

THE SPECTRUM WORKS

Neurodiversity: *The Spectrum Works*

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USC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Week 2019



THE SPECTRUM WORKS

Transitioning gifted individuals on the autism
spectrum into meaningful talent for corporations



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History of Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace



1960s -1970s
Race Relations
Civil Rights



1980s
Affirmative
Action



1990s
Diversity

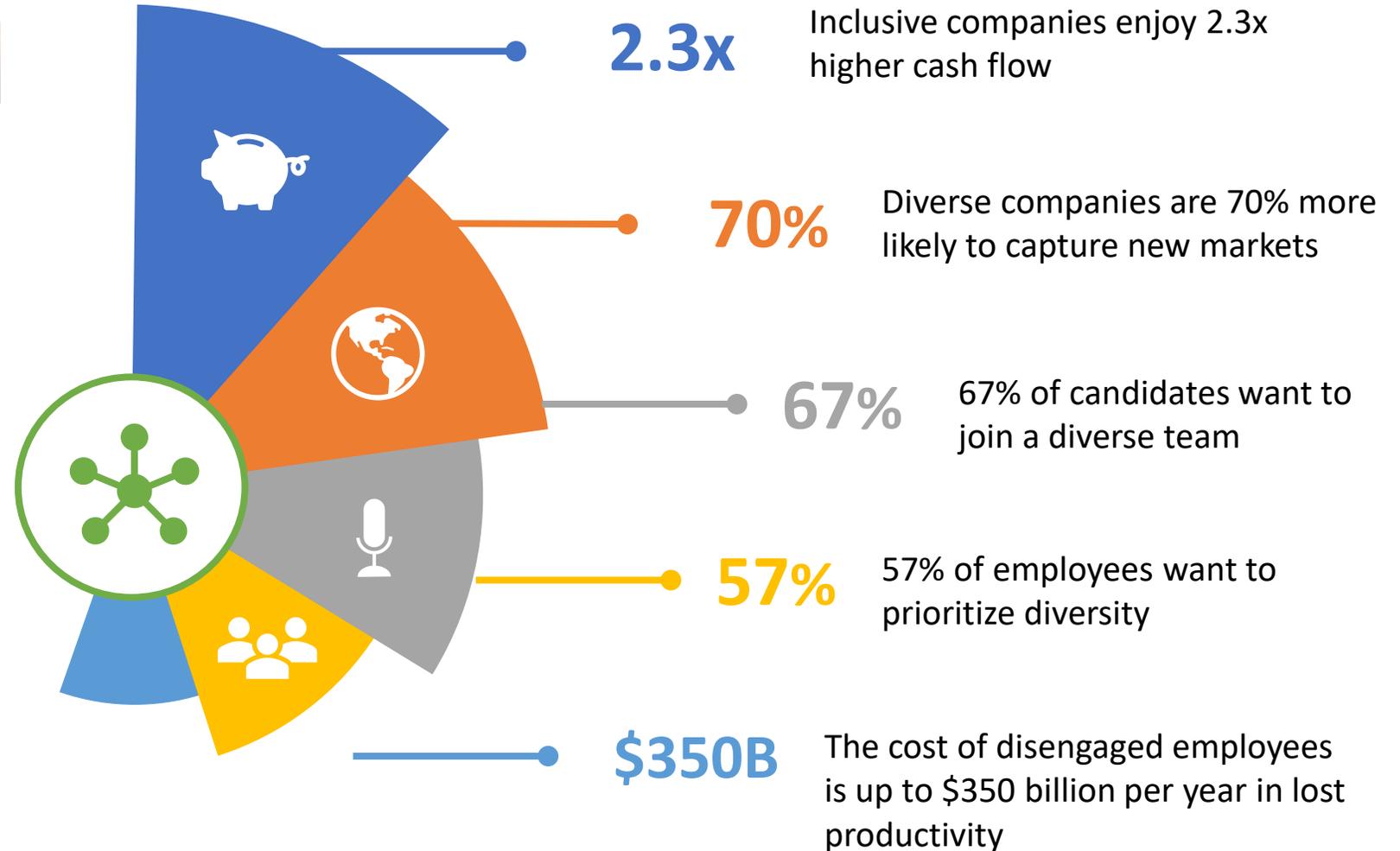


2000-Now
Inclusion
Equity

Why Diversity & Inclusion Matters



75%
of Fortune 1000
companies have
diversity initiatives



Affirmative Action

Individuals with Disabilities (IWD)

American Disabilities
Act (ADA)

Section 503 of
Rehabilitation Act

Workplace Innovation
& Opportunity Act
(WIOA)

Neurodiversity

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What is Neurodiversity?



