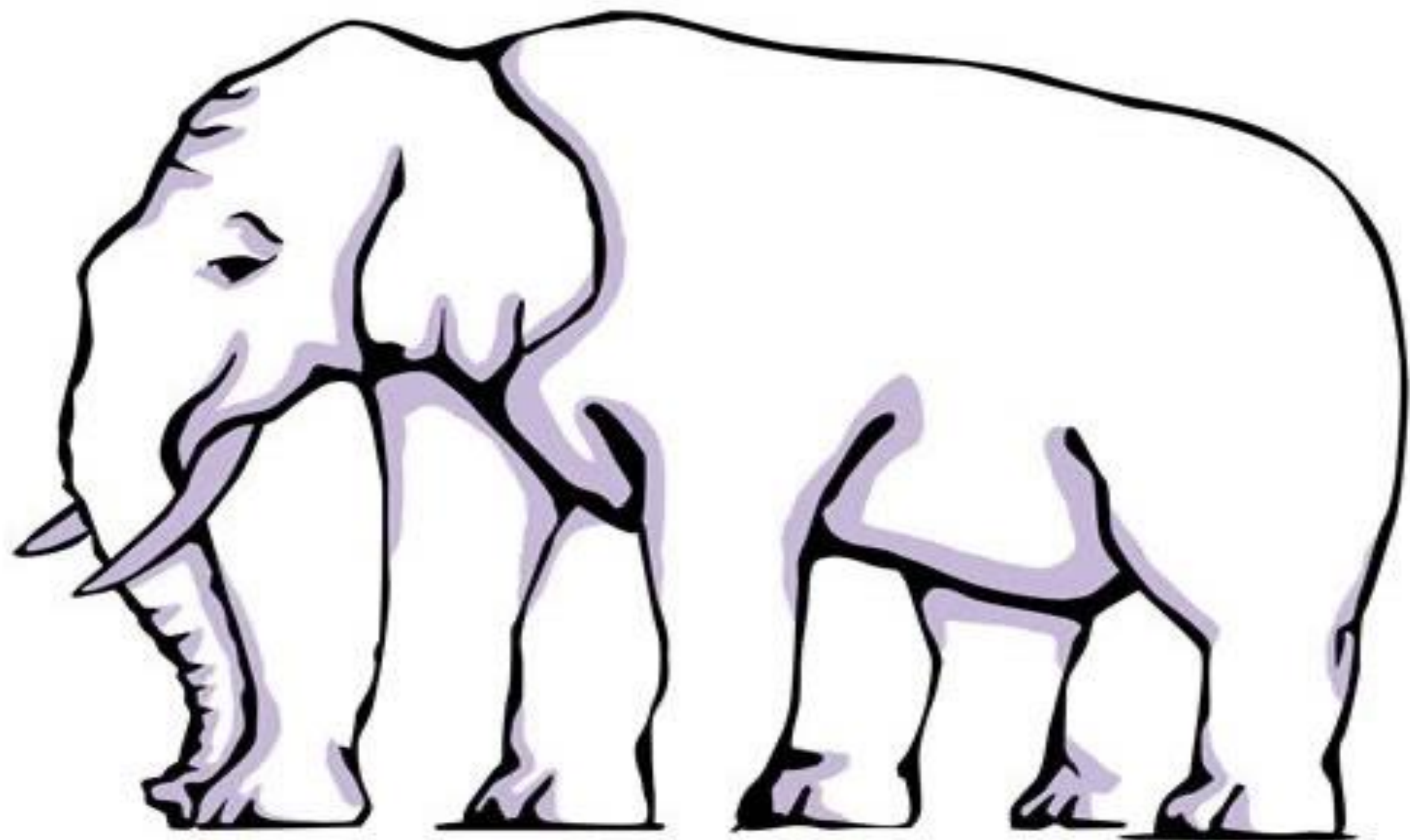


Abbey Childress

 **iPossABLE**
Services. Lives. Futures.

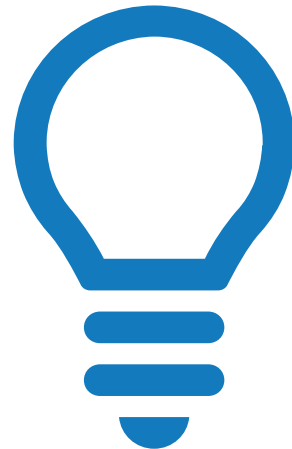
 **OKLAHOMA
Human Services**
Developmental Disabilities Services





THE CORRECT ANSWER IS ...

