Autism
Acceptance
Month 2022

World Autism Awareness and Acceptance Day

April 2022

"Don't discredit what you don't understand. And don't judge when you haven't experienced it."
Jaco - Nonspeaking Autistic Teen

www.aut2know.co.za

What's included in the pack?

- A message from nonspeaking autistic teens
- Why nonspeaking?
- Ideas on how to create acceptance and awareness
- How to help Autism South Africa Raise Money
- Where does that money go?
- Autism Word Search
- What is Autism Poster
- Bunting for you to decorate your house, school or office with
- Free colouring in page designed by autistic adult, Lindsey Carter
- Word Search Answers

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Messages from nonspeaking teens.

The question, what would you like to see from South Africans for autism awareness and acceptance month?

Listen to new things even when it sounds impossible. Get your information straight from the source. Don't link speech to intelligence. And always presume competence.

TANAKA

Dear South Africans,
Tholu here your nonspeaking autistic friend. Don't just accept try to understand. Don't just be aware but truly see us. See who I am as a person. See my strengths not my flaws. On the inside I'm a person just like you.

THOLU

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It's a massive honour to contribute something. It's important to see the person not just the autism that they have. You don't need to accept my autism but you need to accept that I am still a human with rights. Don't discredit what you don't understand and don't judge when you haven't experienced it. It doesn't cost anything to be a considerate, compassionate person.

JACO

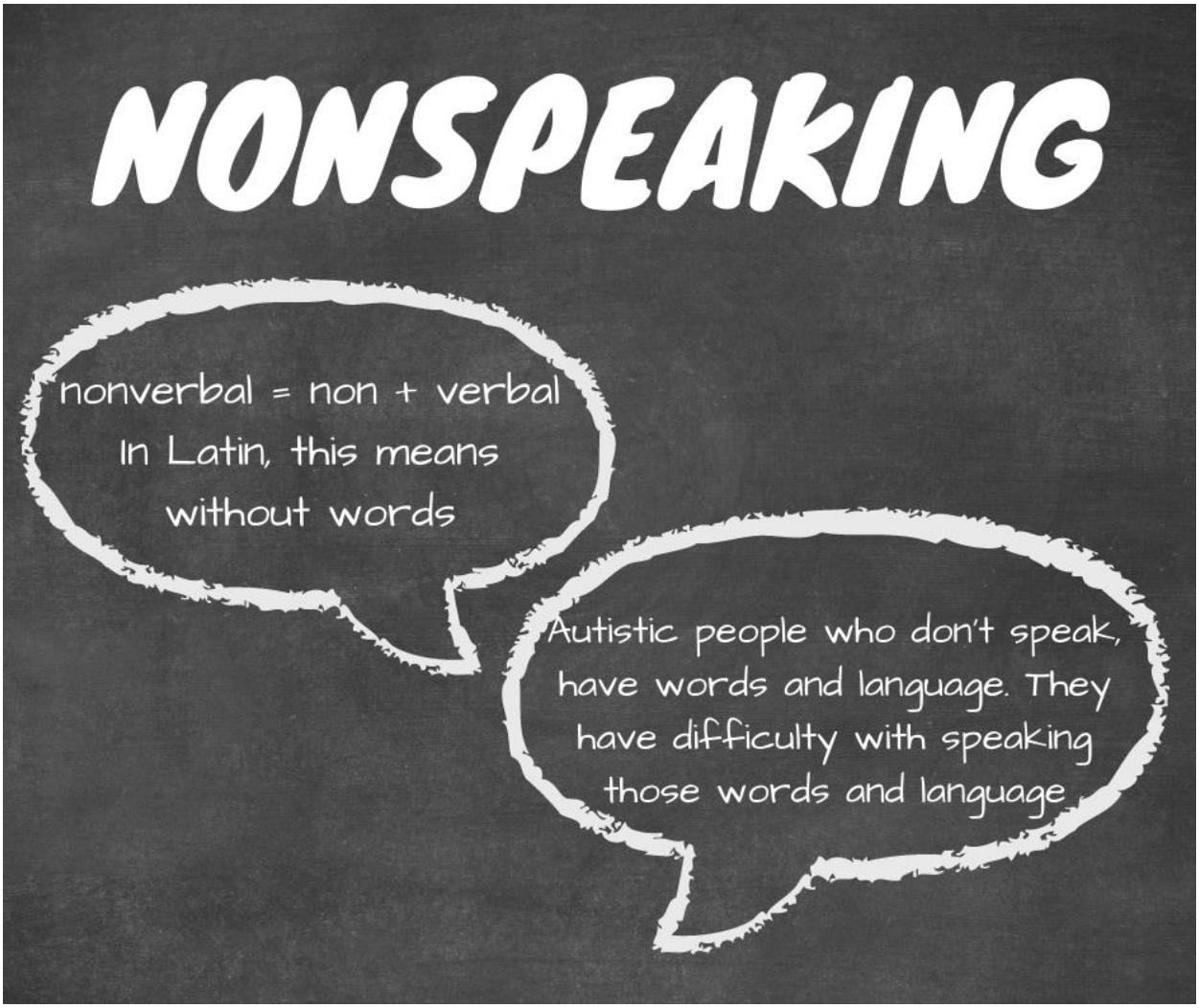
Those around you who does not speak also has words to say. It's just locked up or stuck somewhere in their mouth. Be mindful and don't just assume we are stupid because we don't speak or function differently. Learn to accept unconditionally.

