

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What do Albert Einstein, Emily Dickinson, Tim Burton, Charles Darwin, Bobby Fischer, Bill Gates, Jerry Seinfeld, Tim Burton and Elon Musk have in common? The answer is ASD or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Remember the famous films, Rain Man, My Name is Khan or Barfi, where the central characters appear different because of their social behavior? Audiences assume they have a developmental or intellectual disorder. It's actually ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder).

Recently ASD has caught the attention of people due to the increasing mainstream portrayal of people with this condition in films, television series, **especially on the OTT (over the top) platform.**

Some of the popular ones include, The Good Doctor, Extraordinary Attorney Woo, Atypical and so on.

These are definitely helping bust myths and stereotypes around ASD, myths like people with autism feel no emotion. Or, people with autism have an intellectual disability. Or, bad parenting causes autism. The list is quite a bit long!

1 in 500 people have ASD in India. That's more than 21,60,000 people.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 defines ASD

- As a neuro-developmental condition typically appearing in the first three years of life

That significantly affects a person's ability to

- Communicate
- Understand relationships
- Relate to others, and
- Is frequently associated with unusual or stereotypical rituals or behaviors

Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD, isn't a single condition but a diverse range of neurodevelopmental differences. It's a mosaic of strengths, challenges, and perceptions that shape the world for those who experience it. No two individuals with ASD are exactly alike.

ASD affects social interaction, communication, behavior, and sensory processing. They might also face challenges related to social communication, sensory sensitivities, and changes in routine. Although people with ASD often exhibit exceptional memory, attention to detail, and creativity.

It's common for individuals with ASD to have **co-occurring conditions** like anxiety, ADHD, epilepsy, or gastrointestinal issues, which can further impact their daily lives.

Early intervention services, including

- Behavioral therapy
- Speech therapy, and
- Occupational therapy can significantly improve outcomes for individuals with ASD helping them develop important skills and coping mechanisms

Autism is a lifelong condition.

They are also often misdiagnosed. People with autism have different ways of learning, moving and paying attention. But they can certainly lead regular lives with the right support and resources.

It's crucial to create environments that accommodate different sensory needs and communication styles. By doing so, we foster inclusion and understanding. Every person has their own unique way of seeing the world. It's what makes us beautifully different.

Akshay Bhatnagar was the first person in the state of Rajasthan with autism, to get admission into a mainstream college. And he didn't stop there, of course. He became also the first to crack the competitive exam and join the Government of Rajasthan Secretariat!

Some organizations working for children with ASD are

[Action for Autism](#)

[Autism Society of India](#)

[Sopan](#)

[Forum for Autism](#)

[Ummeed](#)