

The Diagnostic Process

What happens in an adult autism assessment?

There is no biological test for autism. Instead, autism is diagnosed through observation and interaction with an individual, in conjunction with background information relating to development, health and behaviours.

No two individuals' experience of autism is the same, and the specific requirements of the autism diagnostic process can therefore vary, depending on need. Similarly, the assessment process is different for children and adults.



Arranging an assessment

Adults generally come to Autism SA for an assessment either through self-referral, i.e., they make a referral themselves or one is made on their behalf by a partner or family member, or they are referred to us by a GP, nurse or allied health professional.

Assessments can only take place if the adult consents to the process in writing.

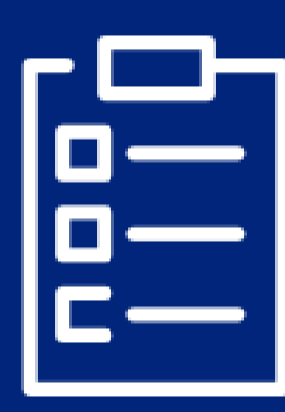
As part of the referral process you or your referrer will have been asked to complete a Diagnostic Assessment Referral form

Preparing for an autism assessment

After the Diagnostic Team receives the referral, you will be sent an 8-page questionnaire to complete. You will also be asked to give a similar questionnaire to a member of your family or someone who knows you very well.

You will also be asked to complete a standardised screening tool for Autism Spectrum Disorder. A consent form will also be sent to you.

An appointment for your assessment will be organised.



During an assessment, you will be asked questions about any signs and characteristics of autism that you might display. Other relevant factors may also be examined, such as any co-occurring conditions or whether you have previously received another diagnosis.

The diagnostic assessment process can for some people be difficult and intense, or feel intrusive. However, it is important to remember that it is about finding answers, and the Diagnostic Team will support you through any anxiety you may feel.

One of the main benefits of receiving an autism diagnosis is that it can help you better to understand some of your characteristics and behaviours, and can lead to positive outcomes without necessarily being a positive process in itself.

The interactions and observations made during the assessment, developmental history, plus information gathered during the referral process, are then considered by the Diagnostic Team in light of the criteria for diagnosing autism as set out in DSM-5.

The Diagnostic Team will write a report based on our findings, explaining the outcome and the reasons for it. This will be sent to you between 2 to 4 weeks after your child's assessment, and there is no additional charge for this service.

If you have been referred to Autism SA by another healthcare professional, we will also send them a copy of the report, with your permission. The report will be only be shared with people for whom you give express consent.



I have been diagnosed with autism — what next?

We will inform the My Pathways Team, and a Pathways Consultant will then make contact with you in order to arrange a Newly Diagnosed Support meeting where your ongoing needs and options in terms of next steps, support, available programs, NDIS funding, etc., will all be discussed.

This meeting will give you an opportunity to discuss your specific circumstances and needs, and the ways in which Autism SA can support you on your autism journey.



I have not been diagnosed with autism — what next?

If you or a person you care for has undergone an assessment but has been diagnosed as not being on the spectrum, there are likely to be a number of conflicting emotions.

You may feel relieved, but also disappointed or frustrated that you have not been able to get the answers you were looking for. You might also be confused as to what next steps you can take.

The Diagnostic Team may be able to make recommendations as to further assessments you could undertake, as well as support and services that might be available to you through other providers.



What else do I need to know?

- The time required for an assessment can vary, from between 1 to 2½ hours. You will be advised of the length of time it is anticipated will be needed in your appointment letter.
- The cost of a multi-disciplinary assessment for an adult over 18 at Autism SA is \$950.



Find out more

Call us on the Autism SA Infoline to find out more about getting a diagnostic assessment:

- 1300 AUTISM (1300 288 476)

Email My Pathways to request a Diagnostic Referral Form:

- mypathways@autismsa.org.au