TUMELO

I would like to see more people participating in more realistic endeavours that bring out the essence of the autistic mind.

KIERAN

The messages on the previous 2 pages are all from learners from the Sisu Hub who use Spelling to Communicate as their method of communication.



Language and speech have been identified as being in two different parts of the brain. We also know, that speech is motor. In fact, most forms of communication require some form of motor control. We are beginning to learn and understand that more often than not, autistic people have apraxia. This means that they have difficulty with movement – including the movement of the mouth, tongue, and lips, to form words. This does not mean that this population does not understand language, it also does not mean that this population does not have language.

Autistic people, both speaking and nonspeaking, understand langugge, and they have language. This is why we are no longer using the terminology nonverbal – it is simply not true. Autisitc people are not nonverbal or minimally verbal, they are nonspeaking, minimally speaking or unreliably speaking.

Functioning labels are harmful

We urge every single South African who is involved in the autism community to please stop using functioning labels in autism. High functioning and low functioning labels are harmful to the autistic community. High functioning does not give a true idea of the supports an individual might require, often individuals who are labelled as high functioning are expected to cope regardless of the situation – this can have disastrous effects on that person. We see masking and eventual autistic burnout.

Low functioning is just as damaging. We are learning from individuals who were classified as low functioning that they are in fact highly intelligent! This label harms this population, as they are underestimated and often placed in facilities that do not presume they are competent.

In addition to the above information, it is important to note that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – the DSM V also uses support levels and no longer refers to functioning levels.

We urge each of you to pledge that from now on, you will rather use the term support needs when trying to support an autistic person. And to also bear in mind that support needs will differ each day. We don't all always have the same level of functioning every day. We also don't always require the same level of support every day.

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Adult Support

Over the last couple of years, Autism South Africa has seen an increase in the number of adults seeking a diagnosis as well as support for themselves. Yet, we have not seen the supports for adults increase.

During the early months of 2022, Autism South Africa met with other organisations and individuals (including autistic adults), to begin a campaign to start advocating for supports for autistic adults in South Africa.

The envisaged outcome of this collaboration is to begin the process of ensuring the following support is available:

- Transition from school to work or post school education
- Employment support
  - This might include training of the employer and colleagues
  - Helping to put supports and reasonable accommodations into place to ensure that the autistic employee has the best opportunity to succeed
- Consultations with medical professionals to ensure adults have access to a professional for diagnosis and support
- Meeting with government, as currently there are no government facilities available for an adult diagnosis
- Consultation with the adult autistic community to ensure that we are respectful of the community.

