

Myths

Independence

Autistic people can't drive

Some autistic people may find driving difficult as there is a lot to focus on, a lot of stimuli, a lot to process and a lot at stake. This can mean that for some autistic people it simply isn't doable. However, that doesn't mean all autistic people are unable to drive. Some autistic people might find that the rules are something they like and it gives them a bit more freedom and independence.

Autistic people can't get or keep a job

The typical workforce is certainly not a place designed to recruit or maintain autistic employees but, with some understanding, autistic people do actually thrive in employment. The recruitment process is one of navigating neurotypical social rules and communication and that can be very difficult for an autistic person and is obviously one of the first big barriers. Having an employer or workplace that understands neurodivergence and is willing to make accommodations makes a huge difference. Accommodations usually aren't major either; sometimes it's just a matter of being a bit more direct in your communication or allowing the person to use headphones or earplugs to manage overstimulation.

Autistic people can work and they can be fantastic employees, it's just that society makes it difficult for us to access and remain in the workforce. Many autistic people will have multiple qualifications but lack the work experience because they simply cannot get past the recruitment stage. They have the skills to do the job if they were given the chance!

'High functioning' or low support need autistics don't need support

Every autistic person will have different support needs and those support needs can vary day to day or over time. A person who is considered 'high functioning' or low support needs may still require support even if it is less than what another autistic person might need. Too much expectation is put on those with lower support needs to get by without the accommodations or adjustments that they might need, and they are often pushed to the point of masking and exceeding their own capacity for such an extended period of time that it leads to burn out, depression, severe anxiety or worse. A person can only go so long without their needs being met. Just because someone's needs are smaller, doesn't mean they should be ignored.

Autistic people can't have romantic relationships

Autistic people are often infantilised or seen as very innocent. They aren't viewed as capable of having independent, adult lives. And if they do start living a more adult life, they are often either viewed as inspiration, 'cute', or people find it uncomfortable. Being autistic doesn't mean a person can't think for themselves or make their own decisions. We're not children forever. We grow up and we're able to have families of our own (if that is what we want). A lot of autistic people (and other disabled people) find it frustrating constantly being viewed as 'too innocent', especially as we get into late teens or adulthood because it means being excluded or outcast on a whole other level of social interaction.