

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY REPORT 2026



Introduction

On 2nd April 2026, the Department of Psychology, in collaboration with the Centre for Community Initiative (CCI), organized an awareness walk followed by an awareness program on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day at Rayburn College. The awareness walk was conducted in the morning from the college to Centenary Hall and back, with students and faculty members carrying placards and slogans to spread awareness about autism and promote acceptance and inclusion within the community. Following the walk, the awareness program was held at the auditorium of Rayburn College. The program was open to the public and witnessed an encouraging participation of approximately 200 attendees. In addition to the awareness program, a screening session for children was also organized by the Department and CCI team. The screening aimed to identify early signs of developmental concerns and create awareness among parents regarding the importance of early intervention.

Awareness Walk

On 2nd April 2026, all students were instructed to reach the college by 5:30 AM. The awareness walk began at exactly 6:00 AM from the college to Centenary Hall and followed a round-trip route. Students and faculty members actively participated in the walk, carrying flags, placards,



and slogans related to autism awareness. The participants walked together in an organized manner, drawing the attention of the public and creating visibility for the cause.

Throughout the walk, participants emphasized the importance of early intervention, acceptance, inclusion, and support for children with autism. Some students also distributed posters and notices informing the public about the awareness program and screening session that would be conducted later in the day. The walk served as an opportunity to educate the community about the challenges faced by individuals with autism and the role of families, schools, and society in supporting them.

The enthusiasm and unity shown by the participants reflected the department's commitment to promoting awareness and reducing stigma surrounding autism. After completing the round trip, the participants returned to the college, where refreshments were provided.

Program Proceedings

The event commenced with Ma'am Bliss serving as the host, who briefly outlined the flow of the program and set the tone for the session. This was followed by a warm welcome address delivered by the Head of the Department of Psychology, Ma'am Janet. She expressed her gratitude to the audience for their presence and emphasized the importance of spreading awareness about autism.



The first informative session was conducted by Miss Lily from CCI, who provided an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). She explained that autism is termed a “spectrum” because it encompasses a wide range of symptoms and abilities, varying from individual to individual. She also highlighted the concept of “virtual autism,” a non-clinical term used to describe autism-like symptoms observed in young children due to excessive

screen exposure. Referencing guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO), she stressed that screen time for young children should not exceed one hour per day.

The program included a special musical performance by Kimcy (2nd Semester), who sang “I’ll Stand By You,” adding an emotional and engaging element to the event.

Miss Hoihkim then elaborated on common symptoms of autism, including lack of body awareness. She demonstrated simple activities and strategies to improve body awareness, such as stretching arms, touching shoulders with both hands, turning movements, and coordinated actions like touching the nose. She emphasized the importance of early intervention, stating, “The earlier the support, the brighter the bloom,” particularly before the age of five when brain development is most rapid. Early support



helps improve communication skills, social interaction, behavior management, and long-term independence.

The session further explored the support ecosystem for children with autism. Speech therapy was highlighted as a tool to help children express themselves through words, pictures, or gestures. Occupational therapy was discussed in relation to improving fine motor skills and managing sensory sensitivities, with examples such as pinch-and-grasp exercises. Play-based therapy was also emphasized as a natural and joyful way for children to develop communication and bonding skills.



The role of parents was underscored as crucial in reinforcing structured routines and positive behaviors at home. Parents were encouraged to actively engage with children during play, assign meaning to their actions, and involve them in daily activities. Sensory Processing Disorder was also discussed, along with practical exercises like buttoning/unbuttoning and brushing.

Further, strategies for developing social skills were introduced, including teaching children to take turns, understand facial expressions using emotion charts, and engage with peer groups. Caregivers were advised to remain calm during challenging behaviors, maintain consistent communication, and foster a supportive family environment.



Activities were recommended to be brief, not exceeding ten minutes, to maintain effectiveness.

Educational and behavioral support strategies were also discussed. These included inclusive classrooms, individualized education plans, visual schedules, and the use of picture communication systems when verbal methods are insufficient. It was emphasized that each

child is unique and requires a tailored approach. Behavioral support techniques, such as structured reinforcement methods, were also highlighted.

Body awareness and sensory regulation activities were demonstrated, including pushing and pulling heavy objects, wall push-ups, controlled spinning, and walking in a straight line. Calming techniques such as deep pressure (tight hugs, blanket wraps) and breathing exercises were also suggested.

A key segment of the program focused on reducing screen dependency and encouraging real-world engagement. Suggested actions included minimizing screen time, increasing face-to-face interaction through play and storytelling, and promoting outdoor exploration. It was noted that such changes often lead to significant improvement in children's development.

Another special musical performance was presented by Chingngaihlon (2nd Semester), who sang “Imagine,” adding further depth and inspiration to the program.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the Director of CCI, Sir Pauzagin Tonsing, who highlighted the importance of autism-related courses and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Department, organizers, and especially the parents for their strength and dedication.

The program ended with refreshments, providing an opportunity for attendees to interact and reflect on the insights shared.

Screening Session

A screening session was conducted simultaneously while the awareness program was taking place. Registration for the screening had been made available one week prior to the event, and on-the-spot registration was also arranged for parents and children on the day of the program. A fee of Rs. 50 per child was charged for the screening.



The screening process was led by the CCI team along with some trained students who assisted in observing and guiding the children. Parents were given the opportunity to consult with the team regarding their concerns, while the children were screened in a supportive and comfortable environment. A total of 58 children were registered for the screening session, out of which 21 children were referred for further diagnosis to Dr. Suanlianmang Phaipi based on their screening results. Based on the screening findings, these children were advised to undergo further investigation and assessment in order to better understand their developmental needs. The session helped create awareness about the importance of identifying developmental issues at an early stage and seeking timely support when needed.

Conclusion

Overall, the awareness walk, awareness program, and screening session were informative, engaging, and impactful. The awareness walk was a great success, as it attracted public attention and helped spread important messages about autism throughout the community. The active participation of students, faculty members, parents, and the public reflected a strong sense of unity and support for the cause. The screening session also proved to be beneficial, as it helped identify children who may require further investigation and support. The program successfully highlighted the importance of early intervention, consistent support, and community awareness, reinforcing the message that while there is no cure for autism, timely and appropriate support can significantly enhance the quality of life and help every child reach their full potential.

