



Autism Society of America Advocacy Guide: Show Your Support for Autism Acceptance Month and #CelebrateDifferences

This April, the Autism Society of America is proud to continue its third annual “Celebrate Differences” campaign in honor of Autism Acceptance Month. #CelebrateDifferences encourages individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives through connection and acceptance.

This year, we acknowledge the shift from “Awareness” to “Acceptance” and advocate for lawmakers to federally designate April as Autism Acceptance Month. While we will always work to spread awareness, words matter -- the need for acceptance is greater than ever, as we strive for autistic individuals to live fully in all areas of life.

The Autism Society understands the importance of fostering acceptance to ignite change through improved support and opportunities in education, employment, accessible housing, affordable health care and comprehensive long-term services and supports.

Show your support by spreading the word and advocating for autism acceptance within your network!

Here’s everything you need:

- Talking points and basic info
- 5 easy ways to support Autism Acceptance today (and none involve donating!)
- Example social media posts and newsletter/email copy
- Additional resources and links

If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out at info@autism-society.org or visit our Autism Acceptance Month website at AutismAcceptance.org.

Key Messages:

- The Autism Society of America with autism advocates, community members, and fellow national autism organizations, are collectively advocating for April to be federally designated as “Autism Acceptance Month.”



- The shift in the use of terminology from “Autism Awareness Month” to “Autism Acceptance Month” aims to foster acceptance which can ignite change in the lives of those with autism and their families.
- Autism community advocates across the country have a long-standing history of using the term “acceptance” as a means of more fully integrating those 1 in every 54 Americans living with autism into our social fabric.

Autism Acceptance Means:

- As we work to create a more accepting society, we must also accept autistic individuals for who they are. Acceptance is often one of the biggest barriers to being valued and finding and developing a strong support system.
- Fostering acceptance is an essential step to improving opportunities in education, employment, accessible housing, affordable health care and more.
- It is not enough to be aware of autism, our society needs to accept the autism community and take actionable steps to better support individuals to live quality, meaningful and supported lives. Acceptance puts pressure on our leaders to dedicate more funding in support services for the autistic community.

#CelebrateDifferences:

- #CelebrateDifferences encourages individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives through connection and acceptance.
- The #CelebrateDifferences campaign provides educational resources about autism, alongside stories from autistic self-advocates demonstrating the impact of acceptance and inclusion.
- Inclusion begins with acceptance.

5 EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT TODAY

- **Post On Social Media:**
 - **Like our social media accounts:** like our posts, comment, share!
 - Facebook: @AutismSociety
 - Instagram: @AutismSociety
 - Twitter: @AutismSociety
 - LinkedIn: Autism Society of America
 - **Use the #CelebrateDifferences hashtag:**



- *#CelebrateDifferences* encourages individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives through connection and acceptance. Tell us how you *#CelebrateDifferences* by using the hashtag in your posts.
- Inclusion begins with acceptance. Join the *#CelebrateDifferences* campaign and the efforts of so many to create a more accepting society that enables each of the 1 in 54 Americans living with Autism to fully integrate into our social fabric.
- **#IamMe**
 - We welcome those with autism and their loved ones to join our movement on social media. What are your favorite activities? What are you proud of? Share photos of yourselves doing things you love and use *#IAmMe* and *#CelebrateDifferences* to help us showcase pride and promote acceptance within our community. It all starts with you being you.
 - What is *#IAmMe*? That's for you to decide. The Autism Society of America is urging you to tell your story in photos, video and your own words. Celebrate your strengths. Spotlight your talents and pride. Embrace your differences.
- **Record & Post a Video In Support**
 - Post a video/vlog explaining your support of *#AutismAcceptanceMonth* and how you *#CelebratedDifferences*.
- **Talk About Us In A Livestream Or Virtual Town Hall**
 - Give an overview on the Autism Society's *#CelebrateDifferences* campaign and the importance behind *#AutismAcceptanceMonth*.
 - Share the website www.AutismAcceptance.org, so your audience can learn more and download resources.
 - Tell your audience how they can get involved by helping to spread the word, fundraiser, or donate.
- **Mention Us In Your Newsletter (Use for partners/Affiliates/corporate donors)**



