

# AUTISM AMBASSADORS CORPS

## Core Values

### MISSION STATEMENT

The *Autism Ambassadors Corps* is a coalition of Autistics and Neurotypicals<sup>1</sup> who seek to bring the entire autism community<sup>2</sup> together in constructive dialog in order that all sides can obtain mutual understanding and admiration for each other.

<sup>1</sup> Autistics have atypical neurology. Therefore, non-Autistics who have typical-neurology are referred to as "neurotypicals."

<sup>2</sup> The Autism community refers not only to Autistics themselves, but to all those who are affected by Autism. This would include parents, siblings, educators, psychologists/counselors, etc.

### GOALS

- 1) Provide a COMPLETE, CURRENT and USABLE understanding of Autism
- 2) Form groups that promote constructive interaction between Autistics and Neurotypicals
- 3) Assist Autistics in their personal development in order for them to reach their full potential in life.

### DEFINITION OF AUTISM

Autism is an atypical neurological connectivity paradox resulting in heightened activity in some areas of the brain and decreased activity in others, compared to neurotypicals.

### WHO ARE AUTISTICS?

Autistics are human beings who have Autism. They have the same needs, wants, personality strengths and weakness, etc. as any other human being, but face unique challenges in having their needs and wants met. There may also be residual benefits to the built in countermeasure they need to overcome these challenges, especially in the area of memory.

### THE GOLDEN RULES OF DEALING WITH AUTISTICS

These Golden Rules provide autistics and their loved ones with the hope of personal dignity that comes through the understanding of oneself, social inclusion, the possibility of self-improvement, the hope of achieving goals, etc.

- 1) Do unto Autistics as you would have others do unto you.
- 2) Everyone, no matter their neurological configuration, should be...
  - a) ...given the benefit of the doubt that they can achieve their goals and overcome their personal challenges.
  - b) ...granted the same rights as any other human being. These include, but are not limited to, the right...
    - i) ...to be their own unique individual selves.
    - ii) ...of self-expression and to have their own personal viewpoints to be treated as valid.
    - iii) ...to make their needs known with the hope that those needs might be met.
    - iv) ...to receive the support necessary to improve their quality of life.
    - v) ...to set and obtain their own personal goals.
    - vi) ...to be protected from bullying and mistreatment.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional literature, questions or comments; please contact:

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### PRACTICES THE AAC SUPPORTS

- 1) Providing a complete, scientific, clinical and experiential understanding of Autism.
- 2) Helping Autistics to develop effective self-management skills that will allow them to function with as little special assistance and/or accommodations as possible.
- 3) Teaching Autistics who can advocate for themselves how to do so.
- 4) Speaking about Autism on behalf of those Autistics who cannot speak for themselves.
- 5) Providing informed referrals for those who need them.
- 6) Develop solutions for parents who need childcare for their Autistic children in order to attend Autism meetings.
- 7) Working to bring more uniformity in Autism diagnoses.
- 8) Autistics providing direct input to researchers.
- 9) Bringing recognition to those who provide actual support and services.
- 10) Having the term "Autism Spectrum Disorder" replaced with "Autism Paradox."

### THE AAC'S POSITION ON INTOLERANCE

There are many different viewpoints on the subject of religion. This is not a major concern of mine because I, as a volunteer English teacher at Covenant of Grace Christian Fellowship, have seen many students of many faiths come to our church for free English classes. We do not attack their religious viewpoints and they do not attack ours. I have spent many hours doing social calls to the houses of Buddhists and Muslims. There have been a few occasions where they have engaged me in civilized and respectful dialog about our respective religions.

Contrary to popular misperception, the majority of the believers of all faiths are human beings who want nothing more than to live peaceable lives with their fellow human beings. The majority of us know that forcing our religious viewpoints down other's throats is not only a waste of time, but also counterproductive. I have stated to many of my Muslim friends that if I have to attack their religion to prove my own, then there is something wrong with my religion. Any individual or church that refuses to accept this principle will not be allowed to participate in *Autism Ambassadors Corps* activities.

There is another factor to consider. The churches that I associate with and respect insist that one of the missions of the church is to show the love of God to all those with whom they come in contact. One of the ways that they do so is by starting programs that tend to the practical needs they see that people need. This ranges from offering social service type of assistance to providing emotional and spiritual support to those who are struggling. Educating such churches to the struggles of Autistics would compel many of them to want to do something to help. The *Mentoring* and *Mutual Support Group* models will give a format for them to make a difference in the lives of the Autistic community if the churches are given the flexibility to act like churches. The kind of churches that I just described would never align themselves with organizations that forbid them to act like a church.

However, there are many that are so hostile towards religion that they try to forbid anyone from discussing religion in their presence, even when the conversation is not directed toward them. Such attempts amount to these individuals attempting to force their viewpoints on everyone else. It is therefore the position of the ACC that CENSORSHIP IS THE GREATEST FORM OF INTOLERANCE. Those who place such demands on others to soothe their personal hostilities towards another's religious viewpoints are guided by attitudes that are contrary to the mission of *The Autism Ambassadors Corps*. All such individuals and organizations will not be allowed to participate in AAC activities.

Hostility is not limited to the subject of religion. I know many autistics who are hostile towards just about all neurotypicals. This would include their parents, teachers, authority figures, authoritative figures, civil authorities, law enforcement, political viewpoints, etc. For this reason, some of the most knowledgeable Autistics I know cannot have a major role at our events. By the same token, those who are hostile towards the concept of neurodiversity cannot have major roles either. Such individuals can come as members of the general audience with the hope that they can be reasoned with, but we should not hesitate to forbid those whose hostilities undermine the mission of the *Autism Ambassadors Corps* from participating in our activities.