



**here's why most autistic  
people hate the puzzle  
piece symbol**

**@NeuroClastic**



# 01 **Infantilism**

**Autistic people are often infantilized and treated like children. Autistic adults have a hard time accessing services, healthcare, and accommodations because much of society sees autism as a childhood disorder.**

**The very childish puzzle pieces and primary colors are not helpful to combatting the stereotype that we are perpetual children.**

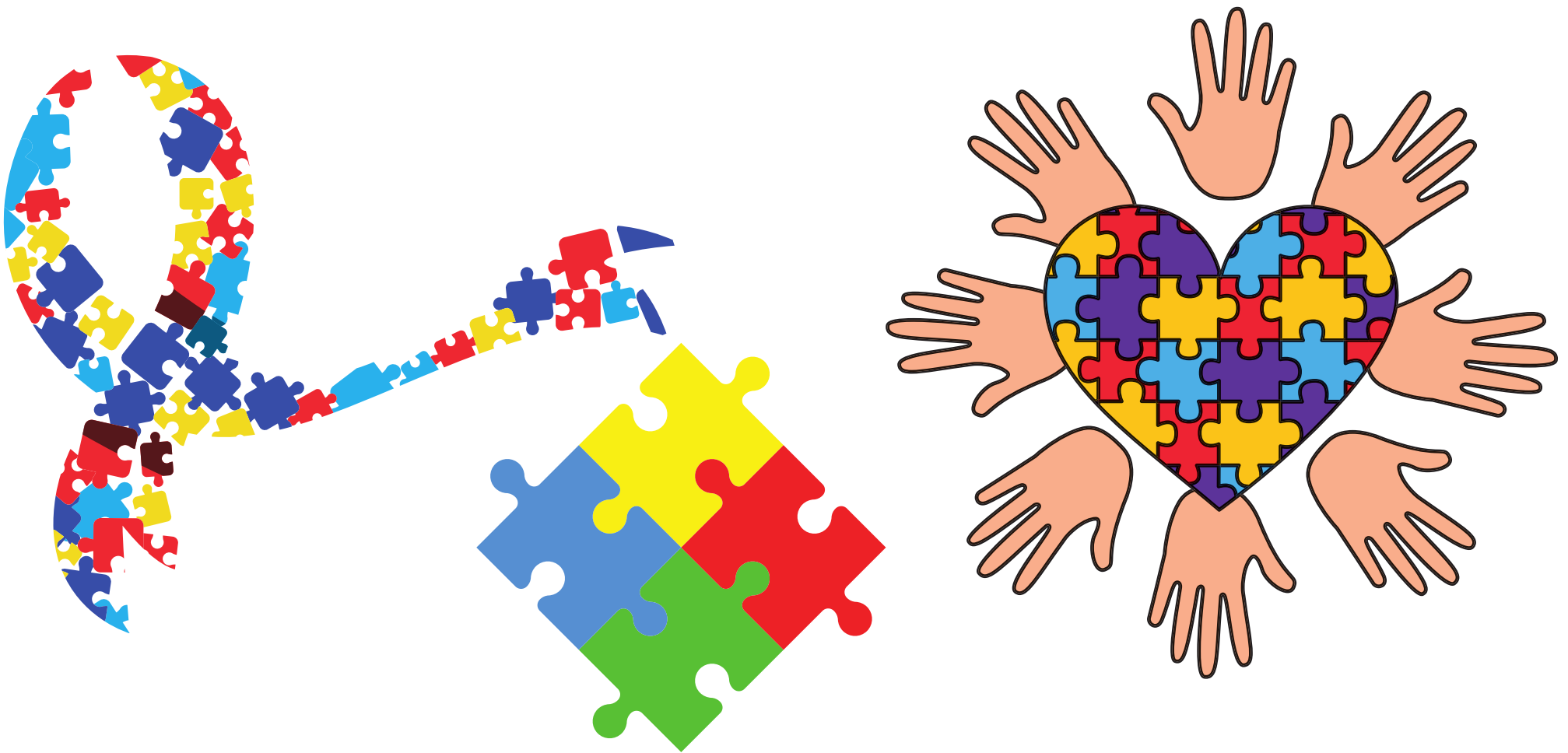




## 02 Advertising

**The puzzle piece serves as an advertisement for several organizations that Autistics widely regard as harmful or even as hate groups.**

