

# Is This Autism?

## Understanding People With Autism



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[www.isthisautism.com](http://www.isthisautism.com)



# Who are we?

## Donna Henderson, Psy.D.

- Neuropsychologist
- Consultation and education for other clinicians
- Mom to 3 neurodivergent kids

## Sarah Wayland, Ph.D.

- Founder, Guiding Exceptional Parents
- Certified RDI™ consultant, Parent Coach
- Mother of two neurodivergent young adults

## Jamell White, Ph.D., LCSW-C

- Therapist specializing in autism and developmental disabilities (children, teens, young adults)
- Additional speciality in care coordination
- Consultation services

ROUTLEDGE

# IS THIS AUTISM?

A Guide for Clinicians  
and Everyone Else



DONNA HENDERSON AND SARAH WAYLAND WITH JAMELL WHITE

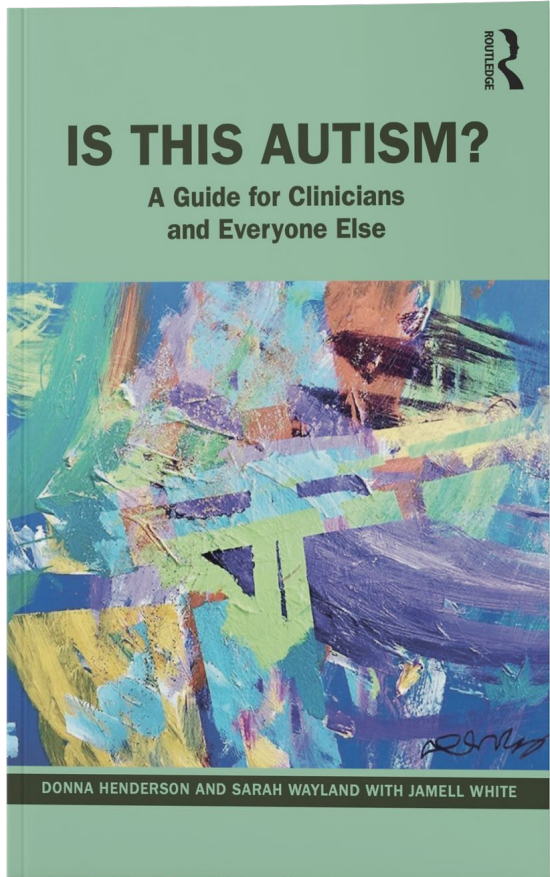
ROUTLEDGE

# IS THIS AUTISM?

A Companion Guide  
for Diagnosing



DONNA HENDERSON  
WITH SARAH WAYLAND AND JAMELL WHITE



*Henderson & Wayland*

*Is This Autism?*

**Is This Autism? *A guide for everyone***  
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Foreword by Meng-Chuan Lai

Introduction

Part 1: What can autism actually look like?

Our framework: The current diagnostic criteria

Reciprocity

Nonverbal communication

Relationships

Repetitive behavior

Flexibility

Intense or atypical interests

Sensory differences

Part 2: What else might be part of this presentation?

Common co-occurring challenges that are not part of the diagnostic criteria

Autistic strengths

The End

# Why did we write these books?

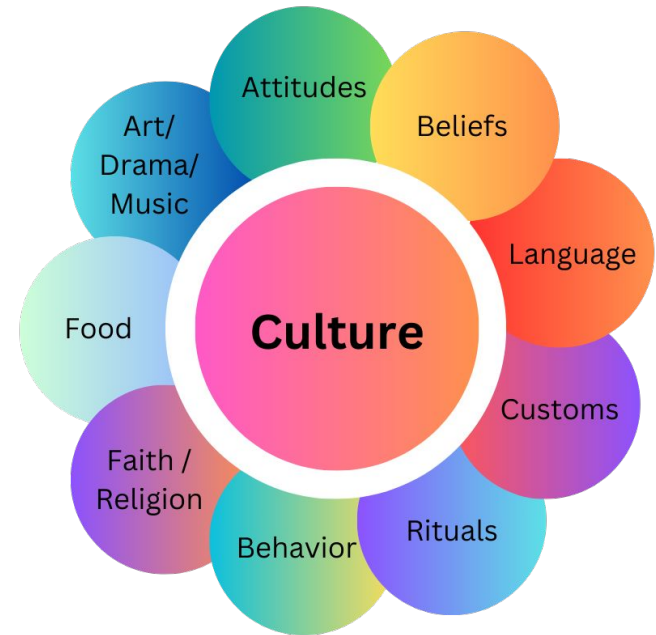
Autism is underdiagnosed.