Recognition that diverse neurological conditions are the result of
normal variations in the human genome

Why Neurodiversity Matters



“Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general.”

– *Harvey Blume*

Autism Spectrum Disorder:



Autism

An impairment of social, behavioral and communication skills caused by differences in the brain



Spectrum

A continuum:
low – moderate – high functioning



Disorder

It's not a disease:
“not a disability but a different ability”

1 in 59



Source: Center for Disease Control, 2018

Typical Signs of Autism



- Difficulty processing and expressing feelings
- May display inflexibility and ‘unusual’ emotional responses
- Sensory integration issues
- Difficulty in verbal and non-verbal body language
- Ability to hyper-focus on obscure interests



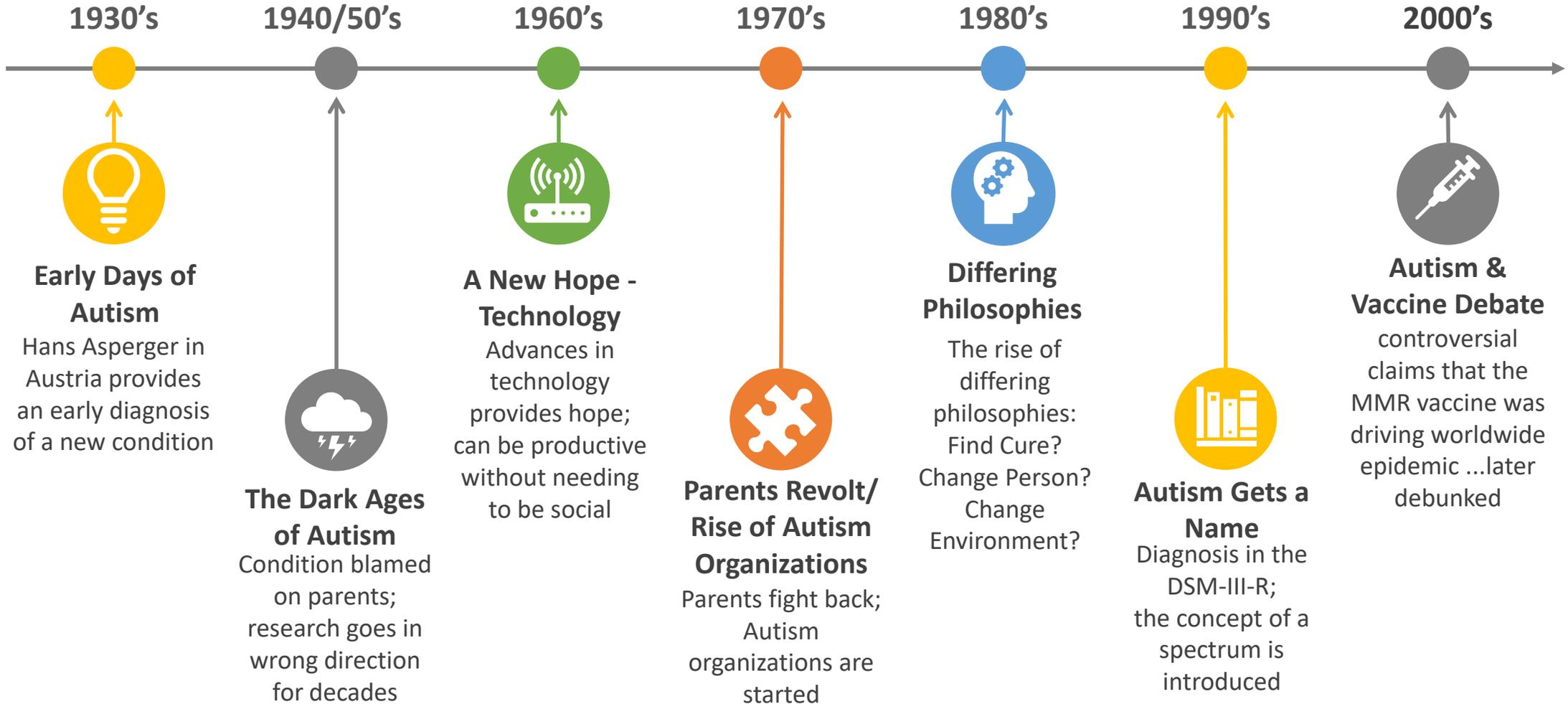
“It is sometimes said that if you’ve met one individual with autism, you’ve met ONE individual with autism.”

