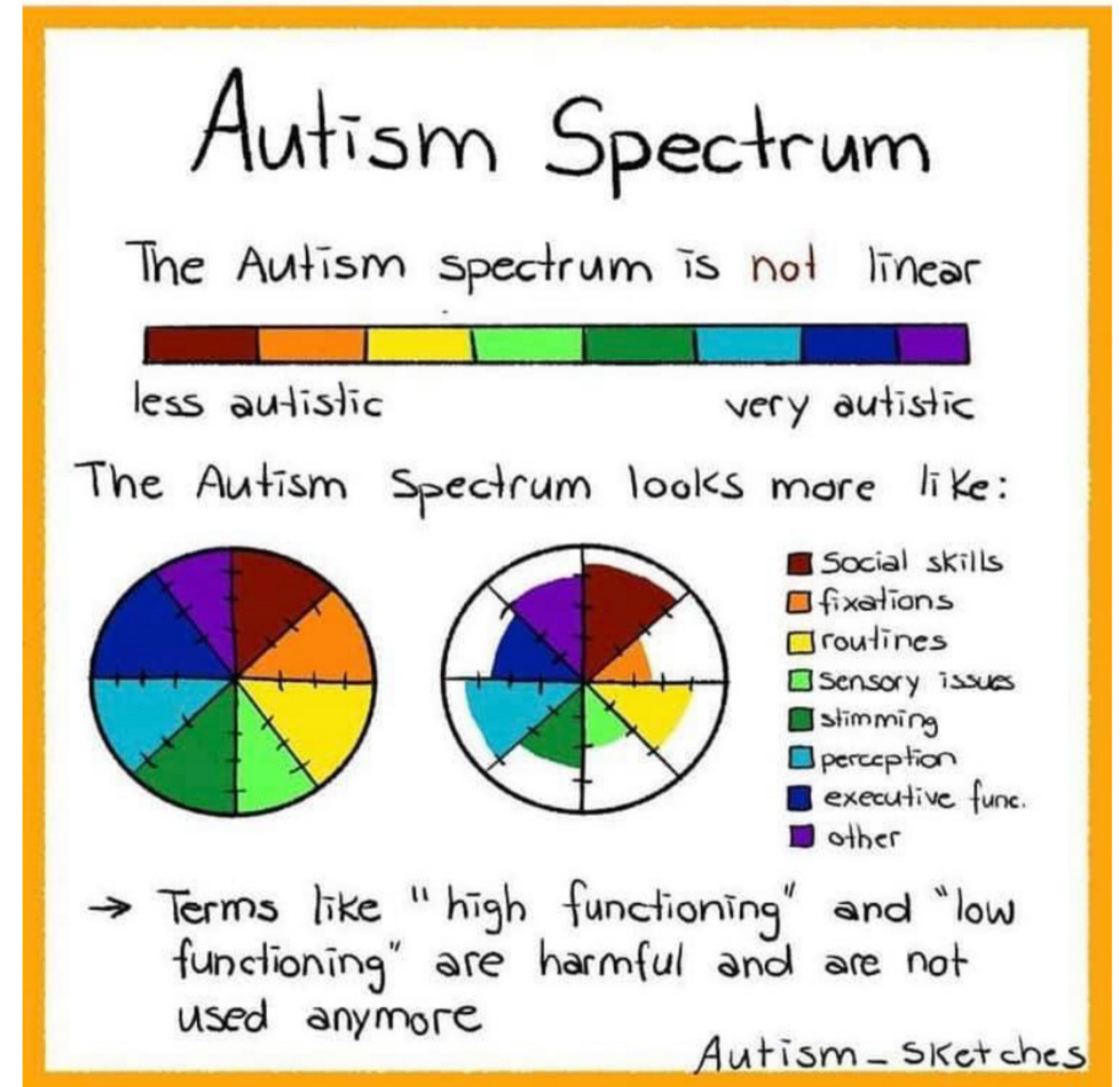
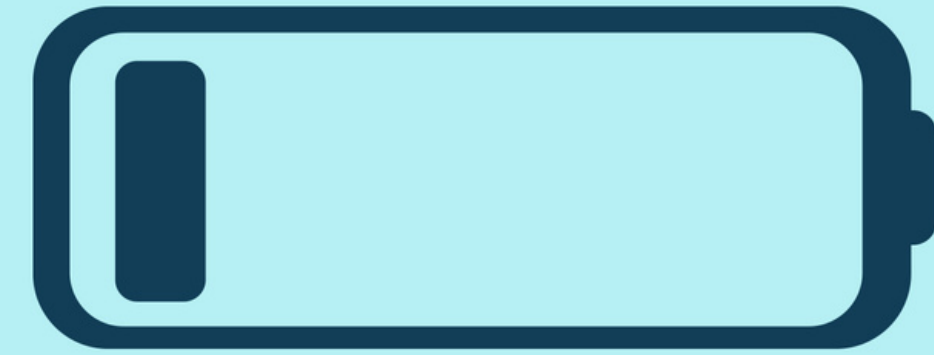
The background of the image is a large, stylized infinity symbol (∞) composed of two overlapping circles. The left circle is colored with a rainbow gradient from red at the top to purple at the bottom. The right circle is colored with a rainbow gradient from blue at the top to green at the bottom. The text is centered within the white space of the infinity symbol.

