SUBJECT: What’s Your Definition of Autism?

COPY: As you may know, a new edition of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) is coming out in May with changes to the definitions of certain disorders on the autism spectrum which is used by medical professionals, government agencies and insurers. There has been much talk about what this will mean to individuals and their families when it comes to obtaining a diagnosis and receiving services. But during Autism Awareness Month in April, The Arc would like to refocus the conversation on the individuals living with autism day to day and ask: “What’s Your Definition of Autism?” What does the word “autism” really mean to you on a personal and individual level?

This April, we invite you to join us in raising awareness about what autism really means. If you are not already familiar with Autism NOW, The National Autism Resource & Information Center, visit [www.autismnow.org](http://www.autismnow.org) for a wealth of high-quality, reliable information designed specifically individuals on the autism spectrum or with other developmental disabilities, their families and others who care about them. Autism NOW is a project of The Arc funded in part by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

And, here’s how YOU can participate in furthering the conversation during Autism Awareness Month – be sure to jump in with your thoughts and feelings on what the definition of autism is to you and share with everyone you know using the hashtag #AutismAware:

* Follow and comment on The Arc on Facebook and Twitter hashtag #AutismAware
* Follow and comment on Autism NOW on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AutismNowCenter) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/autismnowcenter)
* Follow and comment on (YOUR CHAPTER) on Facebook and Twitter (insert links to your pages)
* Post this as your status on Facebook at least once during April: April is Autism Awareness Month. Help me celebrate the contributions of people on the autism spectrum by copying and posting this as your status during April. Get more information at [www.autismnow.org](http://www.autismnow.org). #AutismAware
* Tweet this out on Twitter at least once during April: April is Awareness Month. Foster respect, access and inclusion for all. PLS share! #AutismAware
* Read The Arc and [Autism NOW](http://autismnow.org/blog/) blogs
* Join The Arc’s [online community](http://www.thearc.org/get-involved/online-community)
* Sign up to receive [Autism NOW’s Prism e-newsletter](http://autismnow.org/what-we-do/prism/)
* Join the [Autism NOW forums](http://autismnow.org/forums/)
* Find out more about services for people with autism at (YOUR CHAPTER WEBSITE HERE) if applicable.