

## **Resource recommendations from ECHO Ontario Autism Hub Team Member Moira Robertson (Autistic Advisor) for teens newly diagnosed with Autism.**

As someone who is only a few years removed from being an angsty teen newly diagnosed with Autism, here are my recommendations to share with the newest group of angsty teens newly diagnosed with autism, in a very unorganized but somehow organized fashion.

### **Books**

#### ***Different not Less, Chloe Hayden***

This book is the top of the list because I just got my hands on a copy, and it is now very stained with my tears. This book is just Chloe being unapologetically autistic and weird. She she's got some stuff about periods and specifically about being in a female body but the passage's written by her partner I think anyone who "loves someone with autism" should read. (I am making fun of those really bad Facebook posts that probably involve minions). It also contains her experiences around the slew of diagnoses (like eating disorders) she got before someone clued in it might just be autism. It also has some passages about sexual abuse so be wary of who you recommend this too. However, all those sections are very heavily trigger warned about. I had to get my copy off of Amazon as no one had it. Currently harassing my father to buy a copy for his library.

#### ***The Spectrum Girls Survival Guide, Siena Castellon***

There are about 6 pages just about how to properly shave all the parts. I would have paid a lot of money to be handed this book at 16. It was written by a 16-year-old for other teens and it's great. It's got pieces about sex and healthy relationships and all the things that teen girls struggle with the most. It has whole passages about what you can do for your sensory needs and how to put up with horrible teachers. Love this one. You can get it at the Toronto Library.

#### ***The Awesome Autistic Go-To Guide***

This one is a short but sweet one. Written by autistics for them. It's a fill in the blank kind of deal but it's good to even just read. It is just about accepting yourself and navigating life and school and friendships while also being autistic. You can get this at the Toronto Library.

#### ***Funny You Don't Look Autistic, Michael McCreary***

This guy grew up in Orangeville and is autistic. It is funny and just includes whole sections called things like "everyone has an anime phase". Makes autism less scary. You can get this at the Toronto library.

#### ***Can't Read, Can't Write, Here is my Book, Michael Jacques***

I met this guy through Reaction for Inclusion with Community Living in high school. He is also an autistic person from Ontario. He is funny and lovely, and my grandmother bought me his book when it first came out and she ran into him at a different Community Living event where she

recognized the group that he was a part of from me. My copy got given to a certain professor I absolutely adore, in 2020; exactly one week before covid closed everything down. She forgot to bring it to my graduation. I could not tell you where to get a copy, but this book is great. It is funny but also just made me feel very heard as a newly diagnosed teen. It was the first book I read about autism. I would say it is great for parents too.

### ***Ready for it, Chustia Fashion Fever***

THIS IS NOT ABOUT AUTISM AND IS VERY TMI. But we are talking about teens here and so we are inherently talking about all the pieces that come along with it. That means masturbation, sex, what the literal hell is the difference between a “relationship” and a “situationship”; all those things that autistic teens will struggle with more than other teens, and yet no one will tell them in depth how to *actually* use a condom. This book is not for the parents who don’t want to acknowledge their kids are growing up. This is a **VERY** graphic book. It includes literal instructions on how to “pleasure” each sex, including explaining how too. I am just saying you would rather an autistic teen learns how to ask if their partner is enjoying it, how to handle situations where they are not, and all the things that the adults in their lives will probably feel nauseous talking to them about from this book, than from their friends, or social media or porn. I was stocking shelves when I worked at a library a few years ago and ran across this book and I would pay a million dollars to go back in time and tell me to get off wiki how and just read this book. Save these teens the embarrassment, *please*.

## **Groups**

### ***Re:Action for Inclusion***

On the note of Michael, this group is or can be in every high school and it is all about inclusion, obviously. If one thing helped above all else, it was the group of other disabled teenagers all being normal angry teenagers angry about the systems we live in. Sometimes you just need a group of other pissed off teenagers to all be pissed off together. This group would very much be the reason I do what I do now.

## **Shows**

### ***Everything is Going to Be Ok, on Hulu***

Love this show, it is goofy and weird. The whole premise is that this 25-year-old becomes the legal guardian to his teen sisters after their dad dies, one of these sisters being autistic. This character is played by an actually autistic person and was the first proper show I was introduced to about autism, where I didn’t feel like it was making fun of me.

### ***Heartbreak High, on Netflix***

This show is like Sex Education mixed with Degrassi. It is just weird and very much a show for teens to NEVER watch with their parents. But it includes Quinni, an autistic character who is just as involved in all the Degrassi-like plot lines like everyone else and is treated as equal. There is one episode that I watch over and over again because even beyond the silliness you’d expect from this show, the episode where someone says, “you know sometimes it’s hard to be around

you,” and Quinni responds with “it’s hard for me too”. This is a scenario that has played out my whole life in often those exact words. It is a silly weird show, but I wish it had come out when I was an angsty autistic teen girl.

### **Social Media/ People**

***Chloe Hayden, Instagram/ TikTok/ Author/ Actor***

She makes relatable content and also just uplifting “autism is ok” type content. She is also an actor and author of things listed on here already.

***Kayla Cromer, Actor***

She is an actor and recently got a role playing an autistic character in Monster High.

***@Autism\_Happy\_Place, Instagram***

This contains those little penguin drawings on Instagram that just explain a lot of concepts in easy ways and provides ideas for various ways to support needs.

***@Kaelynn\_vp, TikTok***

This person shares lots of tips and tricks of navigating the world with autism: explains difficult concepts and just shares her life. She was on “Love on the Spectrum” which is also a fun show I am just wary of suggesting it simply because some pieces of it are very patronizing and not the fun show it could be for autistic folks.

*All in all, these would be the top of my list of things to hand a newly diagnosed teen. But with all that in mind nothing, and I mean nothing helped me more in accepting my diagnosis than just being an angry angsty teen about the whole situation with adults who just saw me for me. Learning in high school as a teen that you are different from your peers (which you already knew) in a way that you can never fix feels horrible. But having adults and friends who don’t see it as the earth-shattering news that you did, helped more than any of these resources did.*