**The rainbow infinity symbol represents embracing all neurological uniqueness, all rhythms of neurodevelopment, and all the forms by which humans can express themselves and contribute to their world! Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia, and Dyslexia are all neurodiverse conditions that fall within the "Neurodiversity" spectrum.**

**Terms like "high functioning" and "low functioning" are harmful and are not used anymore. The autism spectrum is not linear, but is actually referring to the many different autistic characteristics (and combinations there of) that can exist across different areas. Common areas of difference are in social communication, social awareness, sensory processing, information processing, repetitive behaviors, and learning style.**



**Many autistic people go to great lengths to appear neurotypical. However, they have many negative internal experiences that are unique to autism. For example, autistic people frequently report severe energy drain from trying to fit in and meet social expectations.**



**Autism is a developmental disability that runs in families and appears to be genetically inheritable, however it is largely multiply determined meaning it has no single cause.**



**The autism spectrum is very broad. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. People with profound autism typically have significant cognitive impairments and require around-the-clock care, while other people with ASD can have high-powered jobs and live independently. Between 30 to 50% percent of people with autism also have seizures.**



**Every autistic person's brain is unique and exhibits its own distinct patterns of connectivity. Autism is a cognitive and sensory difference that affects every area of life.**

**People with autism fit in the category of “neurodiverse” people. This just means that their brains are wired differently than the general population, who are said to be “neurotypical”. Some other neurodiverse conditions are ADHD, Apraxia, and Dyslexia. Autistics and other neurodiverse people are often very creative, thinking “outside of the box” naturally.**





**In previous years, autism was represented by a colorful puzzle piece. That is gradually changing, as autism isn't a puzzle to be solved, but a uniquely diverse neurological condition. Many now use the infinity symbol, representing neurodiversity, instead. It can be gold, specifically for autism (the symbol for gold is the first two letters of autism: Au), or a colorful spectrum, representing the diversity of the color spectrum.**