- *Stephen Shore*



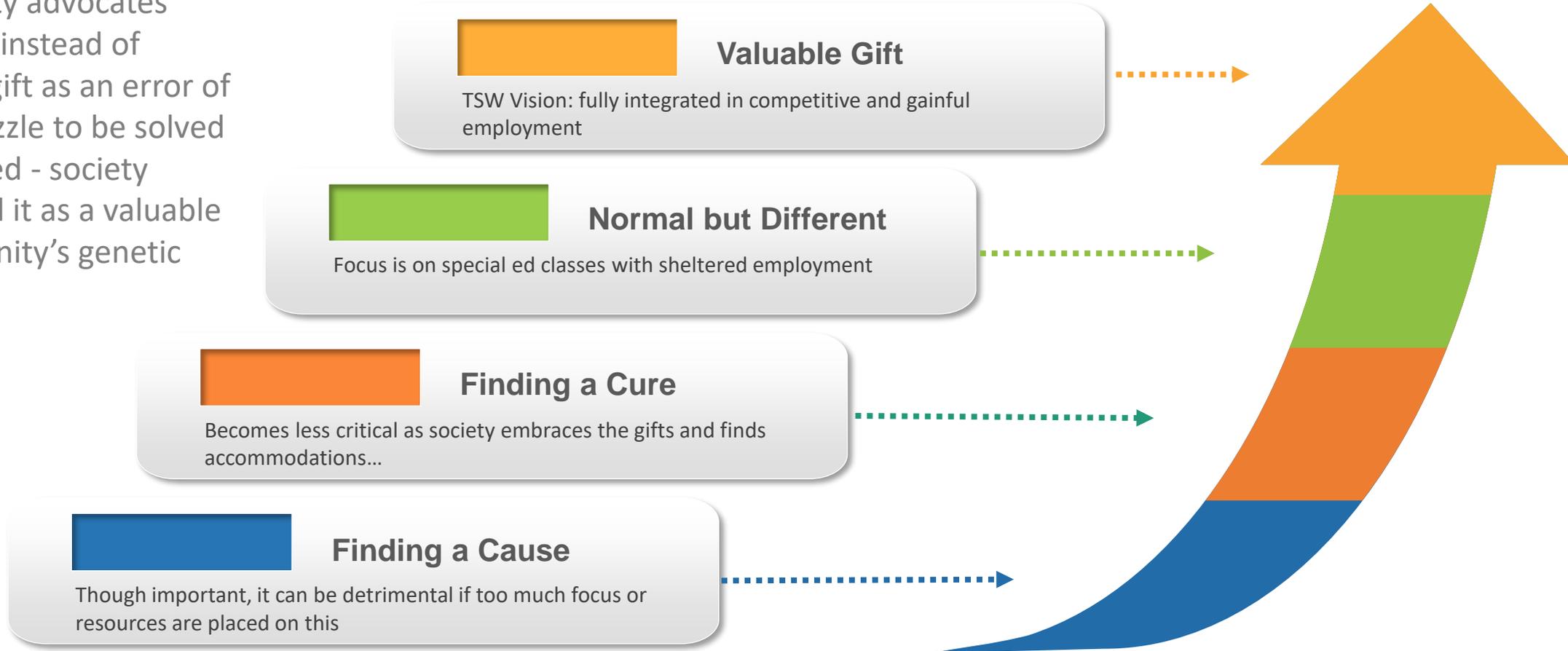
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The History of Autism



Where Are We Now?

Neurodiversity advocates propose that instead of viewing this gift as an error of nature - a puzzle to be solved and eliminated - society should regard it as a valuable part of humanity's genetic legacy...



