

IN A DIFFERENT KEY:
THE AUTISM UNDERSTANDING TOOLKIT

SELF ADVOCACY/NEURODIVERSITY



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

(suggested)

At one time, the autism diagnosis was reserved primarily for individuals profoundly challenged by their inability to meet their own needs and live fully independent lives. But in the 1980s, the concept of the autism spectrum emerged to include a much broader range of people whose experience presents another picture of being autistic. While facing significant difficulty with social relations and acceptance by others, these are people who also often possess above-average intelligence, verbal fluency and creative skills. Importantly for ongoing conversations about autism, they can and do speak and advocate for themselves. The documentary *In A Different Key* features John Elder Robison, author of the bestseller *Look Me in the Eye*, sharing perspective on his autistic experience, and the idea of neurodiversity.

KEY THEMES

- The breadth of the spectrum
- The concept of neurodiversity
- Diagnosis of adults
- Social challenges of being autistic
- Autistic pride

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What does John's story reveal about the "spectrum" concept of autism?

How can being autistic impact connection with others?

What does the term "neurodiversity" describe?

What challenges are addressed by the idea of autistic pride?

Are there likely to be autistic adults who are still not diagnosed?