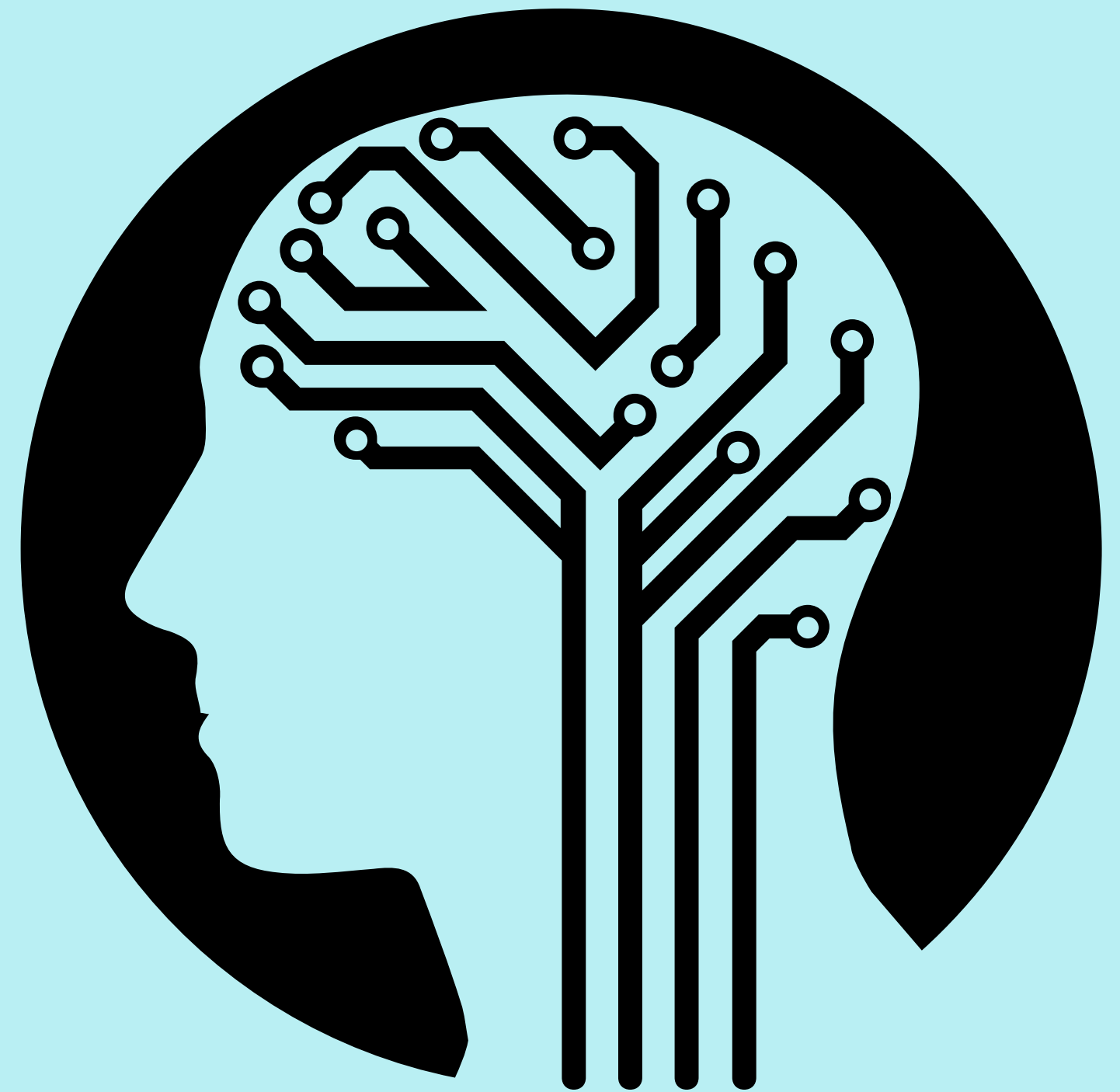
**The Maori word for  
Autism is  
"Takiwatanga" It  
means "In his/her  
own time and  
space".**





**Autism is associated with repetitive, self-stimulatory behaviors (called “stimming”). Stimming is an important means of self-regulation. All humans stem to some extent (that explains why fidget spinners were so popular!) but many autistic people still more frequently and with more intensity.**