Gifts of Autism



Detailed and
Accurate



Creative and
Innovative



Visual/Spatial
Thinkers



Specialized, deep
knowledge



Dependable
and Loyal



Honest
and Ethical

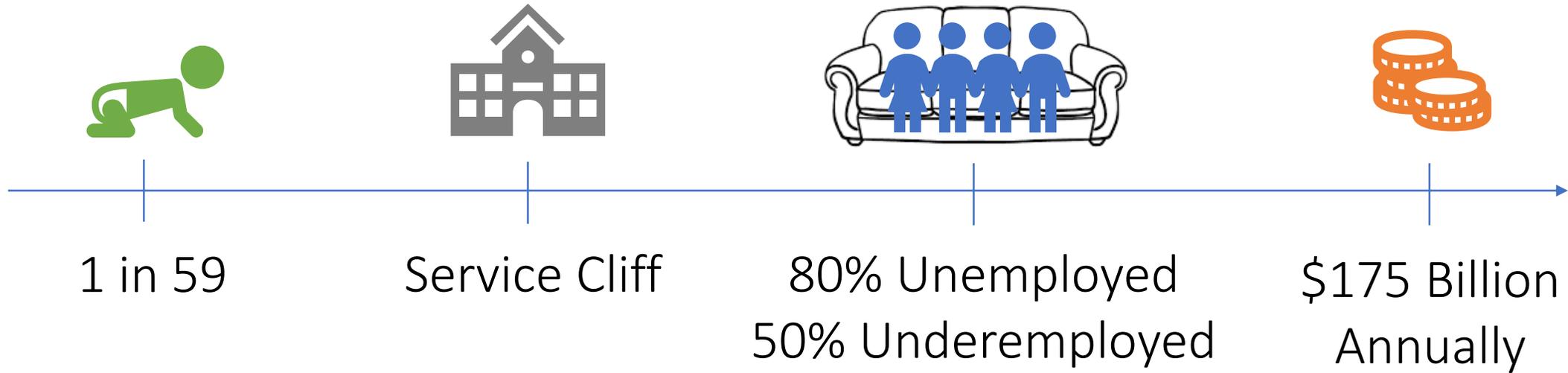


Resilient



Positive Impact
on Culture

The Problem



Our Mission



Adults with Autism

Gifted, untapped
resource pool

The Spectrum Works



Corporations

War for Talent
Inclusive Workplaces

Our Solution



Blue-collar



Social Ventures



White-collar
Corporate Jobs

Extending the Spectrum of Jobs



Autism at Work Programs



JPMORGAN
CHASE & CO.





“This is not about charity, it’s about increasing our profits and building value for SAP stockholders”

– Jose Velasco



Program:

- Employment Readiness Training
- Interview Accommodations
- Corporate Training
- Workplace Support

Outcomes:

- Quality improvement
- Employee engagement
- Productivity gains
- Innovation capabilities

