

The suicide rate in autism is 40% higher than general population.

- ♥ 77% of young autistic adults in their sample had additional mental health diagnoses, including anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder. [Eaves and Ho \(2008\)](#)
- ♥ Difficulties with mental health are consequently thought to contribute to a poorer quality of life in autism. [\(Robertson 2009\)](#)

Is Depression, anxiety and even suicide something that is innately autistic? Or is there something we have been missing?

A recent study in Europe has determined that NO, autistic people are not born with these co-morbid conditions but rather they are a byproduct of NON-ACCEPTANCE in their childhood and teenage years. [\(source\)](#)

**“Autism acceptance can be defined as an individual feeling accepted or appreciated as an autistic person, with autism positively recognized and accepted by others and the self as an integral part of that individual.” [\(source\)](#)**

Autism acceptance, whether it is acceptance from others & the ability to accept your own autistic identity is VITAL to the mental well-being of any person who has lived their life with autism (diagnosed or not).

## Below are resources and links to research that support the link between mental well-being in autistic adults and acceptance

- ♥ NT people are more likely to look unfavorably on a person after finding out they are autistic (even if they liked them before) [Sasson et al. \(2017\)](#)
- ♥ Some autistic adults cite the lack of understanding/information around autism in the general public as being a source of their depression and anxiety. [\(Griffith et al. 2012\)](#)
- ♥ Biases, a lack of understanding and misunderstandings about autism, even with the wealth of information out there, still plays a part in the negative narrative that surrounds it. This is true even with autism professionals. [\(Dillenburger et al. 2015\)](#) [\(Kelly and Barnes-Holmes 2013\)](#)

## How Community Acceptance Helps

- ♥ Having the opportunity to engage with others who are like-minded and to develop one's sense of belonging is thought to be important to the well-being of autistic adults. [\(Milton and Sims 2016\)](#)
- ♥ A sense of belonging is vital to the mental health of all human beings. [\(Baumeister and Leary 1995\)](#)
- ♥ Autistic adults believe that close relationships with family and friends help them develop greater feelings of self-worth. [\(Hurlbutt and Chalmers 2002\)](#)
- ♥ Parents who show acceptance towards their autistic children have less feelings of depression and isolation. [\(Weiss et al. 2012\)](#)

- ♥ Autists who have reported having real friendships have fewer feelings of anxiety & depression. ([Mazurek 2014](#))

## How Self-Acceptance Helps

- ♥ Autistic Adults (and some children) are very proud of their autism and being neurodivergent. Most self-advocates believe their autism is a part of them and they have embraced this and are living authentic lives. Research - ([Cage 2016a](#); [Humphrey and Lewis 2008](#); [Hurlbutt and Chalmers 2002](#); [Jaarsma and Welin 2012](#) [Robertson 2009](#)) Other resources - [Love & Autism Stories](#), [Love & Autism Blog](#), [Love & Autism Facebook](#) (we share a lot of articles from self-advocates sharing their experiences).
- ♥ Autists who closely relate to the neurodiversity movement have shown a more positive autistic identity. Suggesting that personal acceptance of autism as part of one's identity could protect against depression and anxiety ([Cooper et al. 2017](#))

Find a community of self-acceptance & love for your child and yourself. [Join us at Love & Autism 2018.](#)

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This information was taken from an article: Experiences of Autism Acceptance and Mental Health in Autistic Adults.