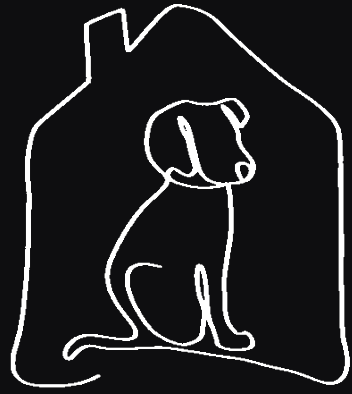




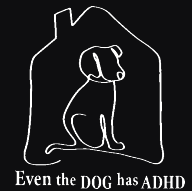
Even the DOG has ADHD

05 / GUIDE FIVE

Explaining Autism.

For the people who love you and want to understand, without the myths.

Autism is one of the most misunderstood differences in how human brains work. This guide gives you clear, kind language to explain it to the people who matter, built around what is actually true, not the tired stereotypes. The aim is connection, not correction.



A CLEAR DEFINITION

What autism actually is.

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that shapes how a person perceives, processes and responds to the world, including social interaction, sensory experience, communication and routine. It is a different way of being human, not an illness or a deficit.

Autism is a spectrum, but the spectrum is not a line from 'mild' to 'severe'. It is more like a profile of strengths and needs that is unique to each person, and that can shift across a lifetime.

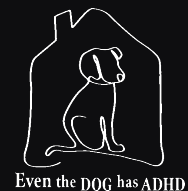
DISMANTLE THE MYTHS

The stereotypes to leave behind.

A handful of persistent myths make life harder for autistic people. Naming them gently, with the truth beside them, is one of the most useful things you can do for the people around you.

COMMON MYTHS, AND WHAT IS ACTUALLY TRUE

- 01 Myth: autistic people lack empathy. Truth: many experience deep empathy; it may simply be expressed or felt differently.
- 02 Myth: you cannot be autistic if you make eye contact, work or are in a relationship. Truth: many autistic people do all of these, often through effort and masking.
- 03 Myth: autism only affects children. Truth: it is lifelong, and many adults are diagnosed late.
- 04 Myth: everyone is 'a bit autistic'. Truth: autism is a defined difference, not a personality quirk; this phrase can minimise real experience.



FOR FAMILY & PARTNERS

What it means in everyday life.

Explain how autism shows up for you specifically, because it looks different in everyone. The people who love you usually want to understand. They just need to know what that looks like in practice.

You might describe your sensory needs, the things that help you regulate, how you prefer to communicate, and what to do when you are overwhelmed. Being specific turns a label into something people can actually support.

WORTH EXPLAINING ABOUT ME

Sensory things that overwhelm me, and the small adjustments that genuinely help.

How I recharge and regulate after demanding situations.

That I may need direct, clear communication rather than hints.

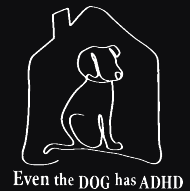
That needing time alone is regulation, not rejection.

AT WORK & SCHOOL

Understanding as support.

In workplaces and classrooms, understanding autism well is often more powerful than any single adjustment. When people grasp why something is hard, the support follows more naturally.

Many autistic people thrive with clarity: clear expectations, advance notice of change, written information, and environments that take sensory needs seriously. Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments may be available without needing to disclose more than you are comfortable with.



SET THE TONE

Inviting understanding, not debate.

You are offering information to the people who want to be closer to you, not defending your right to exist. Keep it warm, keep it specific, and let people ask questions. If someone is unwilling to learn, you are not obliged to keep teaching them.

The most powerful thing you can model is that being autistic is a valid way to be, one that comes with real challenges and real strengths, and that deserves understanding rather than pity.

A last word

You are not starting from scratch.

Neurodivergent life deserves more than awareness. It deserves understanding, offered plainly, received with warmth, and lived with dignity.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Build understanding with Even The Dog Has ADHD.

Sources & further reading

NHS: what is autism <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/what-is-autism/>

National Autistic Society: about autism <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-is-autism>

Acas: neurodiversity at work <https://www.acas.org.uk/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace>

ADHD Foundation: autism support <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>