

DELEGATE

# NEWSLETTER

[www.nicechennai.org](http://www.nicechennai.org)**April 2****World Autism Awareness Day****CATALYZING CONVERSATIONS | TRANSFORMING PERSPECTIVES**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our latest newsletter edition marking World Autism Awareness Day. This year's theme, "Moving from Surviving to Thriving," echoes our commitment to creating environments where individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can flourish. Dr. Naveena Karthik, Consultant Developmental Pediatrician at Nishta Center, provides insights into the transition into adulthood for those on the autism spectrum. Let's embrace inclusivity, celebrate diversity, and advocate for the rights of individuals with ASD. I extend gratitude to Dr. Naveena and our readers for their support. Together, let's turn awareness into action for a more inclusive society.

Warm regards,  
Dr. S. Subramanian  
Director, NICE

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# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

The theme for World Autism Awareness Day 2024 is "Moving from Surviving to Thriving"

This theme goes beyond just raising awareness of autism.

It emphasises the importance of moving from simply understanding about autism to creating an environment where individuals with autism can truly thrive.

It is an opportunity to foster understanding and acceptance, promote inclusivity and holistic support for individuals with unique perspectives and challenges.

Inclusivity facilitates the adaptation of disabled children and young people into their local environment.

Let us work towards more inclusion and acceptance.

Children and young adults are less likely to be accepted in the schools; they often get excluded, and struggle to be understood, get involved or receive support.

It is crucial that individuals with autism, their families and carers, receive guidance and support, to overcome those barriers along with opportunities to explore their interests, develop skills, and build friendships for better lives.

This day encourages initiatives aimed at enhancing the lives of those affected by autism, through education and advocacy, empowering them to thrive in this world by turning their struggles into success.

This World Autism Awareness Day serves as a strong reminder of the need for collective action and a shift in societal attitudes towards stereotypes and stigma.

It urges us to go beyond mere survival for individuals with autism and strive for an environment where they can thrive better.

When we look into adolescents and young adults in the spectrum, it is important to note that autistic individuals tend to prefer predictability; change is not easy for them and transition to adulthood involves significant change.

Dealing with autism in teens can be tricky, but it's not impossible.

Bodily changes due to hormones, environmental adjustments in their daily activities, new roles and responsibilities, the need to equip themselves with basic life skills, and accommodating to social norms and expectations begin to develop around preteens and continue into adulthood.

Paediatricians should consider initiating discussions about the transition, which is not only limited to physical changes but also involves behavioural changes, healthcare, academics, and learning support necessary for adolescents to smoothly transition to independent and self-sufficient adults.

Engaging with teens and young adults with autism is crucial for navigating the transition process. Each visit and follow up present a valuable opportunity for paediatricians to plan their next steps towards their independence, provide anticipatory guidance, stay connected, and ensure that their voices are heard.

This necessitates a comprehensive approach, involving awareness campaigns, education initiatives, policy reforms, and the provision of adequate support services.

As we observe this significant day, it is important for us to renew our commitment to understanding, inclusion, and empowerment for individuals with autism around the world.

Through collaborative efforts, we can break down barriers, dispel misconceptions, and ensure that everyone, irrespective of their abilities or challenges, has the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and lead lives filled with dignity and respect.

Now is the time to shift from mere awareness to tangible action, from mere survival to flourishing, and to celebrate the rich diversity that autism brings.

It is time to move from awareness to action, from survival to thriving, and to embrace the diversity that autism represents.

Let us celebrate the unique strengths and perspectives of individuals on the autism spectrum and create a society that values and supports them.

SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS.  
YOUR VOICE MATTERS!