

Writing about Autscape: Notes for journalists

From time to time, Autscape is approached by people (amateur and professional) wanting to write an article about the conference for a publication.

Publicity for Autscape is very welcome as we aim to increase access to the conference. Articles about Autscape also support our goal of creating a positive and accepting environment for autistic people.

We have, therefore, prepared the following notes to assist journalists. If you would like Autscape to review your final copy prior to publication we would be happy to do so. We can be contacted on info@autscape.org at any time.

Notes:

1. We ask that you make it clear that you are writing about Autscape, but not on behalf of Autscape.
2. Please make your readers aware that Autscape is run by autistics for autistics (unique amongst UK autism conferences) and is a non-profit organisation with all work carried out by volunteers.
3. Please include our website address (www.autscape.org) which will allow people to find additional information or contact us. You may also find this a helpful source of information for yourself, particularly the frequently asked questions (www.autscape.org/faq).
4. Most Autscape members dislike 'people first' terminology as in 'people with autism'. We prefer that you refer to us as 'autistic'. Our reasoning is that being autistic is a core part of who we are which cannot be separated from us as people. A more detailed explanation (not written by Autscape) is available at: tinyurl.com/personfirst (external site)
5. If you attend Autscape personally, you are welcome to write about your experiences and general information about the event in a post-Autscape article. However it is very important that we keep Autscape a safe, comfortable space for participants. I would draw your attention to the 'social interaction' section on our website (www.autscape.org/experience/autisticneeds).

During the conference we have rules to protect people who do not wish to interact and those who do not wish to be photographed. We also have strict rules about confidentiality. No photographs from Autscape are permitted to be published (including online) without the permission of every individual in the picture. We also ask that you do not write about individuals in a personally identifying way without their explicit consent.

We have a general rule that anyone wishing to speak to people at Autscape with the intention of gathering material for publication or research, should do so on an 'opt in' basis. Individuals should be invited to approach you, having already been made aware of your wish to use their interaction in publication or research. It is not acceptable to initiate approaches to individuals for these purposes.

We hope that you understand the need for these stringent rules to protect our participants, some of whom have strong needs in this area. That said, however, there are usually other participants who are quite happy to be photographed and to talk 'on the record' about their experiences and views.

Nevertheless, if your primary purpose in attending Autscape is journalism, we would ask that you discuss your intentions with us before registering.