Building a Neurodiverse Workplace

The Hiring Process | Interview Accommodations

Reword questions in a direct manner

Change interview format to demonstrate skills to do the job



Explain ahead of time what the interview will entail

Provide sample questions and allow a copy in front of them

Building a Neurodiverse Workplace

Workplace Programs & Practices



Neurodiversity
Training



Buddy Program



On-site Coaches



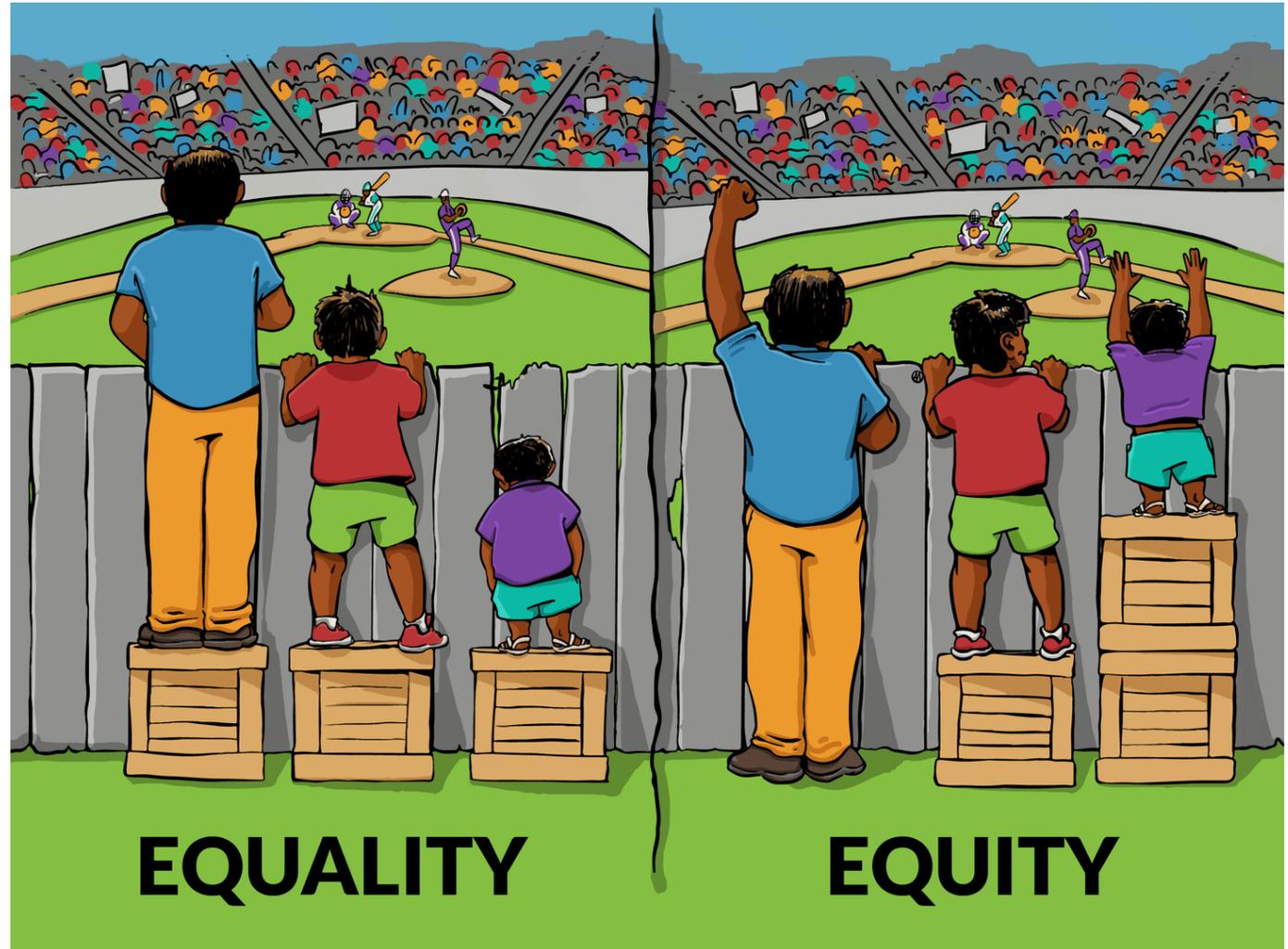
Trusted
Advisors/
Advocates



Structured
Processes

“We can’t afford to waste a brain. To meet the unforeseeable challenges racing towards us in the 21st century, we will need many kinds of minds working together.”

- Steve Silberman



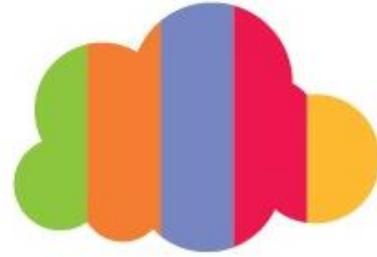


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Questions?

Thank you!



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Connect with us!



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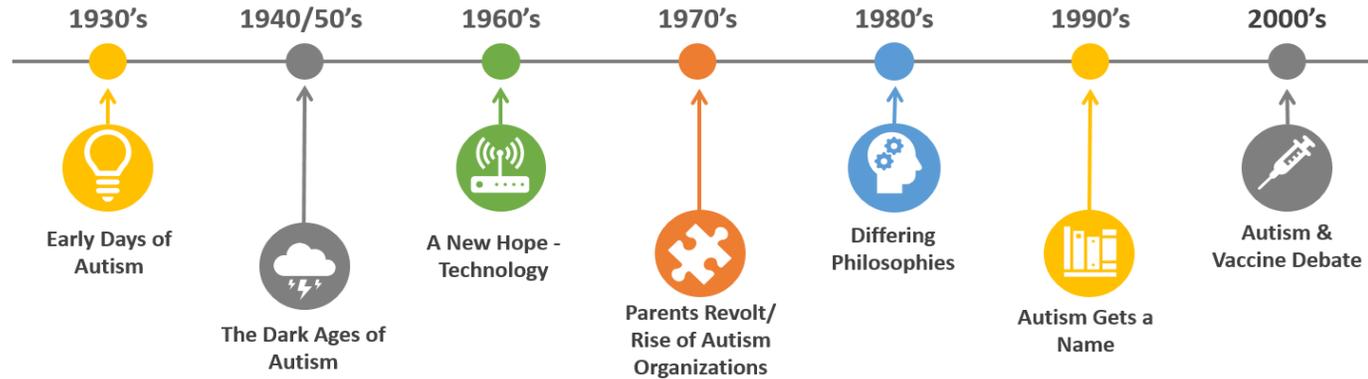
Website: www.thespectrumworks.org

Appendix



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30's: Early Days of Autism



“The boy’s difficulties...are the price that he has to pay for his **special gifts**...goal must be to teach the person how to bear these difficulties. Not to eliminate them for him, but to train the person to cope with special challenges with **special strategies**”

“to determine the **innate capacities** of the child...what will best assure his personal happiness, security, and social welfare, **what his right place** is in the family, society, what are his personal goals and ambitions, and how these can all be realized....**unfortunately**, in the majority of cases, the positive aspects of autism do not outweigh the negative ones”

