

The Autism Diagnosis Checklist Workbook

An interactive workbook for going
through the autism diagnosis
process

Name:

Pronouns:



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All About Autism

The Basics

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition commonly characterised by a variation in social interaction and social communication, focused interests, recurrent behaviours, and diverse sensory profiles.

Autistic people see and process the world in a different way to non-autistic people and this can be difficult as we are living in a world that is not built for us, which can be confusing and overwhelming.

Whilst we share a neurological difference, it is important to remember that autistic people are all different and will exhibit differences in how autism presents. For example, every autistic person will have a different sensory profile.

Diagnosis has generally been based upon the idea of a distressed male brain and that is one reason many people are realising later in life that they have had a missed diagnosis.

A Brief Overview of the Diagnosis Process

This section will be divided into six main sections:

1. I think I'm Autistic?
2. Speaking to the GP
3. Getting a referral
4. The initial interview
5. The Autism assessment
6. What comes next

I think I'm Autistic?

You may have been reading about autism and found that you identified with other autistic people. You may have autistic children and see similarities with them. Or you may have thought about autism for another reason and feel a connection that you want to explore.

In this guide, we hope to help you organise your thoughts and make sense when questioning if you may be autistic.

One important thing to mention is you may not want to obtain an official diagnosis. It can be expensive and time consuming. We believe self-diagnosis is valid and if you choose not to proceed you are still very welcome in the autistic community.

Speaking to the GP

If you decide to go through the official diagnostic process the first step will be to talk to your GP.

It would be useful to:

1. Tell them that you think you are autistic
2. Give them some reasons why you think this
3. Ask if you can have a referral for a diagnostic assessment.

Getting a referral

The referral process will likely be slightly different, depending on where you live and how the healthcare system works in your country. It is important to be aware of this.

The general process would look something like this:

1. GP refers you to a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist

Depending on funds/insurance this would either go through a public or private system.

Waitlists are generally longer in the public health system.

The Initial Interview

Before the diagnostic assessment there will be an initial interview in which a health care professional will get to know you. You are welcome to bring a support person with you.

This is where you will be asked about your experiences as a child and presently as an adult.

This is the first stage in the diagnosis process and any notes taken will be written into the final report.

The Autism Assessment

Assessments are used to determine whether an individual is Autistic, usually a person has to score a certain amount of points to receive a formal diagnosis.

It is important to note that different services use different diagnostic assessments. These assessments can include: self-report questionnaires, interviews, observation schedules and or practical task based assessments.

Depending on the type of assessment the length of time can vary from one hour to a full day.

Your practitioner can outline the details of the assessment for you.

What Comes Next

Once the assessment has been completed the health care practitioner will write a formal report, this will consist of both notes from the initial interview as well as scores from the diagnostic assessment.

You may be given the results of the assessment on the same day, however sometimes you will be given a follow up appointment to go through the results.

Often follow up appointments are scheduled a few months later when the practitioner has written an extensive diagnostic report.

Building Evidence

The next section of the guide is interactive and can help you collate all your evidence for the diagnosis.

This section includes:

1. My Autistic Traits Profile
2. Personal Experience Portfolio
3. Relevant Research Articles
4. A Diagnosis Checklist

My Autistic Traits Profile

This is a space for you to write down any Autistic traits you present with and examples of how you exhibit them:

My Autistic Traits (Cont..)

A large, empty white rounded rectangle with a thin grey border, occupying the majority of the page below the title. It is intended for the user to write or draw their autistic traits.

My Sensory Profile

Autistic people process the sensory environment in a different way. We find some things overwhelming and we want to avoid them. Some things may feel good and we seek them out. It is worth taking some time to think about what you like/dislike in terms of senses.

What things do you avoid?

What things do you seek?

My Childhood History

During the initial assessment you will be asked about your childhood history, this is often from a parent or guardian.

My chosen guardian is:

Their general thoughts of me as a child:

My Childhood History Notes

Under 5 -

Primary School -

My Childhood History Notes (Cont..)

Teenage Years:

Other points of interest:

My Teenage Experiences

This section is for you to write about your experiences as a teenager and young adult.

Secondary School -

My Teenage Experiences

Other notes:

Further Study (If applicable)

This space is for you to write notes about your experience with further study (if applicable).

Employment (If applicable)

This space is for you to write notes about your experience with employment (if applicable).

Friendships/Relationships

This space is for you to write notes about your experience with friendships and relationships.

My Daily Life

This space is for you to write notes about your day to day life. Do you have particular challenges?

Relevant Research Articles

Article Title:

Author:

Date:

Article Title:

Author:

Date:

Relevant Research Articles

Article Title:

Author:

Date:

Article Title:

Author:

Date:

The Diagnosis Checklist

Contact GP



My Autistic Traits Profile



Sensory Profile



Childhood History



Teenage Experience



Further Study



The Diagnosis Checklist

Employment



Friendships/Relationships



Daily Life



Research Articles



Initial Interview



Autism Assessment



Follow Up



Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Final Points to Remember

We hope this guide has been helpful to you.

If you have chosen not to continue with diagnosis, please remember self-diagnosis is valid.

If you continue with the diagnosis pathway, take time to go through the sections and try to include as much information as you can.

It helps to think of your life in different sections, as autism can present differently in different situations. For example, you may have found primary school easier to manage than secondary school.

The traits are useful to note but the impact is also important to talk about.

Your GP is your first point of contact.

You may have a long time to wait for assessment.

Private diagnosis can be an expensive process.

Social media is a good place to link in with others who may be questioning if they are autistic too. We recommend you link with them if you wish.

About the Authors



Victoria Ellen (@actually_aspling) is an Autistic social media blogger and advocate. She uses her passion for autism and psychology to both educate and inform her audience.



Gilly (@neurodivergent_researcher) is currently an autistic PhD student. She uses her lived experience as a contribution to reducing stigma towards autistic people.

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