There are no correct answers!



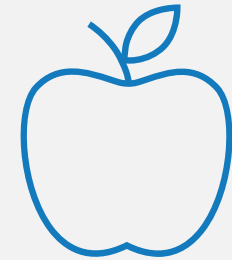
A LITTLE ABOUT ME



**I was diagnosed
with autism
spectrum disorder
at 8 years old**



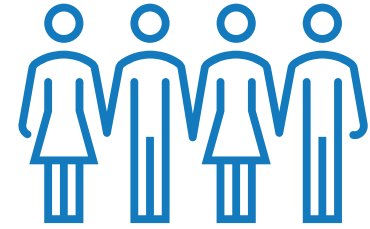
**I received Special
Education services
through school, and I
started speaking about my
life experiences with
autism my sophomore year
of high school**



**My experiences
inspired me to become
a special education
teacher**

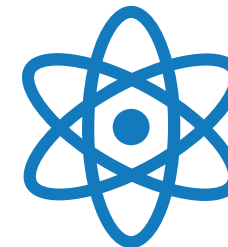
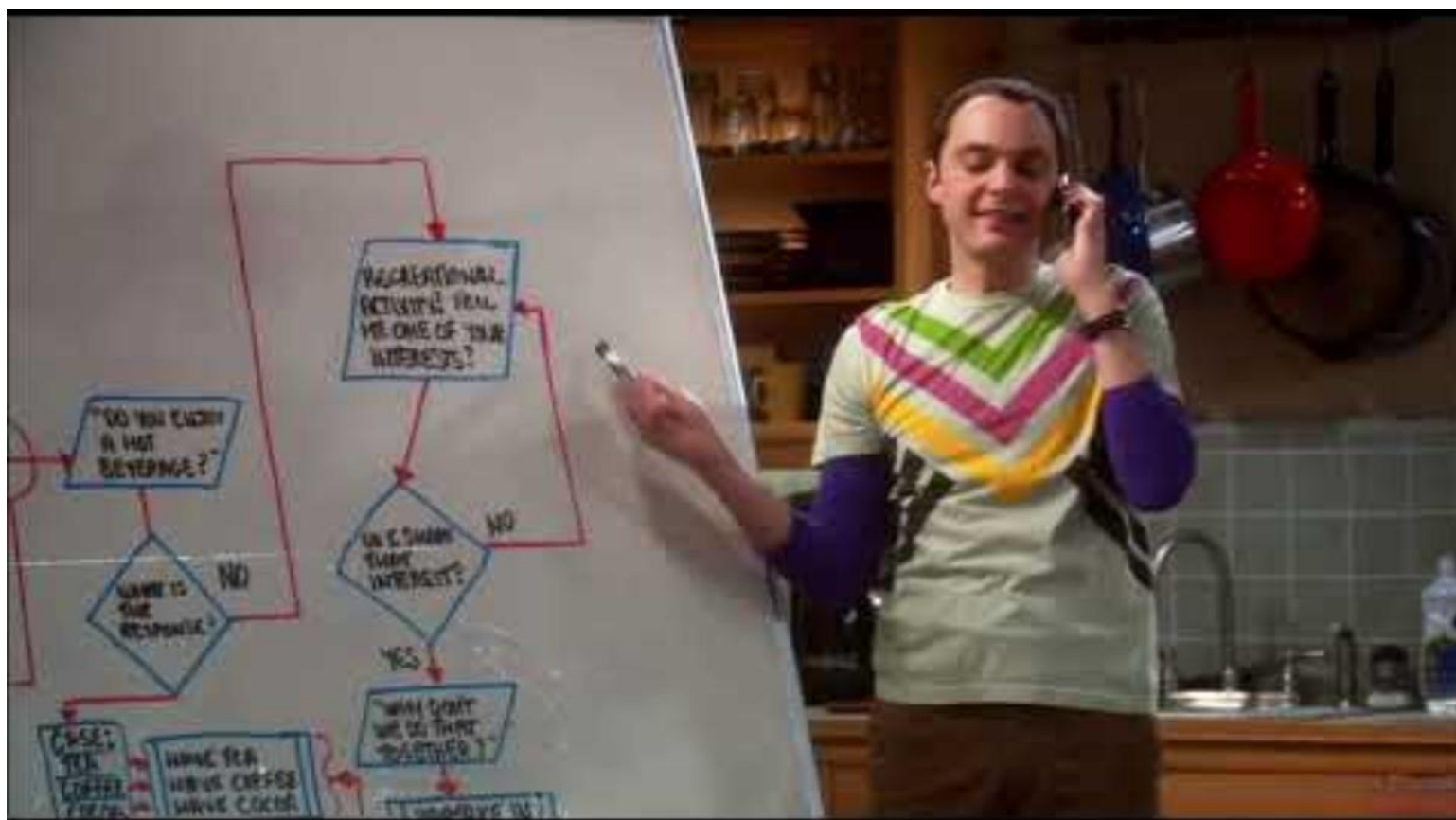


WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?



- The term “neurodiversity” was coined in the 1990s by Judy Singer, an autistic sociologist, as part of the autism rights movement
- Neurodiversity is the concept that differences in brain function and behavior are normal variations within the human population, rather than deficits or problems

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT NEURODIVERSITY IN ACTION



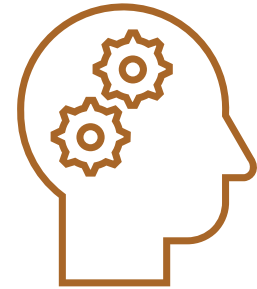
LET'S DISCUSS



**Was Sheldon's
friendship algorithm a
traditional or "normal"
way of making friends?**



**How could Sheldon's
friendship algorithm
impact society?**



**What does Sheldon's
friendship algorithm
teach us about
neurodiversity?**

WHAT AUTISM *ISN'T*...

A disorder where
individuals are anti-social

A condition that causes
intellectual disabilities



WHAT AUTISM *IS*...

A disorder characterized by
repetitive, restricted, and inflexible
patterns of behavior, interests, and
activities, as well as difficulties in
social interaction and social
communication

A wide spectrum where individuals
have a variety of intellectual
functioning, personality traits,
interests, backgrounds, and needs.

WHAT AUTISM *ISN'T* ...

The inability to feel empathy

A developmental disability that occurs mainly in boys

A disorder that goes away upon adulthood



WHAT AUTISM *IS*...

A spectrum disorder where individuals experience a wide range of emotions and may express their feelings of empathy differently

A developmental disability that affects a wide range of people regardless of gender

A lifelong condition where individuals are capable of making progress and developing effective coping strategies

TURN TO A PARTNER AND DISCUSS ...

[Info] Welcome! Select a time and click Start [Reveal*]

0 hr 3 min 0 sec

00:03:00

☐ Play sound when timer ends

Start Timer

Light Theme

- What are some misconceptions you have heard about autism?
- What is the impact of these misconceptions?
- How can we educate our community about these misconceptions?
- Throughout your life, how has your perspective on autism changed?



**DEMONSTRATION
TIME!**



WHAT HAS HELPED ME THROUGH MY LIFE



Getting to express my special interests



Trying new things



Establishing a routine



Learning about autism



BREAK TIME



BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION

[Info>Welcome! Select a time and click Start. [Reveal*]

0 hr

1 min

0 sec

00:01:00

☐ Play sound when timer ends

Start Timer

Light Theme

Turn to your partner and introduce yourself without speaking

Turn to your partner and tell them about your weekend plans without speaking

REFLECTION



How did it feel not being able to communicate verbally?

Which barriers would you face if this was your daily reality?