- o Please mention Autism Acceptance Month and #CelebrateDifferences. Example copy below!
- o Link to our website or our social media channels so people can learn more, and get involved.
- **Get others involved!**
 - o Tag friends and family
 - o Share our fundraising link, <http://bit.ly/aamdonate>
 - o Share our website, AutismAcceptance.org
 - o Share links to Autism Acceptance Month events

EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND NEWSLETTER/EMAIL COPY

Example Tweets

- The @AutismSociety is advocating for an important change and you can help. April has been known as 'Autism Awareness Month' but it's time to transition to 'Autism Acceptance Month'. Words matter, so join us as we #CelebrateDifferences and work to create a more accepting society. (178 characters)
- Words matter. It's why @AutismSociety, leading disability orgs & advocates are working to designate April as 'Autism Acceptance Month.' Fostering acceptance is essential to igniting positive change in the lives of those with #autism. #CelebrateDifferences (160 characters)
- The #IAmMe challenge for #AutismAcceptanceMonth: Share photos/videos doing the things you love and tag it with #IAmMe. Help us showcase your pride, empower your strengths and talents. Let's #CelebrateDifferences as we strive for a more accepting world. (165 characters)

Example Facebook Posts

- Now is the time for change. Now is the time for acceptance. That's why the @AutismSociety, alongside national autism organizations and community advocates, are leading an effort to change April from 'Autism Awareness Month' to #AutismAcceptanceMonth. We know words matter as we work to create a more supportive and accepting society for those with autism and their families. Here's how you can help: [\[Link to website\]](#) (66 words)



- *(For April 2nd, 2021:)* Today, I join the @AutismSociety to celebrate #AutismAcceptanceDay worldwide. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. Today, and everyday, I #CelebratesDifferences as we work to build an inclusive society where individuals with autism live fully through connection and acceptance. Here's how you can support: [[Link to website](#)] (56 words)
- We need more options for autistic adults to live supported, quality lives and be meaningful members of their communities through employment, independent living, and inclusive opportunities. Your support helps the @AutismSociety advocate at the local, state and national level to better support the autism community through connection and acceptance. [[Link to donate](#)] (49 words)

Example Instagram Copy

- Inclusion begins with acceptance. This month we're participating in the @AutismSociety's #CelebrateDifferences campaign to create a more accepting society that enables each of the 1 in 54 Americans living with Autism to fully integrate into our social fabric.
- April is #AutismAcceptanceMonth. I stand with the @AutismSociety as we #CelebrateDifferences of individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives.
- *(For April 2nd, 2021:)* Today, I join the @AutismSociety to celebrate #AutismAcceptanceDay worldwide. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. Today, and everyday, I #CelebratesDifferences as we work to build an inclusive society where individuals with autism live fully through connection and acceptance. Visit the [link](#) in bio to support!

Example Newsletter or Email Copy

This April, we are joining the Autism Society of America in its third annual "Celebrate Differences" campaign in honor of Autism Acceptance Month. #CelebrateDifferences encourages individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives through connection and acceptance.



This year, we acknowledge the shift from “Awareness” to “Acceptance.” While we will always work to spread awareness, words matter -- the need for acceptance is greater than ever, as we strive for autistic individuals to live fully in all areas of life.

To highlight the importance of fostering acceptance we are using the following hashtags in our social media posts: #AutismAcceptanceMonth #CelebrateDifferences #IAMMe

We invite you to do the same as we work to build an inclusive society where individuals with autism live fully through connection and acceptance.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Resources

- Here is a [link](#) to our Autism 101 to share!
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- Additional resources can be downloaded for use [here](#).

Our Affiliates and Partners

- Find a local Autism Society affiliate near you, [here](#).
- Learn more about our partners for Autism Acceptance Month, [here](#).

If you are interested in:

- Corporate donations, sponsorship, fundraising or hosting an event in support of the Autism Society of America, please contact: development@autism-society.org
- Media contact or interview request: nathanw@strategies360.com
- Additional information, referrals, or support: info@autism-society.org