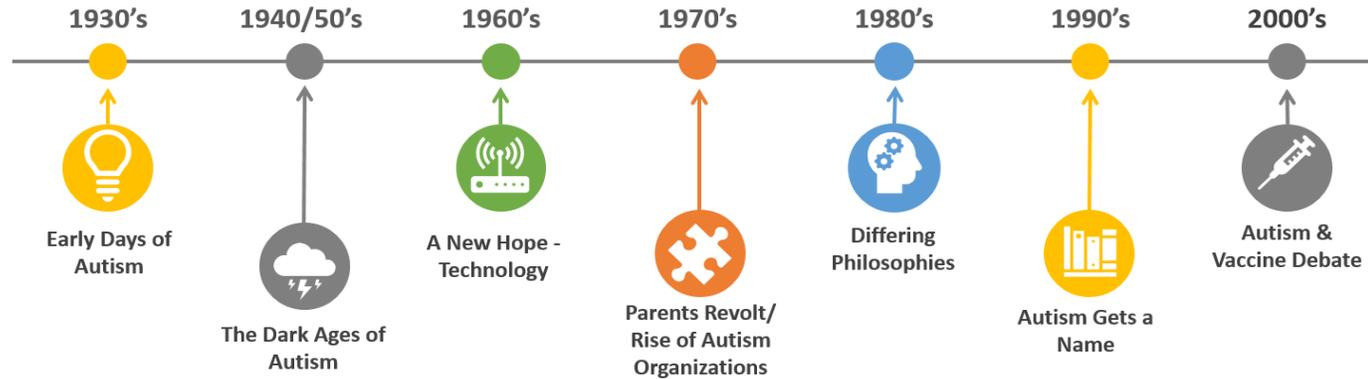
- Hans Asperger (German Scientist)

Incredible insight but shortsighted



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40/50's: The Dark Ages of Autism



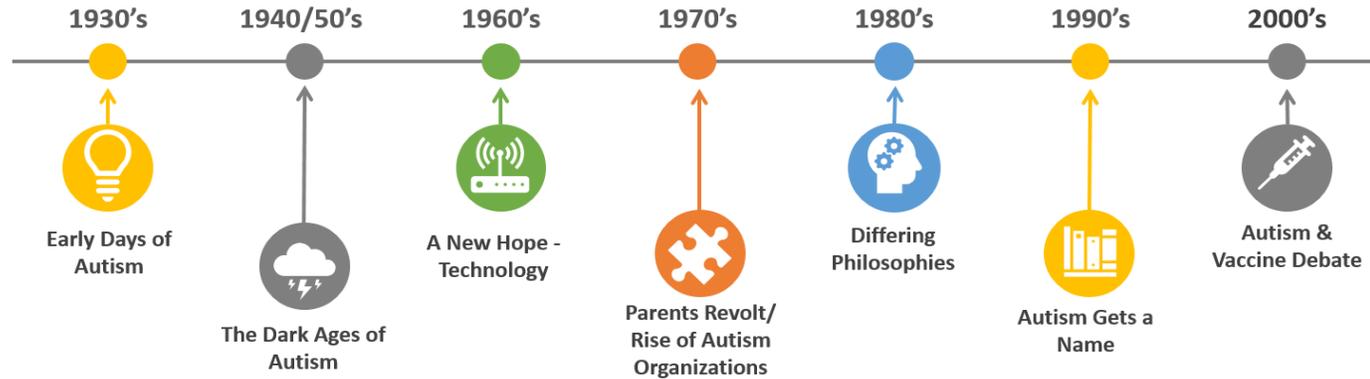
“Leo Kanner saw the shadow of the sinister figure that would become the infamous “refrigerator mother”... unsettling possibility: that these children had been pushed into mental illness by their selfish, compulsive, and emotionally frosty parents...by **blaming parents** for inadvertently causing their children’s autism, Kanner made his syndrome a source of **shame and stigma for families** worldwide.”
- NeuroTribes Book

Research in wrong direction for decades



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60's: A New Hope - Technology



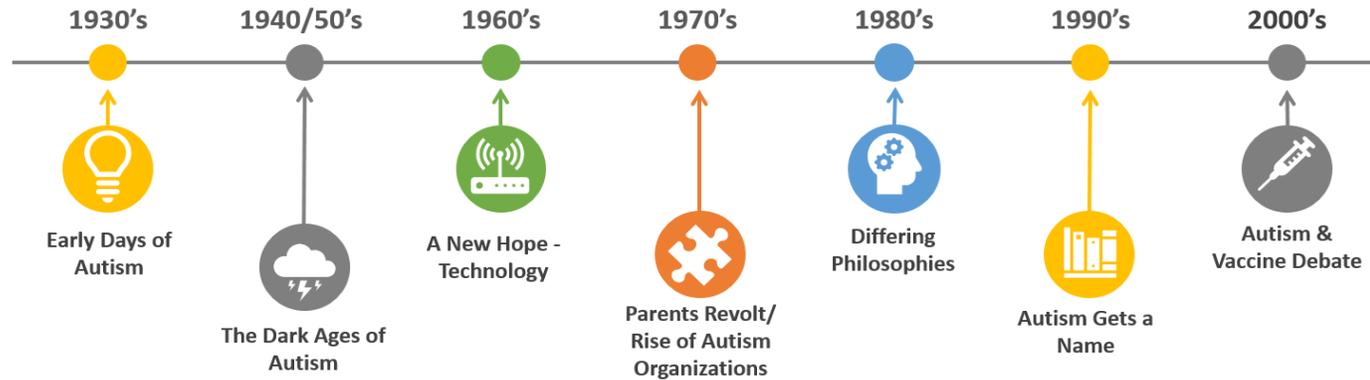
“For people who struggled to express themselves in face-to-face situations (and people who were incapable of speech altogether), computer networks held the potential for not just “augmenting” communication but making it possible, period.”