**The iconic Autism Speaks logo is a puzzle piece, and it's often the only "authority" people recognize as a source of information about autism. Autism Speaks had caused irreparable harm to our community.**

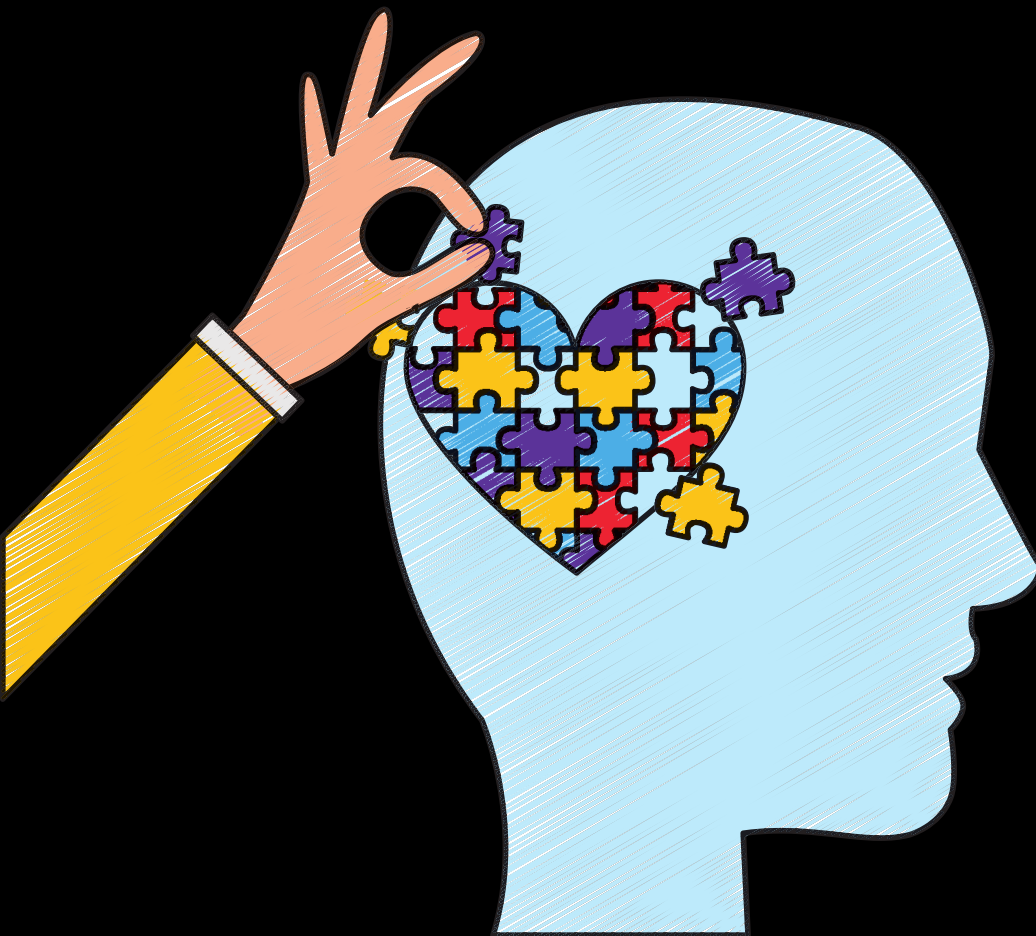


## 03 Aesthetics

**Visually, the bright, loud, jumbled primary colors are a hot mess of overstimulation.**

**Further, the puzzle rainbow is a design scheme that makes no sense. Random interlocking colors are not how puzzles work. This doesn't complete a picture of anything. It's nonsensical.**





## 04 Symbolism

The puzzle has historically meant the final genetic link to a cure. We can't move past that.

Others see it as a missing piece of someone's brain, as if an Autistic is just a neurotypical person who is missing something and who needs others to intervene to "fix" them or make them more complete.

