The Autism Society of Maine provides education and resources to support the valued lives of individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

Membership Includes:
- Autism Advocate Journal
- Scholarships for Conferences
- Access to ASM Family Retreat and Summer Camp
- Individual/Family Member $25.00
- Student $25.00
- Professional $150.00
- Agency/Organization $200.00
- Lifetime $1,500.00
- Donation $_______

Total: $_________

Check which best describes you:
- Individual on the Autism Spectrum
- Parent
- Family
- Professional

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**What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?**
- Developmental disability that appears before age 7 years
- Result of a neurological disorder that affects the brain
- Occurs in 1 out of 68 births in the United States
- 4 times more prevalent in boys than girls
- Crosses all racial, ethnic and social boundaries
- Affects ability to communicate, reason and interact with others
- Impacts individuals differently and to varying degrees of severity (mild, moderate, severe)
- Often found with other disabilities

**What are the criteria?**
- Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across settings, as shown by:
  1. Deficits in social-skills and emotional reciprocity
  2. Deficits in non-verbal communication (i.e. body language, eye contact);
  3. Deficits in developing, maintaining and understanding relationships (i.e. absence of interest in peers, difficulty in sharing imaginary play) AND
- Restrictive, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities as shown by:
  1. Repetitive speech and/or behaviors, or use of objects (such as repeating words, using objects the same way over and over, spinning, flapping);
  2. Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, need to take same route to destinations, eat same foods);
  3. Highly restricted fixedated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus (i.e. strong focus on unusual objects, unusual interests);
  4. Hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment (e.g., apparent indifference to pain/temperature, adverse response to specific sounds or textures, excessive smellding or touching of objects, visual fascination with lights or movement).

**What causes autism spectrum disorder?**
- No single cause
- Biological and neurological differences in the brain
- Research continues focused on genetic links in family patterns and ASD
- Research suggests environmental factors - influences on genetics are not yet clear
- Not caused by poor parenting and individuals do not choose to have autism

**How is it diagnosed?**
- No medical test for autism
- According to the DSM-5 criteria for ASD
- Evaluations to be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team that may include: neurologist, psychologist, developmental pediatrician, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, education consultant or other professional (i.e. LCSW, LCPC) knowledgeable about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Rule out any physical reason for the behaviors being observed

**Is there a cure?**
- No known cure
- Many ways to understand the disorder and help people cope with the symptoms
- Some symptoms may lessen as the individual ages or disappear altogether
- With appropriate intervention many behaviors associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be positively supported and strengths maximized
- Majority of individuals with ASD will continue to exhibit some of the symptoms throughout their lives

**What are the most recognized interventions?**
- Early intervention services
- Highly structured individualized special education program tailored to the individual's needs
- Positive reinforcement strategies
- Training and support to caregivers
- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Vocational Training and Supports
- Living Supports: varies based on need from own apartments to residential care
- Biomedical (e.g. diet, supplementation)