“a fascination with logic and complex machines, a gift for puns and aphorisms, an uncompromising personal ethic, and the ability to solve problems from angles that his more socially oriented colleagues missed.”

Steve Silberman - NeuroTribes Book

HAM Radio, Artificial Intelligence, Wireless

70's: Parents Revolt/ Rise of Autism Organizations



New Organizations:

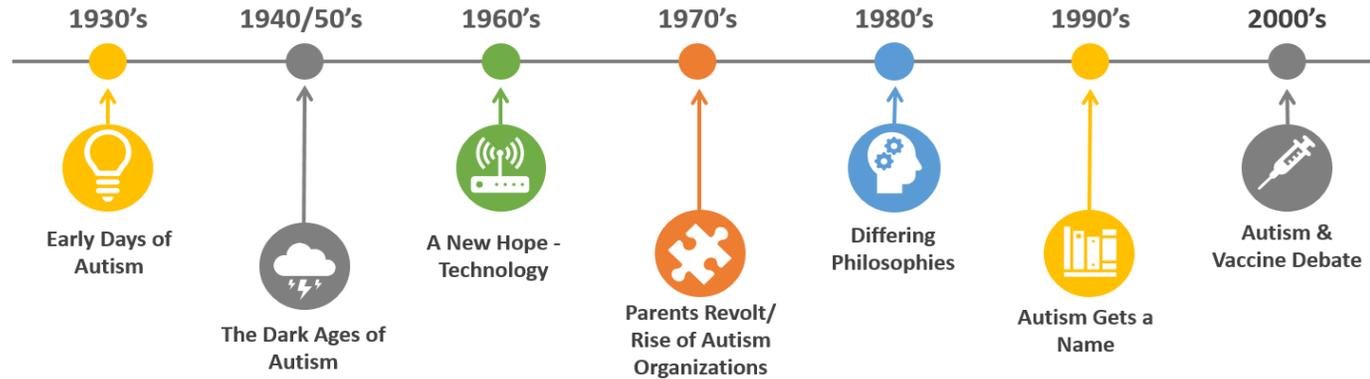
- UNC TEACCH
- Autism Research Institute
- Autism Society of America
- National Society for Autistic Children
- UCLA Center for Autism Research

New Thinking:

- As an inborn condition based in genetics and neurology rather than the complexities of the developing psyche
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) – teach new skills to cope with condition

Lifting burden of shame, guilt and blame;
unleashing productivity and creativity

80's: Differing Philosophies



Finding Cause and a Cure:

- focused primarily on biomedical interventions and genetic research

Change the Environment:

- focused on ways of changing society to make it a more accepting and accommodating place for autistic people

Prepare the Person:

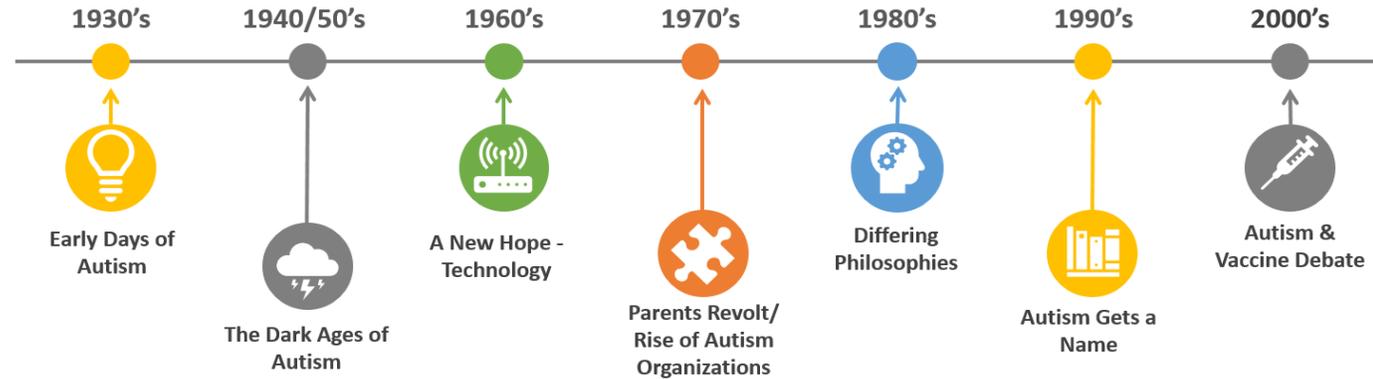
- change the children themselves to make them more “socially acceptable”

