

# Off the Spectrum

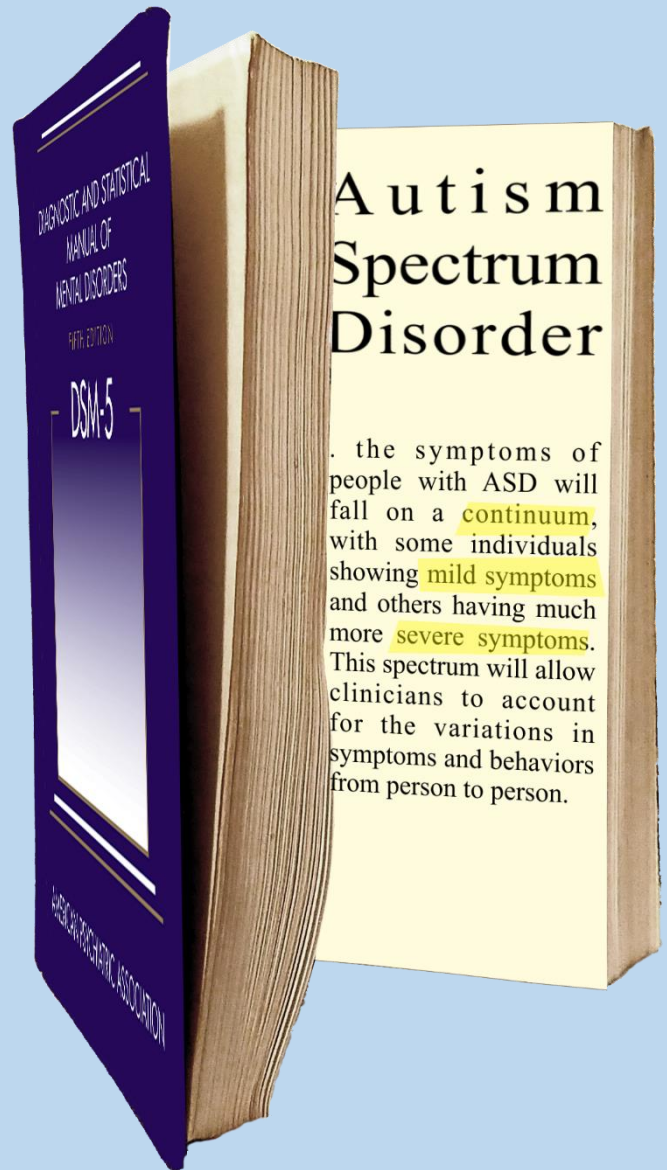
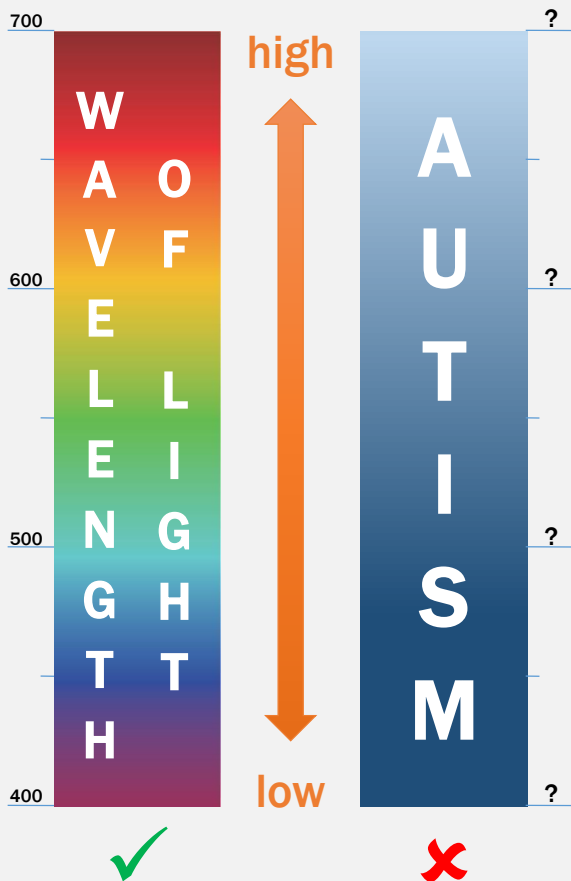
## spectrum

*noun*

Used to classify something, or suggest that it can be classified, in terms of its position on a scale between two extreme or opposite points.

spectrum. Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press. [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/spectrum](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/spectrum) (accessed August 02, 2016).

*A spectrum is great if you can classify something with a single number*



There is value in diagnosis, but...


there is confusion and danger in oversimplification and artificial categories.

# How Autistic Are You?

Being *on the spectrum* reduces a person to a single dimension.

It's like saying, "What's your address on Autistic Street?"  
or "How Autistic are you?"

It allows classification of Autistic people on a scale from low to high.

A photograph of a row of colorful row houses (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue) on a street. A green street sign on a tree in the foreground reads "AUTISTIC STREET". An American flag is visible on one of the houses. Several cars are parked along the street.

If you need to know  
where somebody is on  
the Autism Spectrum,  
you're already asking the  
wrong question.

But Autistic individuals are not simply on a spectrum:  
nobody is 95% Autistic, nor 10% Autistic.

There are many dimensions to Autism. It's a complex collection of traits.

Every person has a unique expression of their Autistic nature.

# The Autistic Landscape

Autism is not a spectrum. It's a landscape.

There's depth, breadth and height to every Autistic person.



The Autism Spectrum was constructed to simplify diagnosis, but it doesn't reflect reality. There's a better metaphor.

So how can you properly classify somebody who is Autistic?

Not with a number. Not with crude categories such as "High" and "Low."

Instead, take the time to *explore the Autistic Landscape*.

