



# Fact or Myth?

## Answers and further detail

#ImWithSam

<p>A learning disability usually develops before or at birth.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>A learning disability usually develops before or at birth, and has a lasting effect on someone's development.</p>
<p>You can always tell if someone has a learning disability by the way they look and behave.</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>The term 'learning disabilities' covers a wide spectrum. For example, people whose learning disability is mild learn to speak, read and write, while people whose learning disability is more severe may need higher levels of support to communicate.</p>
<p>Autism affects about 1 in 100 people in the UK.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>Autism is much more common than many people think. There are around 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the UK – that's more than 1 in 100*. If you include their families, autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people.</p>
<p>People with learning disabilities have always been treated equally in society.</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>As late as the 1980s people who had learning disabilities were said to need care in hospital settings and were kept away from people in their communities.</p> <p>The treatment that people received in these institutions was often very bad. There was very little to do and there was no freedom, choice or control for people to live the lives that they wanted to. This included not being able to choose what they ate or when they ate it, not being able to choose their own clothes or decide how they wanted to spend their day.</p> <p>In the 1980s the self-advocacy movement began, which is a civil rights movement for people with learning disabilities and autism. The self-advocacy movement is about people with learning disabilities and autism taking control in their own lives and not having decisions made for them and about them without their involvement. It has been very important in securing change for people, including legislation like the Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p>From the 1960s through to the 1990s more and more learning disability hospitals were closed down and people began to live in their own homes.</p> <p>More recently government and others have been making sure more support is available for people in their own homes. We know that people with learning disabilities and autism should be able to live free and independent lives, just like anyone else. This includes going to a mainstream school, getting a job, having relationships with people around them and making decisions for themselves.</p>
<p>Autism is an illness that can be cured.</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>Autism spectrum disorders are lifelong developmental conditions that impact the ways a person communicates with and relates to people and the world around them. You cannot 'catch' autism, and we still don't know for sure what causes it.</p>

<p>Everyone with autism is affected in the same way.</p>	<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>Autism spectrum disorders impact the ways a person communicates with and relates to people and the world around them. However, although there may be similarities, autism affects the people who have it in different ways.</p>
<p>People with learning disabilities and autism think about and experience the world in different ways, and behave differently.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>The word Neurodiversity describes the difference in brain functioning and behavioural traits that occurs naturally in the population.</p> <p>Neurodiversity underlines how people think and experience things differently in various ways, in the same way we have diversity of other characteristics, and challenges the idea that there is one 'normal' way of being and thinking.</p>
<p>More men and boys than women and girls are diagnosed with autism.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>A 2009 study showed that 1.8% of men and boys surveyed had a diagnosis of autism, compared to 0.2% of women and girls.* * However, it may be that autism in women and girls presents differently, or is under-diagnosed.</p> <p>For more information see <a href="http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/gender.aspx">http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/gender.aspx</a></p>
<p>People from all nationalities, cultural, social and racial backgrounds can be affected by learning disabilities and autism.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p>
<p>People with disabilities and autism have the same human rights as everyone else in society.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>Under the Human Rights Act 1998 people with learning disabilities and autism are subject to the same human rights to be treated and live life with the same rights, choices and opportunities as anyone.</p> <p>Under the Equality Act 2010, disabled people (including those with learning disabilities) should be treated equally, and protection from discrimination applies in many situations such as education, employment, exercise of public functions, goods, services, facilities and transport.</p>
<p>Many adults with learning disabilities have experienced hate crime.</p>	<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>Dimensions research*** found that 73% of those surveyed had experienced some form of hate crime. A hate crime is any offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice – in this case based on a person's disability or perceived disability.</p> <p>Hate crime may be non-violent abuse and harassment, such as name-calling. In some cases the behaviour is more serious, including bodily harm and damage to property.</p>

#### General figures and information from Dimensions

\* From The NHS Information Centre, Community and Mental Health Team, Brugha, T. et al (2012). Estimating the prevalence of autism spectrum conditions in adults: extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. Leeds: NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (quoted on the National Autistic Society website)

\*\*From Autism Spectrum Disorders in adults living in households throughout England. Report from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2007

\*\*\*Dimensions UK 2016 autism and learning disability hate crime survey