- ▷ Clinicians don't feel qualified to diagnose
- ▷ Cultural factors overlooked

Not getting a diagnosis has mental health consequences.

# A note about culture

- Important to acknowledge the intersection of culture and autism.
- Our cultural experiences and identity is intertwined with our broader experience.
- Not a deep dive into all aspects of cultural considerations – an attempt to offer perspective
- Just Ask!



# Who is the target audience?

Clinicians

Other professionals

- Teachers
- Therapists
- etc.

Autistic people

Those who love them

# What was our process?

## Autistic advisory board

- ▷ Balanced gender, age, nationality, tried for race
- ▷ Wide variety of voices

## Clinician advisory board

## Family & professional focus groups

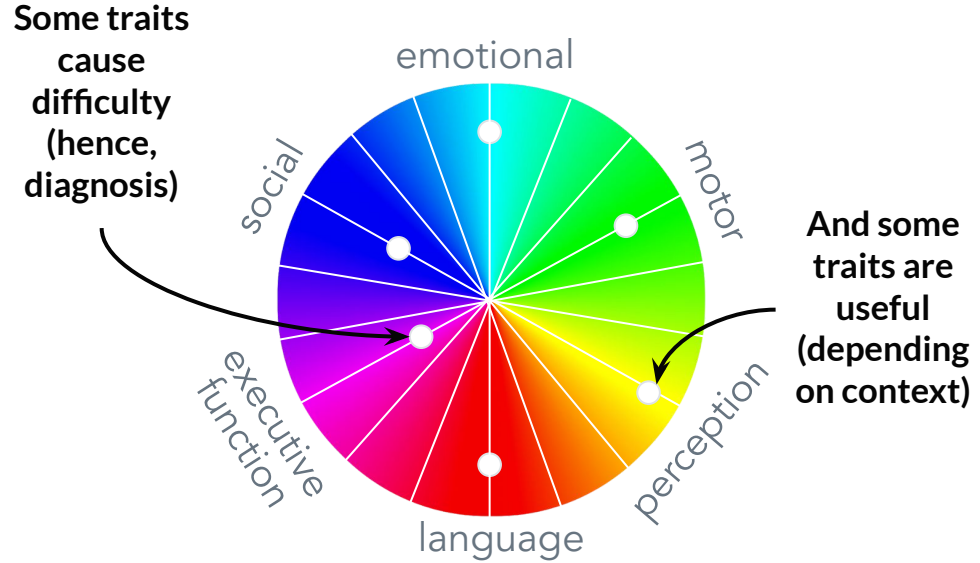


# How is this book different?

- Aimed at a general audience, easy-to-read!
- What the research says
- What autistic people say (lived experience)
  - Not just one person
  - Breadth of experiences
- Provides guidance for cultural humility

We each have different traits  
(ways the brain processes information)

Each person has a **unique** mixture of abilities and challenges



From "Understanding Autism: A Comic Strip Explanation" by Rebecca Burgess  
<https://the-art-of-autism.com/understanding-the-spectrum-a-comic-strip-explanation/>

# Diagnostic Criteria

## **Social/Communication challenges** (need all 3)

- Reciprocal interactions
- Nonverbal communication
- Relationship management

## **Repetitive/restricted behaviors** (need at least two)

- Repetitive or unusual behavior
- Inflexibility
- Interests
- Sensory

Current or by history

# Co-Occurring Challenges

- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Other
  - Adaptive functioning
  - Dating & cultural norms
  - Gender & attraction

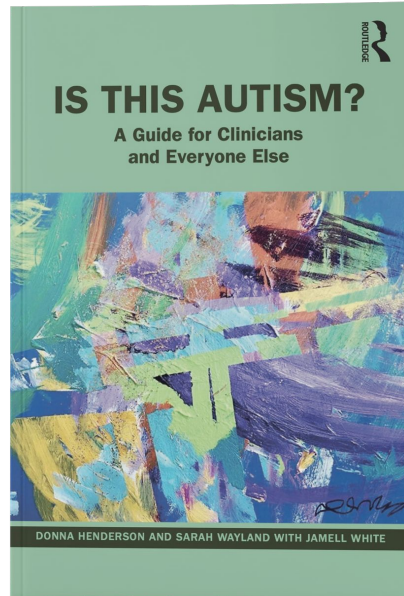
# Autistic strengths mirror the criteria

- Social communication
- Consistency
- Deep interests
- Sensory differences
  
- Language
- Ways of thinking
- Humor
- Grit

We are all  
beautifully complex  
and  
marvelously  
imperfect

# Want to know more?

IsThisAutism.com



Leave a review for both books on Amazon or at GoodReads. It really does help other people find our books!

# Q & A