# 05 Red flag

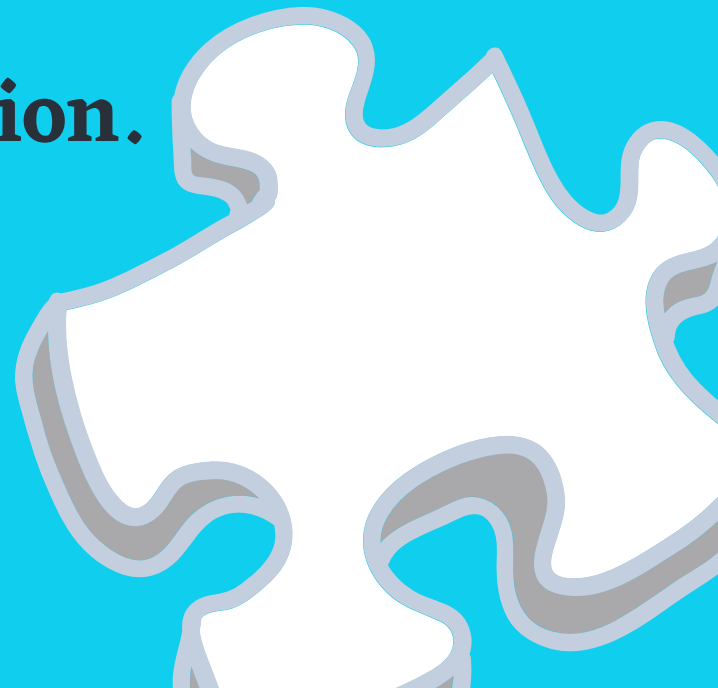
**Many organizations refuse to acknowledge the adult Autistics who try to communicate when orgs are doing something harmful.**

**When an organization uses the puzzle piece, it demonstrates they are not interested in making basic adjustments to show respect for Autistic perspectives.**

**They are often using autism as a product in a way that financially benefits them and are appealing to the mainstream. We cannot make any real progress by relying on the status quo.**

**The puzzle piece is brand recognition.**

**We are not products.**



# **What if an Autistic person likes the puzzle piece?**

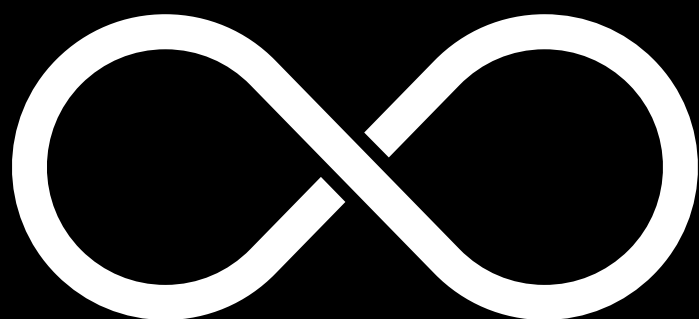
**The puzzle piece could have any metaphor or significance any individual wants to give it. If an Autistic person likes the puzzle, respect their choices.**

**But don't use the individuals you know who like the puzzle to disrespect the community majority.**

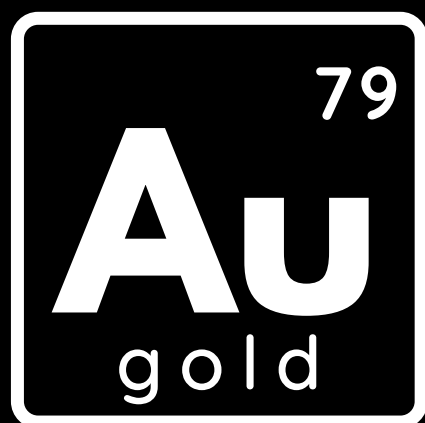
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# What do I use instead of a puzzle piece if I want to show support?

Most Autistic people will not care about what you're wearing because that's just not usually our focus. But, we're pretty cool with infinity symbols...



And the Au symbol (like the element, gold)





**What if my heart is in the right place,  
and I've been using the puzzle?**



## **DO**

Just be open. Say that you used to use the puzzle piece but realized it was not embraced by the community, so you will be updating your support. Set an example!



## **DON'T**

Don't explain your good intentions. We understand, but we need to have control of our own narratives so your child can live in a more equitable future where their needs matter.



## **BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY IS A PRIVILEGE**

While it shouldn't have to be, being taken seriously is a privilege that Autistic people aren't given. Autistic adults have to battle ridiculous stigmas & biases every day. The preschool puzzle imagery is not sending the message that we deserve to be taken seriously.

How does the puzzle piece impact how we are seen when reporting a crime against us? Applying for a competitive job? Making a marriage proposal or even asking someone on a date? Getting treatment for addiction? Being believed by physicians? Buying a home? As adults, our lifespan is under 40 with suicide as a top cause of death. How is the puzzle piece serving to bring attention to that reality?

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