

Autism Frequently Asked Questions

World Autism Awareness Week from 29 March to 4 April 2021

What is Autism? What is ASD?



Autism is a lifelong disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD, is the medical name for autism. Some people use

Autism Spectrum Condition, or ASC.

Some autistic people have average or above average intelligence. Some autistic people have a learning disability. Asperger's Syndrome is a diagnosis previously given to autistic people with average or above average intelligence.

It is not known exactly what causes autism though it is widely believed to be the result of an interaction between environmental and genetic factors. There is no cure. However, continued research has led to a clearer understanding and better treatments and therapies that can positively change the associated behaviours. 1 in 100 people are on the autism spectrum. There are approximately 700,000 autistic people in the UK.

What is the Autism 'Spectrum'?



Autism is known as a 'spectrum' disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience. Some autistic people need little support while others may need help from a carer every day.

What are the main signs of Autism in Adults?

Common signs include:

- finding it hard to understand what others are thinking or feeling
- getting very anxious about social situations, finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on your own
- seeming blunt, rude or not interested in others without meaning to
- finding it hard to say how you feel
- taking things very literally, for example, not understanding sarcasm or phrases like "break a leg"
- having the same routine every day and getting very anxious if it changes
- mood, tearfulness or a lack of motivation or interest in anything
- signs of low self-esteem, such as thinking you're not good enough
- talking about ending things or not wanting to go on.

Other signs might include:

- not understanding social "rules", such as not talking over people
- avoiding eye contact

- getting too close to other people, or getting very upset if someone touches or gets too close to you
- noticing small details, patterns, smells or sounds that others do not
- having a very keen interest in certain subjects
- liking to plan things carefully before doing them.

Who can help with Autism?

You should see a GP if you think you may be autistic. If you already see a health professional, such as another doctor or therapist, you could speak to them instead. Ask them if they think it would be a good idea to refer you for an autism assessment.

A diagnosis can help you get any extra support you might need, help you understand why you might find some things harder than other people, help you explain to others why you see and feel the world in a different way, get support at college, university or work or get some financial benefits.

What is an Autism Assessment?

An autism assessment is where specialists check if you are autistic. They may ask about any problems you are having, speak to someone who knew you as a child to find out about your childhood or read GP reports about other health problems you may have.

What is Autism Awareness Week?

World Autism Awareness Week is an opportunity to celebrate as well as encouraging awareness and education. It's a chance to speak up for the rights of all autistic people, and highlight the obstacles that many autistic people face. Autism Awareness Week aims to improve people's understanding of autism and help make the world friendlier to those who are affected by it.



Where can I get more information?

The NHS offer a [guide](#) to help if you or someone you care about is autistic or might be autistic.

Find resources and practical tips from the [National Autistic Society](#).

Watch a [TED talk](#) and hear about personal experiences and stories from autistic people.

Access information and resources from [Ambitious About Autism](#), a national charity for young people with Autism.

Listen to people's experiences of autism via [Healthtalk](#).

Take a look at information about autism from [Oldham Council](#).

Website: www.oldhamsafeguarding.org

Email: OldhamSafeguardingAdultsBoard@Oldham.gov.uk

