DEFINING AUTISM:

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), refers to a complex developmental disability that displays a *broad range of conditions*. It has many subtypes, displays uniquely in each individual, yet is characterized by two main criteria:¹

1) Challenges in social communication or interactions. This may manifest as struggling with:
   - Social-emotional reciprocity
   - Nonverbal communication behaviors (i.e. keeping eye contact, lack of facial expression)
   - Developing, maintaining, understanding relationships

2) Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities with two or more of the following:
   - Stereotyped or repetitive physical movements
   - Inflexible adherence to routines, ritualized patterns of behavior whether verbal or nonverbal
   - Restricted, fixated interests that are of abnormal intensity. Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input (i.e. indifference to pain, adverse reaction to certain sights, sounds, textures)

QUICK FACTS:²³

- Several factors may influence the development of ASD, but no single cause has been identified.
- Studies have shown that there is no link between receiving vaccines and developing ASD
- Once considered a separate disorder and milder form of Autism, Asperger’s syndrome is now included in the umbrella diagnosis of ASD

DIAGNOSIS:

Diagnosis of ASD is accomplished by a doctor or specialist who looks at an individual’s behavior and development. ASD can be detected and diagnosed throughout the lifetime:

- Can be detected at 18 months or younger.
• By age 2, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable.

**TREATMENT:**
There is no “cure” for ASD. However, early intervention is key in improving a child’s development and capabilities.

**FURTHER RESOURCES:**
To find your state’s early intervention contact, please refer to this website provided by the CDC:

[https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html)

For other reliable information and support regarding ASD, please refer to:

[https://www.autism-society.org](https://www.autism-society.org)

www.autismspeaks.org

[https://autismnow.org](https://autismnow.org)

In Montana:

[http://autism.ruralinstitute.umt.edu](http://autism.ruralinstitute.umt.edu)

Some difficulties to expect about the structure of college. Is college right for me?

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IDm7qj90oZ1uU6wd78-wckhfLnUQDL95wjhnDr8kTTw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IDm7qj90oZ1uU6wd78-wckhfLnUQDL95wjhnDr8kTTw/edit?usp=sharing)

**CITATIONS:**
