

#RedInstead: The Truth About Autism Acceptance Month

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April is Autism Acceptance Month, but many people don't know what that means or how to celebrate it. Some people support some unsavory "Autism" groups to try and show solidarity to their autistic friends. They shine blue lights and use the puzzle piece symbol to show they care, however that's not the best thing to do during this month.

The puzzle piece and the color blue were introduced as symbols of autism by a company called Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks doesn't have a very good track record with actually representing the autistic community. This track record includes merging with Cure Autism Now (CAN), a group dedicated to curing autism from the gene pool. (How Does the Autistic Brain Work). Why go red? The blogger Speaking Autism said it better than I can: it "represents part of the philosophy of Neurodiversity, in that neurodivergent like autism are something to be celebrated as natural variations of human neurology." Wearing red shows support for autistic people rather than a company.

You may ask yourself why the puzzle piece is a harmful symbol in the autism community. A blogger known as AutisticAlex said it best, "it implied that we are something to be solved or fixed" this follows along with the Autism Speaks campaign to "cure" autism and "fix" those that have it. Autism doesn't need to be fixed or cured. In fact, it can't be, no one knows what causes it.

Autism Speaks calls April "Autism Awareness Month," but the autistic community doesn't need awareness, they need acceptance. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) answered the question, "Why Acceptance," with the poem "Because autism is a natural part of the human experience. /Because autistic rights are human rights. /Because autistic people can speak for ourselves, and we want you to listen to us. /Because we aren't going anywhere. /Because this is our world too. /Because there are all kinds of minds, and this world is big enough for all of us."

To show support for your autistic friends, use red lights instead of blue and the infinity sign instead of puzzle pieces. Show them they are cared and loved for. Get them new stim toys, ask them about their special interest. Show them acceptance. If you want to know more about Autism Acceptance Month, check out this [website!](#)