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Word Search

Autism

I	T	E	Y	L	I	M	A	F	O	U	L	N	U
N	O	I	T	A	C	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	T
A	R	E	W	O	P	M	E	I	U	P	S	R	C
U	R	I	S	E	N	S	O	R	Y	T	O	P	O
T	S	E	S	G	R	E	L	T	L	P	E	S	M
I	I	E	G	O	T	A	A	U	P	O	S	N	P
S	I	N	T	U	C	M	D	U	P	P	D	O	E
T	D	O	C	C	L	A	S	L	I	N	E	I	T
I	M	N	E	L	P	A	E	S	N	E	E	T	E
C	F	P	N	E	U	C	T	L	I	S	N	O	N
N	T	I	P	L	E	D	P	I	T	O	T	M	C
M	S	I	T	U	A	O	E	T	O	E	I	E	E
M	N	O	N	S	P	E	A	K	I	N	G	O	U
Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	D	O	R	U	E	N

ACCEPT
NEURODIVERSITY
COMPETENCE
ADULTS
COMMUNICATION
REGULATION
AUTISM
EMPOWER
TEENS
NONSPEAKING
NEEDS
SUPPORT
EMOTIONS
INCLUDE
PEOPLE
FAMILY
AUTISTIC
MOTOR
SENSORY

Help Us Raise Money

HELP US RAISE MONEY

DONATE DIRECTLY TO AUTISM SOUTH AFRICA	HOST AN AUTISM AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE DAY TO RAISE MONEY FOR AUTISM SOUTH AFRICA

BANKING DETAILS:
BANKING DETAILS: AUTISM SOUTH AFRICA
STANDARD BANK
SANDTON: BRANCH CODE: 051 001
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 220731233

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Autism Acceptance Spirit Week

Autism Acceptance Spirit Week – With thanks to The Neurodivergent Teacher who has graciously allowed us to use this in our booklet this month. Please follow The Neurodivergent Teacher's page: https://www.facebook.com/theneurodivergentteacher

Magnificent Mind Monday

Autism is a neurological variation, which means the brains of autistic people work differently than the brains of non-autistic people – and that's amazing! Celebrate how amazing it is all of our minds work in different and wonderful way by **wearing a fun hat and/or wild hair.**

Neurodiversity Tuesday

To celebrate the beauty in the diverse spectrum of the human mind, **wear rainbow or tie-dyed clothes to school or work!**

What's your passion Wednesday

One characteristic of autism is to show incredibly focused passion for topics of interest. What are you passionate about? **Dress to show something you love.**

Thursday Autism acceptance day

Love and acceptance go a long way. **Wear red or gold** to show your support and acceptance of autistic individuals.

Sensory Friendly Friday

Autism people often have a variety of sensory sensitivities.
Dress up today in our most comfy clothes
(including school-appropriate pjs), use as much natural light in your classroom instead of fluorescents as possible, and/or wear sunglasses.

a;sa
autism south africa

WHAT IS AUTISM?

AUTISM IS A SPECTRUM

AUTISTIC PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT AUTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

SOME MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH SENSORY INFORMATION SUCH AS LIGHTS, SOUNDS, TEXTURES AND TASTES

CHILDREN MIGHT PLAY DIFFERENTLY WITH THEIR TOYS

SOME AUTISTIC PEOPLE MIGHT SPEAK
SOME AUTISTIC PEOPLE MIGHT NOT SPEAK

AUTISTIC PEOPLE AND CHILDREN MIGHT HAVE MOVEMENT DIFFERENCES

AUTISTIC PEOPLE ENGAGE IN SELF-STIMULATORY (STIMS) BEHAVIOUR TO HELP THEM STAY REGULATED OR CALM

WWW.AUT2KNOW.CO.ZA 011 484 9909 INFO@AUTISMSOUTHAFRICA.ORG

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Bunting Instructions

Print out the page with the bunting triangles – print as many as you would like to create a banner.
Cut each flag out.
Get some string, and lay it onto the top of the triangle. Fold down the top edge of the triangle over the string and glue it down.
Your bunting is ready to hang.

