

What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition, which means that it is something you are born with. Autism is a different way of thinking and being.

- Between one-to-two people in every 100 people are autistic.
- Every person with autism is different.
- In a recent survey the National Autistic Society found 47 % of autistic people fall into the severe anxiety category. Depression and other mental health diagnoses are also common for autistic people.
- Not every autistic person will need a formal assessment and/ or diagnosis. In our team we will only see people whose autism symptoms are impacting them negatively in some way e.g. contributing to low mood or social isolation.

Typical Features include difficulties with:-

- Maintaining or developing relationships
- Being able to read others' non-verbal behaviour
- Being able to think of things to say in conversation and knowing when to say it.
- Understanding and expression of emotions
- Dealing with change

Autistic people may be very sensitive or under sensitive to light, touch, texture, smell, taste, feeling of fullness, reaction to pain Autistic people may regulate their emotions via stimming (repetitive behaviour such as rocking or tapping)

What next

Understanding Autism, acting compassionately towards yourself and making changes to the way you view and care for yourself can help. If you are diagnosed, we offer an opportunity to learn more autism in a **Being Me group**. If you are interested in this option, please see the separate information sheet about opting in for post-diagnostic support.

There is no medication for autism. However, understanding more about yourself as an individual and improved understanding from friends and family can improve confidence and lead to improved wellbeing. It may also help other professionals who are working with you to understand how best to support you.

Strengths and talents associated with autism

Because of the nature of the autistic mind, autistic people often have an array of skills and talents that often work well in employment e.g. capacity to concentrate and focus deeply if interested, attention to detail and good memory, strong sense of right and wrong, loyalty and determination are often key personal values.