

Transitioning to adulthood: Autism and biological citizenship¹

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The concept of “Biological Citizens” is one that has increased in popularity in recent literature. Several considerations have been made of it in relation to enhancing our understandings of disability and impairment (Hughes, 2009), specific labels such as bi-polar affective disorder (Rose and Novas, 2005) and autism (Orsini, 2009). In this paper we further explore the concept of “Biological Citizens” and extend considerations of it to our understandings of autism. We draw on online discussion list exchanges by people with autism, parents of people with autism and professionals working with people with autism in exploring the crafting of communities based on biological and neurological differences. The concept of neurological difference has been a long standing issue for autistic advocates, who frequently draw on neurology as a way of warranting difference between people with autism and ‘neurological typicals’. In doing so clear arguments are presented which serve to position autism as a *difference* rather than a *deficit*. In this paper we seek to further explore the concept of biological citizenship for these online groups and what identification with this may mean for young people with autism transitioning to adulthood.

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