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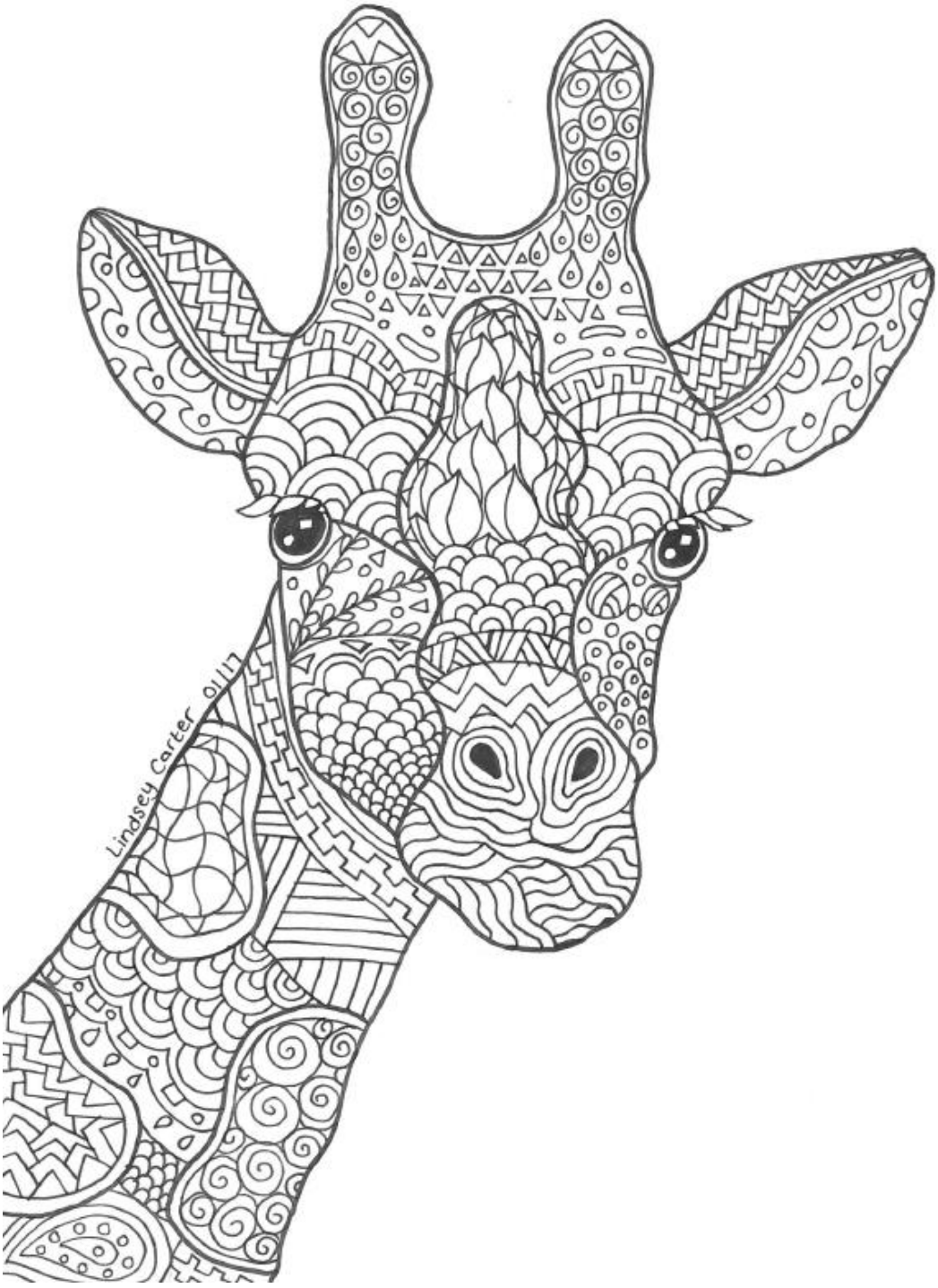
Colouring in Page – Designed by Lindsey Carter

Autism South Africa is selling a full colouring in book, all designed by Lindsey. Proceeds go to Autism South Africa. You can order your copy by contacting Autism South Africa.



