

Autism spectrum: barriers in society

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Autism spectrum conditions can manifest as difference, disability or skills, from person to person and within the same person, depending on which social context this person is living too.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) adopts social model of disability: persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Ten years after its ratification, UN CRPD implementation for people on the autism spectrum is still incomplete and fall far behind other types of disabilities, being discriminated among discriminated ones in every aspect of life.

Autism spectrum can be defined by the concept of neurological diversity (neurodiversity), especially by people on the autism spectrum themselves in contrast with other definitions involving stigmatizing concepts and language, especially by professionals or parents of people on the autism spectrum, creating linguistic and conceptual barriers. Moreover autistic community is very broad and there is not a universal definition accepted by everyone, creating several colliding factions.

Adopting a social model and human rights approach is possible for different parties to converge to overcome social barriers and to achieve social inclusion.