

# What Is Autism?

Autism affects the brain and how a person senses the world around them, communicates, thinks, and understands. People with autism have unique brains. No two people with autism are the same, which means the examples we give will not apply to everyone.

The Autism Society of Minnesota created this resource with support from the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division.

## How does someone with autism act?

People with autism may act differently from those around them. You'll see this in two main areas:

### How they talk, communicate, and socialize.

Examples:

- Needs a longer time to process
- Skips small talk or politeness
- Has a hard time making or keeping friends
- May not use spoken language, or speak in scripts



### Repeating thoughts or actions.

Examples:

- Flapping hands or rocking body
- Always does things in the same order
- Has a hard time with change
- Has an intense interest in a few specific topics



### You may also notice:

- Big reactions to sensory input like loud noises or bright lights.
- People with autism often have skills that develop unevenly: they can be very talented at one thing and struggle a lot with another.

