

Autism Awareness Day 2 April 2021

Raising understanding and awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorders



Friday 2 April is World Autism Awareness Day and it falls during World Autism Awareness week (29 March – 4 April 2021).

Autism Awareness Week's goal is to shine a bright light on autism, increasing knowledge of autism and the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention.

It celebrates the unique talents and skills of people with autism and is a week where individuals with autism are warmly welcomed and embraced in community events.

Autism New Zealand has a knowledgeable, professional staff who work daily with children and adults with autism and their support networks. Their main role is 'essentially empowering people living with autism'.

What is Autism and Aspergers Syndrome?

Autism New Zealand's definition is:

"Children and adults who have an autism spectrum disorder look the same as other people, and due to the invisible nature of their disability it can be much harder to create awareness and understanding.

Autism and Asperger syndrome still remain relatively unknown disabilities among the general population.

Yet it is estimated that autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are approximately four times as common as cerebral palsy and 17 times as common as Down's syndrome. ASD affects 1 in 66 people, approximately 65,000 New Zealanders, which is equivalent to the entire region of Otago."

The following are some wonderful audio links around Autism which are well worth a listen:

"Autism Research - Dr Javier Javier Virues-Ortega" on Radio New Zealand.

https://www.ted.com/talks/ami_klin_a_new_way_to_diagnose_autism

There's no known cause ... and no cure. Autism remains one of the most complex disorders for researchers to tackle. But what if we could see inside the brains of sufferers to see if therapies are actually reshaping them? That's what a New Zealand team plans to do. It's a world-first study combining the latest behavioural science with cutting-edge functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology.

“Karen Pierce and Eric Courchesne - Early Detection of Autism” on Radio New Zealand.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/201811139/karen-pierce-and-eric-courchesne-early-detection-of-autism>

Karen Pierce and Eric Courchesne are directors at the University of California's Autism Centre of Excellence. Dr Pierce specialises in the early detection and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in toddlers, and Dr Courchesne's research has proved that the abnormal brain development causing autism begins in the womb. Karen Pierce and Eric Courchesne are the keynote speakers at Autism New Zealand's national conference later this month.

What's going on in the minds of children with neurological disorders

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoon/audio/201817128/what's-going-on-in-the-minds-of-children-with-neurological-disorders>

Susan Haldane is the head of Mind Over Manner - an organisation which uses the power of theatre to help people understand what's going on in the minds of children with neurological disorders like ADHD and autism.

“Professor Russell Snell - the hunt for autism genes” on Radio New Zealand

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/audio/201837972/professor-russell-snell-the-hunt-for-autism-genes>

Kim Hill (RNZ) talks to Professor Russell Snell, a world-renowned geneticist based at the University of Auckland who has long studied human disease genes and variations in genes in general with a focus on the molecular genetics of disease, in particular neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimers.