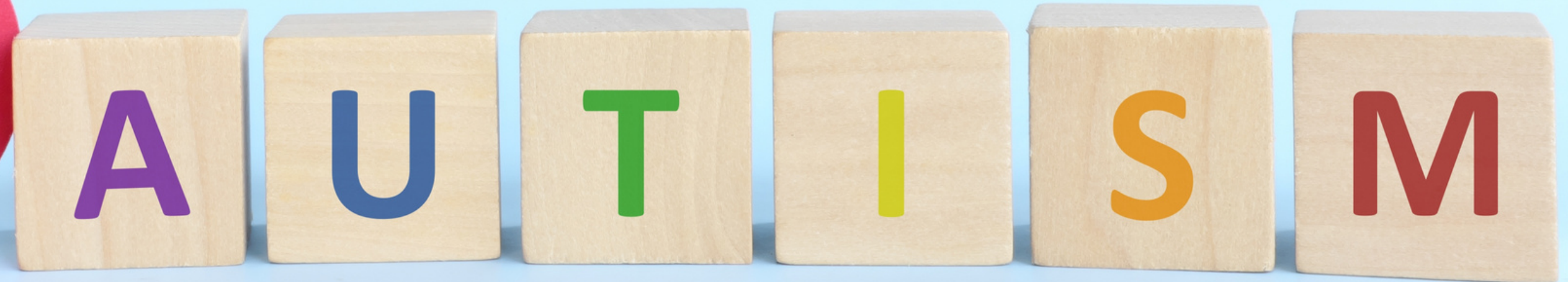
**Autism is not a mental health condition or disorder, nor is it an illness. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disability that affects how a person perceives, processes, and interacts with the world around them.**



**For many with autism, social nuances can be challenging. It can take more work for them to decipher facial expression or subtle body language. The extra work this takes for them can mean delayed responses or misunderstandings. Be patient and give the person time to respond.**



**In the past many thought that people with autism didn't have sympathetic feelings. That is now known to be untrue. Many autistics have deep sympathetic feelings. They may struggle to know how to show that or become overwhelmed by the emotions.**

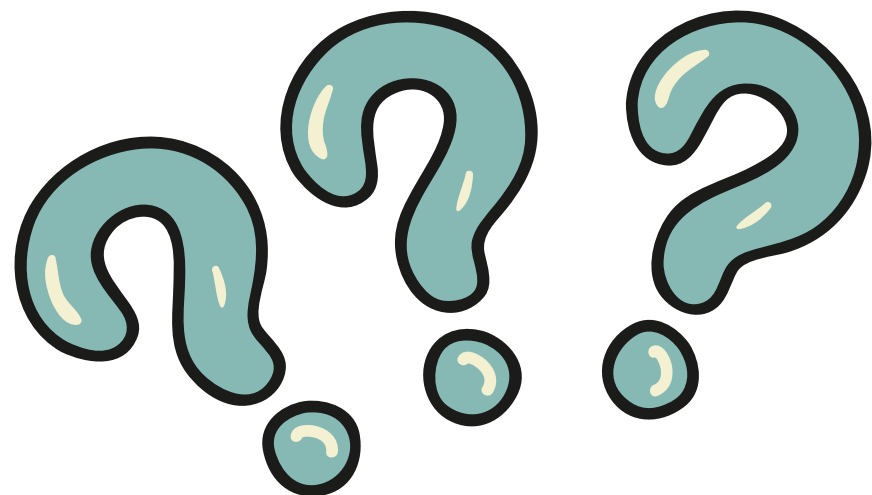


**People with autism are very honest. Don't be offended if they speak bluntly. They aren't trying to be rude. Also, they expect honesty from you. If you say something that isn't true and expect them to know it's a "social white lie", it will likely just make things more confusing and stressful. Be kind, but be honest.**



**Autism in females is often overlooked and under diagnosed. Autistic women exhibit more internalizing traits, such as anxiety and depression, than autistic males, and may be better at outwardly fitting in with society's expectations.**





**People with autism can have difficulty with broad, generalized instructions. You can help a friend with autism participate in a group by giving them a personal invitation to join and specific direction in what they can do to participate.**





**Autistics have to work harder than neurotypicals to decipher social expectations. This can take a lot of energy, leading to burnout. There are things you can do to help: Accept and support people with autism for who they are, without making them pretend in order to fit in.**





**When we take the time to really get to know and accept an autistic person as they are (rather than fixating on how “severe” their autism is), we access a diversity that can richly expand our worldview. We’ll also learn how to modify our neurotypical world to better accommodate their neurodiversity. In that way, autistic people will have an environment where they can utilize their strengths and be their authentic selves.**