



AUTISM :

DESERVING OF MORE THAN ACCEPTANCE

As our community grows, we find ourselves surrounded more and more by **diversity**. It seems as though the world is finally recognizing that diversity is not, in fact, a minority of peoples, but an aspect of all people who make the choice above and against evolutionary instinct, to try to live together. Politics have made the term “minority,” which numerically does apply to many of us, into a tool for maneuvering that is all too frequently negative and even derogatory. If we are such advanced creatures as to be able to choose to live **together**, then why is it that by the same hand we categorize ourselves into disparities? Emphasizing the rights of a majority here, or minority there?

I ask this rhetorically, of course, because most of you reading this will have a reason you feel is justified. My message here, as an **autistic** woman, is this: if given the opportunity, we ourselves are blind to such divisions. Passionate about social justice causes, yes. As adults. But if you were to sit with an Autistic child and be able to hear their thoughts on the subject you would find a sense of confusion, and likely even some humor in this pointless posturing.

Born into a world so entirely not ready for us, we will most likely lose ourselves in it. By the time people see us we have adopted **identities** and languages that are not our own as a means to survive, or are suffering in silence with so few able to hear what we say, sing, and feel. If you could strip all of that back, however, you would find no other human being as ready, able, and compulsively OURSELVES, as us.

So on behalf of the community of what is currently called Autistic Peoples, I put forth this **provocation**. What would the world be like if you simply woke up tomorrow and decided to be...

YOURSELF?



mind-body-spirit

KIDS CORNER

Autie Finger Maze

Learning people can be like a maze. Hard, but a little easier with some help.—Glo (Umi Kid)

Leaving Your Fingerprint

This one is for our beautiful, awesome, vibrant, quiet, loud, unique autistic kiddos.

Indeed, for ALL children.

The next time you go on a hike, are on your way to school, or even going to a doctors office, take with you a little non-irritating washable marker or bit of paint.

Find a GOOD spot (no damage):

Small stone, edge of a sidewalk, a pillar on a walkway, or the thin paper on the doc's table. Put a little bit of color on your finger, and press gently into your spot. Voila.



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A little bit of you has made an impression on the world.



BY AN ANONYMOUS MEMBER

AN HONEST, PERSONAL LOOK AT MY EXPERIENCE
WITH HEALTHCARE, AND HOW BEING AUTISTIC
HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS.

A team of doctors and nurses had just run off with my baby to the NICU. They ran. I had stood up with the epidural still in and tried to follow them down the hall. I could do this because analgesics don't always work well on people with EDS. I wasn't stopped by being numb or paralyzed from the waist down, as a lot of people would have been. I was stopped by the fact that I was still attached to the epidural catheter which was still attached to the IV pole. There were lines everywhere. The nurse who had coached me through my labor unhooked me as quickly as she could while my baby's father followed the team rushing away down the hall with my baby.

I finally made it to the NICU, on foot, waddling, several minutes after my baby did....

This Member's full, heartfelt story has been attached in PDF form in its entirety. We hope you'll take a few moments in this special Autism Awareness and Minority in Healthcare Month to read and honor this member's experience...

Conclusion...The books will say that autistic people have a heightened sensitivity to pain, and the appearance of diminished sensitivity is only because the brain flips that same switch under extremes. To survive. I also think that over the years I've gotten so used to my pain being dismissed that I mostly don't bother to report it anymore. So, do I feel less pain than other people? Or do I just know how to suck it up? For autistic people needing medical care, we are at war to decide what to allow them to see and what to hide. Pain largely psycho-social, and disability performative. Do we stand outside the building and demand they build steps we can walk up? Or just find a building without them? For me, medical care is so often just a crap shoot. I never know what I'm going to get no matter how hard I work to improve the odds. Some days it feels safer to conceal my disabilities. But then, if we all did that, how would the world ever



Change?



UMI VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

- SUBMIT A STORY FOR UMI NEWS – MAY IS EDS AWARENESS MONTH. IF YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE A STORY ABOUT YOU OR A LOVED ONE, SEND US A NOTE!

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE ANONYMOUS.

- CALLING PEOPLE WHO NEED A KNOWING EAR
- WRITING NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT, APPRECIATION, AND BIRTHDAYS TO MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN THE BROADER COMMUNITY WHO NEED ONE.
- HOSPITAL VISITS OR HOME VISITS
- HOME FOOD DELIVERY (MCAS FRIENDLY)
- RIDES TO APPOINTMENTS
- CREATIVES! CAN YOU SEND SHORT SONGS, POEM, DRAWING, CRAFT TO SOMEONE IN NEED?

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*VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS
AND EVENT REGISTRATION.*

UMI CALENDAR

MAY DAY! - 50% OFF FIRST PAC CONSULT	FOR NEW MEMBERS
STAFF & PROVIDER MONTHLY MEETING	MAY 2ND— 8:00PM ONLINE
HEART 2 HEART ANNUAL MEMBER GATHERING	TUESDAY MAY
HEART 2 HEART ANNUAL MEMBER GATHERING	IN -PERSON @ YANNI BISTRO
WORK WEEK—FINISHING	MAY 27-JUNE 1
ROADS LECTURE WITH DR. ALAN SPANOS	TBA—JUNE 15TH IN PERSON

HELP RLPAC WITH THE SPRING PROVIDER DATABASE!



NC & SC PATIENTS: ASK YOUR PHYSICIANS IF THEY WOULD CARE TO BE RECOMMENDED. SEND INFO TO ADDRESS PROVIDED.

OUT OF STATE PATIENTS: WANT TO USE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO GATHER EDS PROVIDER INFO FOR YOUR AREA? SEND RACHEL AND EMAIL AND SHE’LL TELL YOU HOW TO BEGIN!

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