Puzzle Piece Symbol

Abi Harrison-Nye

Let's talk about it

You've likely seen the puzzle piece used to represent autism. While common, it is highly controversial. Many in the autistic community view it as outdated or offensive. Understanding why helps you be a better ally. Here is a breakdown of the controversy:

It implies autistic people are a 'puzzle' to be solved or have a piece 'missing'. This frames autism as a problem rather than a different way of being

It was historically used by organisations focused on 'curing' autism. It represents an era where autistic people were talked about, not to

The primary colours reinforce the myth that autism is just for children. This erases the existence and needs of autistic adults

The community generally prefers the infinity symbol (rainbow for neurodiversity or golden for autism). See the Infinity Symbol highlight

Being mindful of imagery shows you are listening to the lived experiences of the community.

Useful Links

The Ableist History of the Puzzle Piece Symbol for Autism
The History of the Puzzle Piece