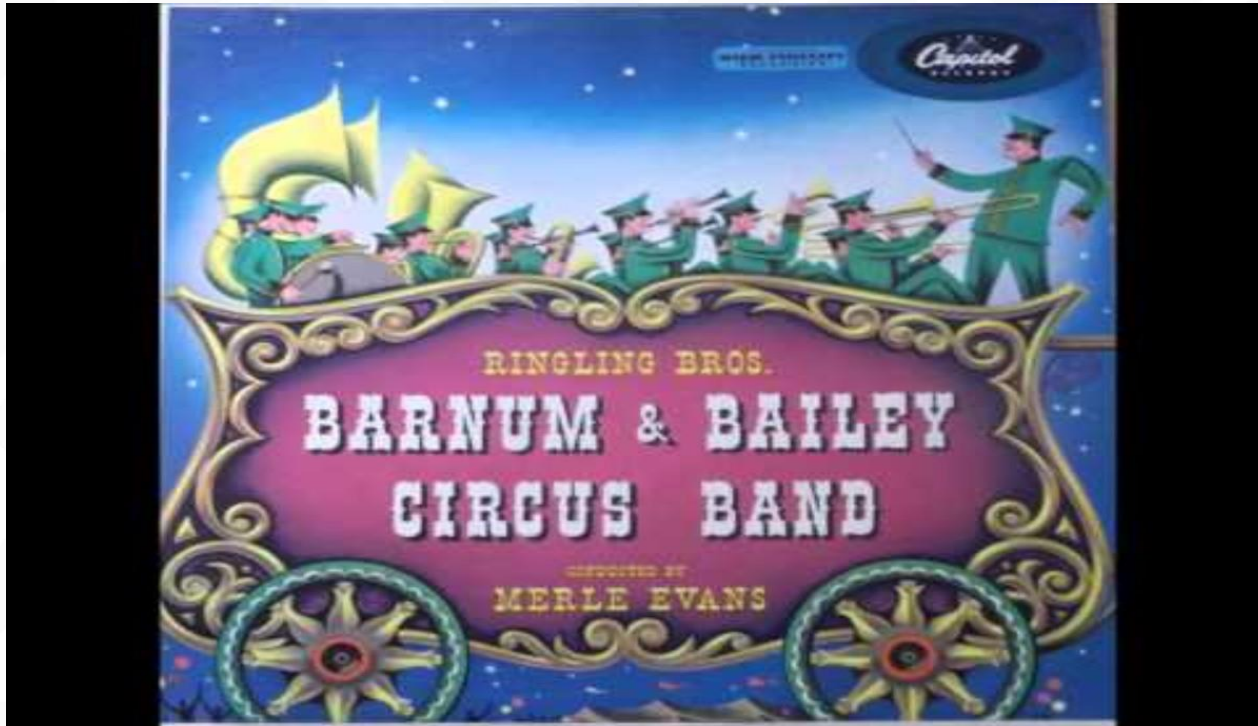
How would communication barriers affect the lives of people on the autism spectrum?

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT LIVING ON THE SPECTRUM?



- We crave friendships and relationships
- We may need more frequent breaks
- We really do love talking about our special interests
- We want to be celebrated for our differences, but also have a sense of normalcy
- Our disability can be invisible to others, but not to ourselves
- We want both awareness and acceptance

OVERSTIMULATION





REFLECTION

How did it feel writing on your paper with that music in the background?

How would feeling overstimulated frequently affect your daily life?

How can we make our world more sensory-friendly?

AUTISM GLOSSARY OF TERMS



- Masking
- Burn-Out
- Allistic
- Scripting
- Visual Schedule
- Savant
- Expressive Language
- Receptive Language
- Pragmatics
- Functioning Labels
- Hyper/Hyposensitivity
- The Infinity Symbol
- Stimming
- Self-Injurious Behavior
- IEP
- 504
- FBA
- BIP
- LRE
- Self-Contained
- Mainstream
- Regression
- Prompt
- Generalization
- Identity-First Language
- Person-First Language



The work all of you do is extremely important and affects the lives of so many people on a daily basis.

I wouldn't be where I am today without the contributions people like you all make.

Thank you so much for all you do and thank you for making a difference for those who need it.





Q&A



THANK YOU!

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Headshot Station



**RESERVE
YOUR SPOT**

No spots left? Stop by!
We'll fit you in for a walk-up.