TSW: Training, Education & Accommodations



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90's: Autism Gets a Name



- 1980 - Autism added to the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- Third Edition (**DSM-III**) as "infantile autism"
- 1987 - "Autistic Disorder" replaced "Infantile Autism" in the manual and gave a more expansive explanation of the diagnosis
- 1989 - **Child Autism Rating Scale (CARS)** behavioral rating scale was developed to help diagnose Autism
- 1991 - Federal government decision (**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**) makes Autism a special education category
- 1994 - Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (**PDD-NOS**) and **Asperger's Syndrome** added to DSM-IV
- 1998 - Harvey Blume was the first to use the term **neurodiversity** in the press, writing in the Atlantic
- 2013 - Based on new literature and clinical experience the diagnosis is now be referred to as **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

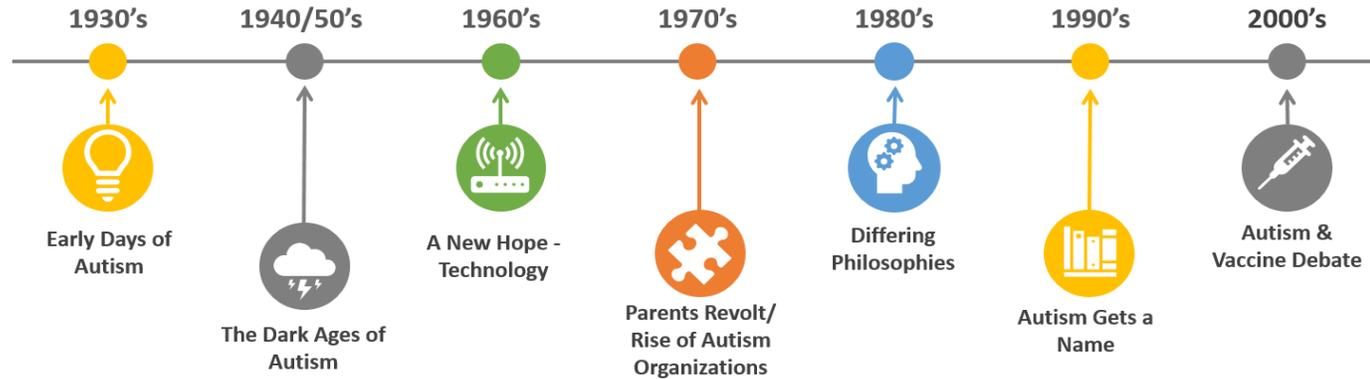
Autism Spectrum Disorder

Impaired social communication and/or interaction or
restricted and/or repetitive behaviors



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2000's: Autism & Vaccine Debate



“Incendiary public debate about vaccines sparked by gastroenterologist Andrew Wakefield’s controversial claims that the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine) was driving worldwide epidemic of a “leaky gut” ...diverting from original mission of demanding services and accommodations in education into a rancorous debate about vaccines”

Steve Silberman - NeuroTribes Book

Published in 1998 - Debunked by 2011

Where Are We Now?



Numbers

Autistic people constitute one of the largest minorities in the world

Are the numbers going up?

Recently raised to 1 in 59
(was 65 just 2 years ago)

...or just being diagnosed more accurately?



Media

Rain Man in 1988
Temple Grandin 2010

TV:

- Good Doctor, Atypical, Parenthood

Movies:

- The Accountant, Roman Israel ESQ

Documentaries:

- Life, Animated



Research

- Impact of Diet
- Biological (Gut bacteria) and neurodevelopment
- Mitochondrial impact
- Genome sequencing (18 new candidate genes)
- Neuroimaging in infants predicts ASD – early diagnosis

Building a Neurodiverse Workplace

Equipping Managers and Team

Challenge	Accommodation
Remembering and following <i>verbal</i> instructions	Simplify and write down direct instructions Use visual aids
Difficulty thinking on their feet	Share meeting objectives before any meeting or discussion, set and send agenda ahead of time
Tendency to be logical, difficulty reading emotional states of others	Act and speak directly/literally
Planning and juggling multiple tasks	Write down tasks and prioritize them
Difficulty handling criticism	Take on a coaching mindset, do not speak or act in an intimidating or demeaning manner
Sensory sensitivities (visual, audio)	Lighting and sound adjustments Allow headphone use
Responding flexibly to unexpected situations	Prepare to provide 'a little extra' support, provide time to process the change, give them options of how to respond