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Autism South Africa's theme for World Autism Awareness and Acceptance Day for 2002 is:

INCLUSION EQUALS EVERYONE.

Lidia Pretorius is collaborating with Down Syndrome SA, Autism SA and Equal Education Law Centre on a campaign during Human Rights Month (March) and Freedom Month (April), coinciding with **World Down Syndrome Day (21 March)** and **World Autism Awareness and Acceptance Day (2 April).**

The education campaign focuses on reinforcing messaging that encourages families, schools, communities and leaders to do more to advance the rights of children with disabilities to quality inclusive education for all. The campaign will mainly be waged through social media.

Our Ask - How can you show solidarity in action?

We are requesting that you use your agency (institution, designation, reputation, influence) to:

Record and post weekly 60-180 second videos or voice notes on your organisational and/or personal social media platforms, using the thematic areas that we will send to you, for message content and Calls to Action (please keep in mind access for Deaf and blind viewers/listeners and make use of closed captions/sub titles/transcripts as far as possible.)

Release a weekly media statement and/or requesting timeslots on radio/television, using the weekly thematic areas, over the next two months that advocates for solidarity in action, and which

educates members of the public with a clear Call to Action

Visit schools and early childhood development centres and encourage them to take small steps within their reach towards welcoming and accommodating children with disabilities

Write to/engage with MECs of Education, advocating for more action faster to enrol children with disabilities who are out of school, and to retain and ensure learning for learners with disabilities who are enrolled in school

Write to/engage with MECs of Social Development, advocating for more action faster to support parents organisations of children with disabilities, and to equip early childhood development centres with skills and knowledge to impactfully include children with disabilities in community-based ECD and stimulation centres

Write to/engage with MECs for Health, advocating for more action faster to ensure that children with disabilities have access to community-based early identification and therapeutic support, inclusive of essential assistive technology such as wheelchairs and other mobility devices, hearing aids and so forth.

Lobby the private sector for more meaningful partnership with organisations advocating for, and providing education support services to children with disabilities and their families

Lobby other influencers in your network to join the campaign by taking similar action

Retweet social media campaign posts

#QualityInclusiveEducationForAll CAMPAIGN

Please use the following 3 hashtags with all your posts to enable the team to track and retweet:
#QualityEducationForAll
#EveryChildMatters
#InclusionMatters

Please contact director@autismsouthafrica.org if you would like further information on this campaign.

Follow our campaign on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/AutismSouthAfrica
https://www.facebook.com/EqualEducationLawCentre
https://www.facebook.com/DownSyndromeSouthAfrica
https://www.facebook.com/groups/349136842576271

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I	T	E	Y	L	I	M	A	F	O	U	L	N	U
N	O	I	T	A	C	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	T
A	R	E	W	O	P	M	E	I	U	P	S	R	C
U	R	I	S	E	N	S	O	R	Y	T	O	P	O
T	S	E	S	G	R	E	L	T	L	P	E	S	M
I	I	E	G	O	T	A	A	U	P	O	S	N	P
S	I	N	T	U	C	M	D	U	P	P	D	O	E
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C	F	P	N	E	U	C	T	L	I	S	N	O	N
N	T	I	P	L	E	D	P	I	T	O	T	M	C
M	S	I	T	U	A	O	E	T	O	E	I	E	E
M	N	O	N	S	P	E	A	K	I	N	G	O	U
Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	D	O	R	U	E	N