



Post-diagnosis advice for people diagnosed as autistic

Being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can bring a mix of emotions and questions. It's important to remember that everyone's journey with ASD is unique, and this diagnosis is just one part of who you are. This leaflet aims to provide you with useful information, support options, and resources to help you understand ASD better and navigate the path ahead with confidence and clarity. You are not alone in this journey, and there are many ways to seek help and embrace your strengths.



I've been diagnosed with ASD, what now?

- It might be helpful to give yourself some time to process the diagnosis.
- You may find it comforting to talk with family and friends, as they can gain a better understanding of your challenges and provide support.
- Consider connecting with others who have received an autism diagnosis and explore personal stories from individuals with autism.
- Learning more about autism could also be a valuable step in understanding the condition better.
- It might be worth reaching out to your college, university, or workplace to inquire about any available support resources.
- You could look into contacting local support groups and charities that focus on autism.
- It may also be beneficial to speak with your GP for further advice and guidance.



What should I know about autism and how it affects my life?

- Autism is not an illness or disease, so there is no specific treatment or cure. It is not something that requires a targeted treatment approach.
- Interventions are not always necessary for autism; instead, focusing on improving quality of life, rather than treating ASD itself, can lead to meaningful progress.
- For most individuals, ASD is not disabling, and the strengths associated with autism can be used to enhance well-being, success, and overall quality of life.
- While some environmental and societal challenges may be unavoidable, it is crucial for individuals with autism to identify strategies that promote resilience and help manage challenges, such as social and sensory fatigue. Learning how to recover from these challenges is key to avoiding burnout and stress.



- Resilience may be found in the strengths of neurodivergence, as autism often comes with unique qualities that promote well-being. In some cases, therapies may not be necessary, as personal interests and routines can provide natural sources of resilience and stability.
- If you are in employment or education, it's important to discuss your diagnosis with your employer or educational institution to request reasonable adjustments and support.



Are there any further assessments which may be useful to help with ASD and how can I access them?

- **A psychosocial needs assessment** is intended for individuals who experience significant impairments and struggle with basic social interactions and daily living tasks. Contact a healthcare provider, such as a GP or mental health professional, who can assess the need for this type of evaluation and refer you to the appropriate services.
- **Occupational therapy (OT) sensory assessments** are for individuals whose sensory profile is causing significant difficulties. Speak with a healthcare provider or occupational therapist, who can evaluate sensory challenges and recommend a sensory assessment if necessary. A referral may be required through your GP or a specialist.

In both cases, it's important to communicate any difficulties you're experiencing so that appropriate support and assessments can be arranged.



How can I get support if I experience mental health difficulties alongside my autism?

- Many individuals with autism experience co-occurring mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, and sleep disturbances. If this applies to you, consider asking your GP for a referral to have your mental health assessed further. It's important that any psychological therapies for these conditions be provided by therapists who are experienced in working with individuals with ASD.



What support can I get at work or in education if I am autistic?

- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Employers or educational institutions may provide accommodations, such as modified work schedules, quiet workspaces, or additional time for tasks and exams, to support individuals with ASD in performing their duties or studies effectively.
- **Specialised Support Services:** Some workplaces and educational settings offer specialised services like mentoring, counselling, or coaching to help individuals navigate social interactions and manage stress or sensory challenges.
- **Disability Advisors or Support Teams:** Many colleges, universities, and workplaces have designated advisors or teams who are trained to support individuals with disabilities, including ASD, and can help with navigating academic or work-related challenges.
- **Training for Staff or Educators:** Employers and educational institutions may offer training to staff or educators to help them better understand autism and provide a supportive environment for individuals with ASD.
- **Peer Support and Networks:** Some workplaces and educational settings offer opportunities to connect with others who have similar experiences, which can provide valuable social support and advice.
- **National Autistic Society (UK):** Offers detailed guidance on workplace adjustments for individuals with autism. www.autism.org.uk
- **ACAS:** Provides advice on reasonable adjustments in the workplace, including for neurodivergent individuals. www.acas.org.uk
- **Gov.uk:** The government website outlines the rights and reasonable adjustments that can be requested under the Equality Act for employees with disabilities, including autism. www.gov.uk
- **Access to Work:** In the UK, the "Access to Work" scheme provides funding for support in the workplace, such as adjustments to the physical environment or additional assistance with tasks. <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>



Where can I find more information and resources about ASD?

There are many resources available to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ranging from online materials to support networks, and connecting with healthcare professionals or organisations can provide valuable guidance and insight. Here are just a few recommendations:



Websites:

[The National Autistic Society](#)

Tony Attwood - Autistic educator - [Tony Attwood](#)

[National Institute for Health and Care Excellence -](#)

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg142>



Videos

[NHS - What is autism?](#)

[Demystifying autism with Chris packham](#)

[The Autistic Brain - Temple Grandin](#)

[ASD and Anxiety - Dr Luke Beardon](#)



Books

Exploring Depression and Beating the Blues by Tony Attwood and Michelle Garnett.

Autism Equality in the Workplace. Removing Barriers and Challenging Discrimination by Janine Booth

An Autistic Anthology: Neuro-Narratives of Mental Health Professionals by Nikita Shepherdson, Dr Vicky Jervis and Dr Marianne Trent



There are likely many podcasts available that could be helpful for learning more about ASD and hearing others' experiences.