

Delve Deeper into *Neurotypical*

A film by Adam Larsen

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Linda Brawley of San Diego Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Neurotypical*.

Neurotypical is an unprecedented exploration of autism from the point of view of autistic people themselves. Four-year-old Violet, teenaged Nicholas and adult Paula occupy different positions on the autism spectrum, but they are all at pivotal moments in their lives. How they and the people around them work out their perceptual and behavioral differences becomes a remarkable reflection of the "neurotypical" world — the world of the non-autistic — revealing inventive adaptations on each side and an emerging critique of both what it means to be normal and what it means to be human.

ADULT NONFICTION

Armstrong, Thomas. *Neurodiversity: Discovering the Extraordinary Gifts of Autism, Adhd, Dyslexia, and Other Brain Differences*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Lifelong, 2010.

Armstrong uses the term neurodiversity to encompass a new way of thinking about a variety of disabilities (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and dyslexia) by focusing on their potential benefits rather than problems. For each of these conditions, he provides an overview, examples of complementary careers, and stories of people who exceed expectations.

Grandin, Temple. *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006. The idea that some people think differently, though no less humanly, is explored in this inspiring book. Temple Grandin is a gifted and successful animal scientist, and she is autistic. Here she tells us what it was like to grow up perceiving the world in an entirely concrete and visual way - somewhat akin to how animals think - and how it feels now.

Through her finely observed understanding of the workings of her mind she gives us an invaluable insight into autism and its challenges.

Grandin, Temple, and Richard Panek. *The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. The latest by Grandin describes what she considers the "third phase" of research and understanding of autism. She explains how 21st-century brain-imaging technology allows researchers to see differences in the wiring and structures of the brains of people with autism.

Grinker, Roy Richard. *Unstrange Minds: Remapping the World of Autism*. Basic Books, 2007. Based on his work in the United States and abroad, Roy Richard Grinker presents the controversial idea that there is no evidence for an autism epidemic. Instead, the high rates of prevalence and diagnosis today are instead evidence that scientists are finally counting cases correctly. And this is a good thing, not only for the US but for the world, including cultures that have only just begun to learn about autism. *Unstrange Minds* shows how the shift in how we view and count autism is part of a set of broader shifts taking place in societies throughout the world. The growth of child psychiatry, the decline of psychoanalysis, the internet, the rise of international advocacy organizations, greater public sensitivity to children's educational problems, and changes in public policies have together changed the way autism is diagnosed and defined.

Hendrickx, Sarah. *The Adolescent and Adult Neuro-Diversity: Handbook Asperger's Syndrome, Adhd, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Related Conditions*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London, 2010. Hendrickx provides an invaluable resource for health and social care practitioners, as well as for individuals who feel that they may be living with an undiagnosed developmental

condition. She examines Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, OCD, Tourette's and Anxiety Disorders.

Mooney, Jonathan. *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal*. New York: H. Holt Paperbacks, 2007.

Labeled "dyslexic and profoundly learning disabled," Jonathan Mooney was a short-bus rider—a derogatory term used for kids in special education. To learn how others had moved beyond labels, he bought his own short bus and set out cross-country. This is his irreverent and poignant record of that odyssey, meeting people who teach Mooney that there's no such thing as normal — and that to really live, every person must find their own special way of keeping on.

Sacks, Oliver. *An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales*. New York: Knopf, 1995. Oliver

Sacks has written that neurological patients are travelers to unimaginable lands. *An Anthropologist on Mars* offers portraits of seven such travelers. Along the way, he gives us a new perspective on the way our brains construct our individual worlds. In his lucid and compelling reconstructions of the mental acts we take for granted—the act of seeing, the transport of memory, the notion of color—Oliver Sacks provokes a new sense of wonder at who we are.

Sacks, Oliver. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat: And Other Clinical Tales*. New York: Summit Books, 1985.

Here Dr. Sacks recounts the case histories of patients lost in the bizarre, apparently inescapable world of neurological disorders: people afflicted with fantastic perceptual and intellectual aberrations; patients who have lost their memories and with them the greater part of their pasts; who are no longer able to recognize people and common objects; who are stricken with violent tics and grimaces or who shout involuntary obscenities; whose limbs have become alien; who have been dismissed as retarded yet are gifted with uncanny artistic or mathematical talents. These are studies of life



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struggling against incredible adversity, and they enable us to enter the world of the neurologically impaired, to imagine with our hearts what it must be to live and feel as they do.

Simone, Rudy. *Aspergirls: Empowering Females with Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2010. Rudy asserts that girls with Asperger's Syndrome are less frequently diagnosed than boys and help is often not readily available for them. Rudy opens our eyes to the World of the *Aspergirl*, providing powerful insights on love, learning, sex, career, marriage, having children, friendships, puberty, diagnosis, emotions, health, aging and more.

Solomon, Andrew. *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*. New York: Scribner, 2012. Solomon's startling proposition is that diversity is what unites us all. He writes about families coping with deafness, dwarfism, Down syndrome, autism, schizophrenia, multiple severe disabilities, with children who are prodigies, who are conceived in rape, who become criminals, who are transgender. While each of these characteristics is potentially isolating, the experience of difference within families is universal. In Solomon's telling, these stories are everyone's stories.

Williams, Donna. *Nobody Nowhere: The Remarkable Autobiography of an Autistic Girl*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 1999. *Nobody Nowhere* is an account of a soul of someone who lived the word 'autism' and survived in an unsympathetic environment despite intense inner chaos and incomprehension. Born into a 1960's family with more challenges than she has, Donna starts out as a two year old diagnosed as psychotic, and grows up treated as mad, backward, and disturbed. Gaining functional speech by late childhood, Donna leaves home at 8 years old and is homeless by her teens in a world that can no more understand her than she

can understand it. Life, 'normality' and 'reality' will not be the same after you read this book.

Willis, Clarissa. *Teaching Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Beltsville, MD : Gryphon House, 2006. Willis offers a straightforward, easy-to-understand guide to working with autistic children. She explains the major characteristics associated with autism and helps teachers and parents understand how these children relate to the world. Teachers and parents can discover meaningful ways to communicate while allowing those with autism to learn and grow.

ADULT FICTION

Palmer, Michael. *The Second Opinion*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009. The novel is an exploration of a young girl named Thea who is determined to communicate with her comatose father despite overwhelming odds. Thea has Asperger's syndrome, which gives her an obsession with details, a near-encyclopedic memory, and a rather charming awkwardness in social settings.

Perry, Drew. *This Is Just Exactly Like You*. New York: Viking, 2010. Set against a landscape of defunct putt-putt courses and karaoke bars, parenthood and infidelity, *This Is Just Exactly Like You* is a wise and witty debut novel with captivating insights into marriage, autism, suburban fiasco, and life's occasional miracles.

FICTION FOR YOUNG ADULT READERS

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. New York: Doubleday, 2003. Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic, fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers

secret information about his mother.

Nappi, Frank. *The Legend of Mickey Tussler*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008. This is an honest and knowledgeable book about overcoming adversity and the basis for the television movie *A Mile in His Shoes*. Mickey achieves local stardom despite his autism, abusive father and his teammates' clubhouse pranks. Nappi's powerful story shows that with support and determination anyone can be triumphant, even when the odds are stacked against them.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Lears, Laurie, and Karen Ritz. *Ian's Walk: A Story About Autism*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman, 1998. A young girl realizes how much she cares for her autistic brother Ian when he gets lost at the park. When her autistic little brother, Ian, wanders off while on a walk to the park, Julie must try to see the world through his eyes in order to find him.

