



BY DAVID GRAY-HAMMOND

Autism & Addiction: The deadly issue no one is talking about

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INVISIBLE CRISIS

Autism and addiction is rarely discussed despite the fact that many Autistics self-medicate with drugs and alcohol for a variety of reasons—poor access to mental and medical healthcare, adults not being diagnosed, and even neurological differences that can predispose Autistic people to forming habits.





WELL, ACTUALLY...

**"But autistic people are
less likely to take drugs
and drink!"**



Except, that's not true at all...

This is a myth that professionals have perpetuated for years. While some Autistics are less likely to try drugs and alcohol, they are not less likely to become addicted.

With the intense sensory, social, medical, and institutional trauma Autistic people are exposed to, one could make the argument that they are at a higher risk of addiction.

A silent crisis

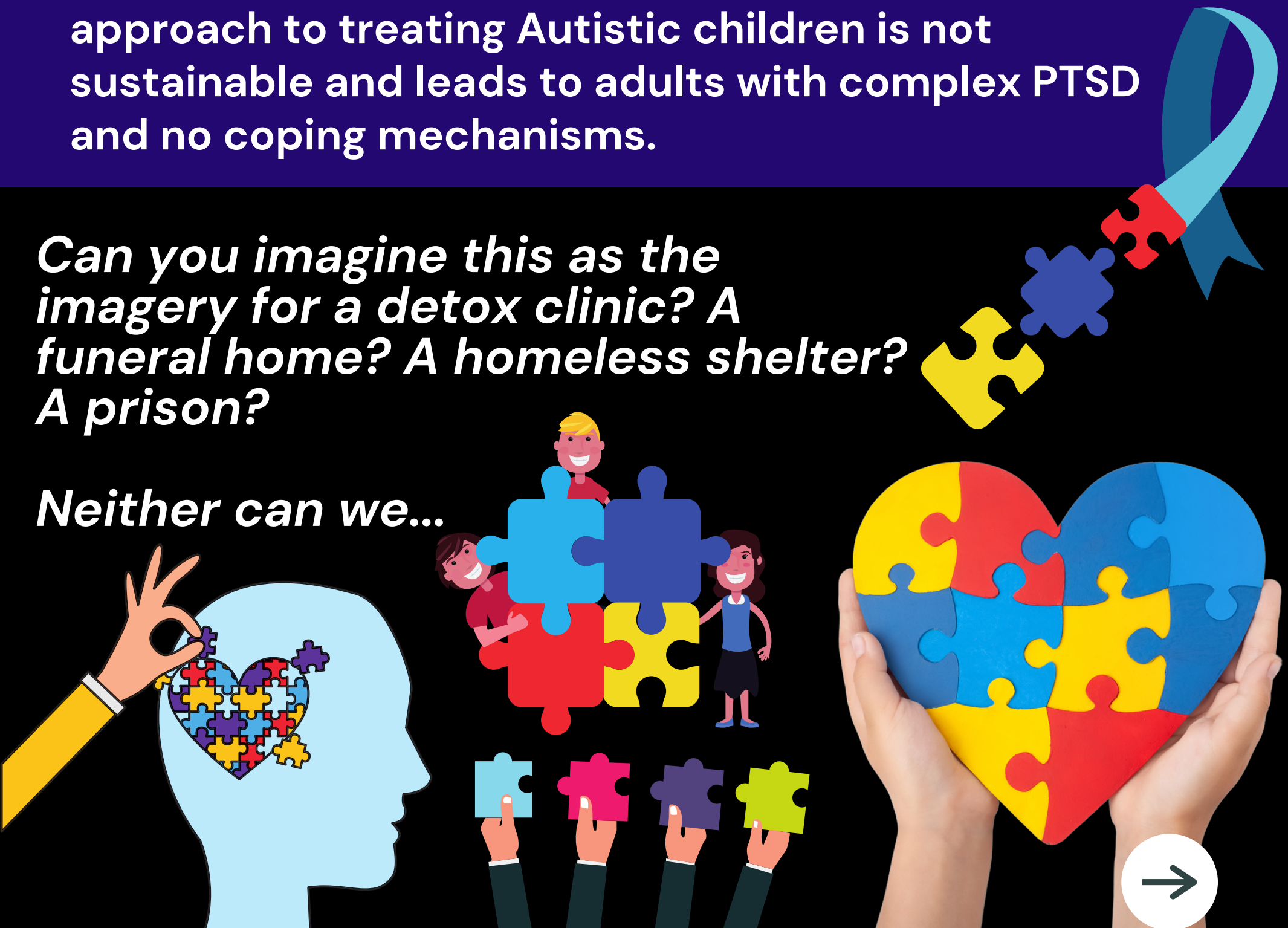
**So why is no one talking
about autism and
addiction?**



People think about and market autism as a childhood condition, and the reality of life for adult Autistics is not good for business. Acknowledging that reality would require admitting that their grin-and-bear-it approach to treating Autistic children is not sustainable and leads to adults with complex PTSD and no coping mechanisms.

Can you imagine this as the imagery for a detox clinic? A funeral home? A homeless shelter? A prison?

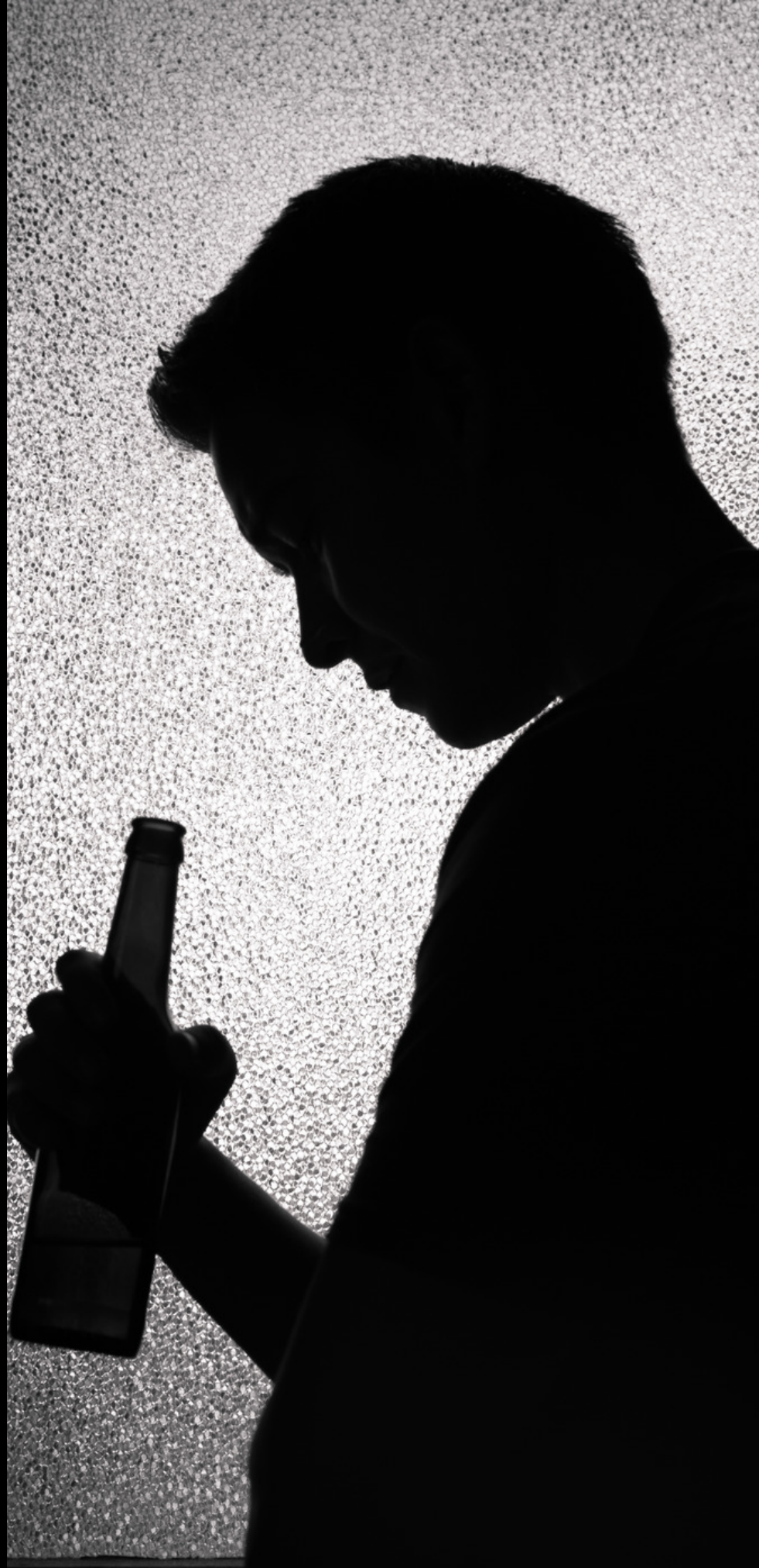
Neither can we...



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Barriers to accessing effective treatment for addiction

- * Most providers know nothing about autism
- * Treatment programs are not designed with Autistic neurotypes in mind
- * Autistic people have less access to coping strategies than non-Autistic people because Autistic needs are not accommodated in workplace, family, and social settings





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HELP

SUPPORT

ADVICE

GUIDANCE

So what can
you do to help?





TAKE ACTION



Autism & Addiction Action Items

- * Read, share, follow, like, and signal-boost writing by Autistic adults. Until the world understands what it means to be an Autistic adult, we will never have the awareness, acceptance, access, or accommodations we need.
- * Call up local service providers and ask them if they are prepared to serve Autistic clients (spoiler alert, they won't be). Ask them how they will prepare and petition them to seek input from Autistics.



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Addiction & Autism Facts

Addiction is not a moral failing or a choice. It is an illness, and people with addiction need support, not judgement

Genetics and neurology contribute to how vulnerable someone is to forming an addiction

Autistic people often are traumatized and may be living with daily, ongoing sensory trauma that they reduce by self-medicating

