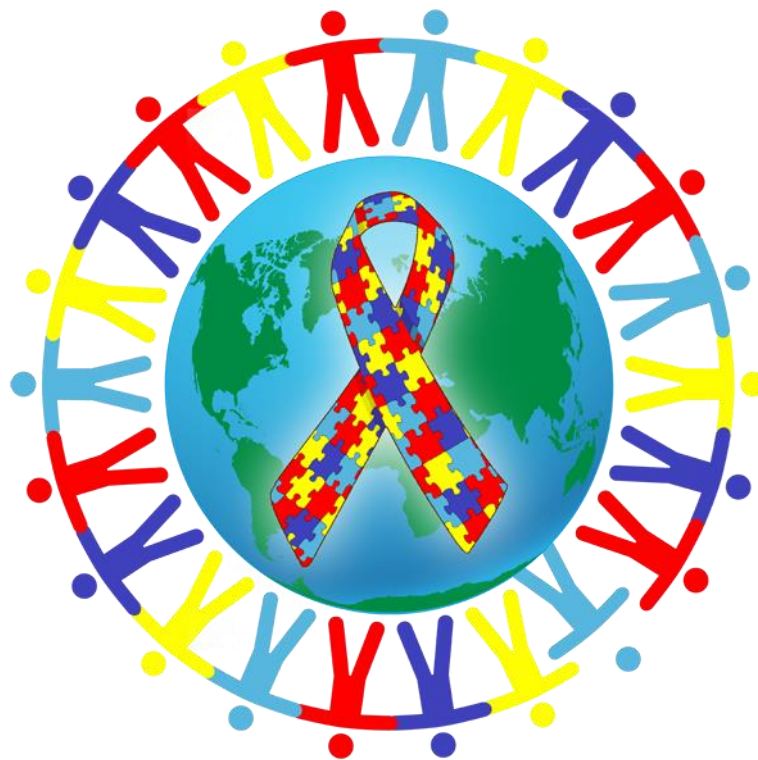


Behaviour and Neurodevelopmental Service
Mindsight Surrey CAMHS

Post-Diagnostic Pack for Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



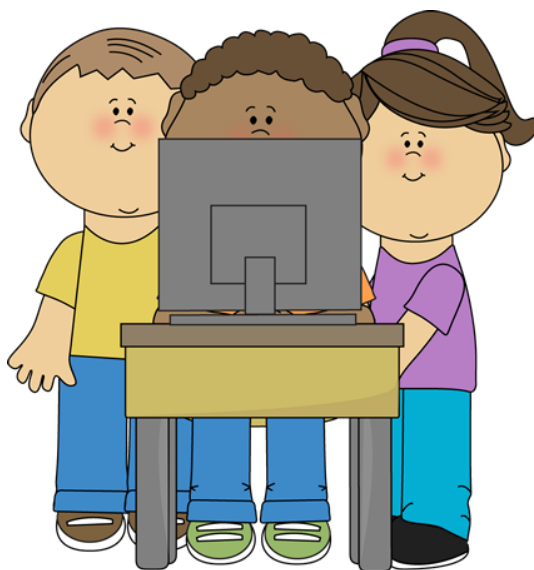
Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation
Trust



What is this pack for?

You have recently had your assessment with the Behavioural and Neuro-developmental Team. The team may have decided that you have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

There is lots of information about ASD in books and on the internet but this can be overwhelming. This pack will begin to explain what it means to have ASD, how it might affect you, and it will give tips and strategies to help you at home, and at school.



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

If you have Autism Spectrum Disorder, it means that there is a difference in the way that your brain has developed. You may have trouble understanding the world around you. You may also be very good at somethings, and people who do not have Autism might struggle with these things.



Please note: Research (Kenny et al., 2015) has found that people diagnosed with autism have told us that they prefer to be called “autistic”. For this reason, we refer to “autistic people” in this pack.



What causes ASD?

ASD is something you are born with. Scientists are still researching what the cause is, but they agree that it is probably caused by a mixture of different things that affect brain development.

What is it like to have ASD?

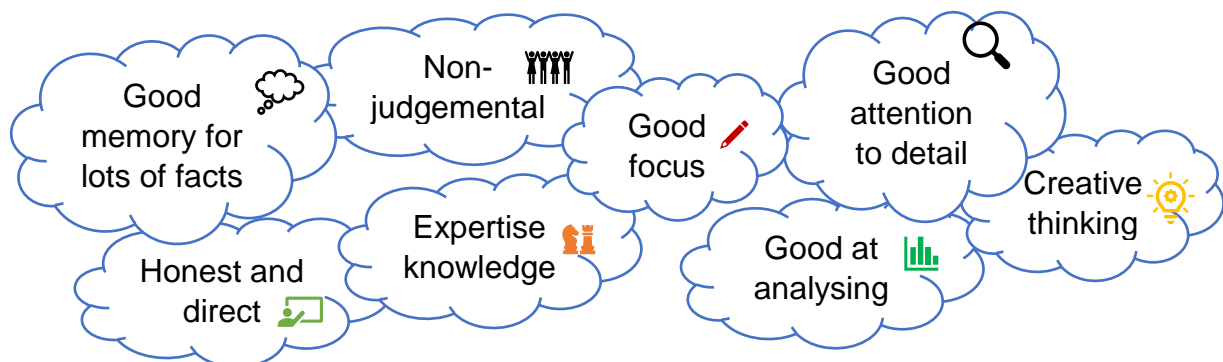
Everyone is different and so everyone with ASD is different. It may mean that you have trouble with:

- Talking and understanding the meaning of words 🗨️
- Understanding other people's thoughts and feelings 👤
- Expressing your own feelings 😞 ❓
- Coping with changes ↔️
- Making friends 👯
- Coping with loud noises or bright lights 🎧 🔊

Some people need very little support with the things that they find difficult, and some people need lots more help with learning how to do some everyday things.

The Positives of ASD

People with ASD have many **strengths** such as:



And **MANY MORE!**

You may also like to repeat things and have some things in your life to stay the same (e.g. meal times, bed times, or the route you take to school). You may have some things that really interest you, and you might like to spend a lot of time learning about these things (e.g. transport systems or Dr Who).





Autism: the positives



Understanding, embracing and celebrating different ways of thinking and doing can release the true power of the autistic mind. Here we look at the positive features of autism.



Attention to detail

- Thoroughness
- Accuracy



Methodical approach

- Analytical
- Spotting patterns, repetition



Deep focus

- Concentration
- Freedom from distraction



Novel approaches

- Unique thought processes
- Innovative solutions



Observational skills

- Listen, look, learn approach
- Fact finding



Creativity

- Distinctive imagination
- Expression of ideas



Absorb and retain facts

- Excellent long term memory
- Superior recall



Tenacity and resilience

- Determination
- Challenge opinions



Visual skills

- Visual learning and recall
- Detail-focussed



Accepting of difference

- Less likely to judge others
- May question norms



Expertise

- In-depth knowledge
- High level of skills



Integrity

- Honesty, loyalty
- Commitment

⚠ Remember

Every experience of autism is unique. No one person will identify with every positive feature of autism. We all have individual skills, attributes and characteristics that are as unique as our personalities – this is the power of neurodiversity.

Harriet Cannon
Disability Services, February 2018

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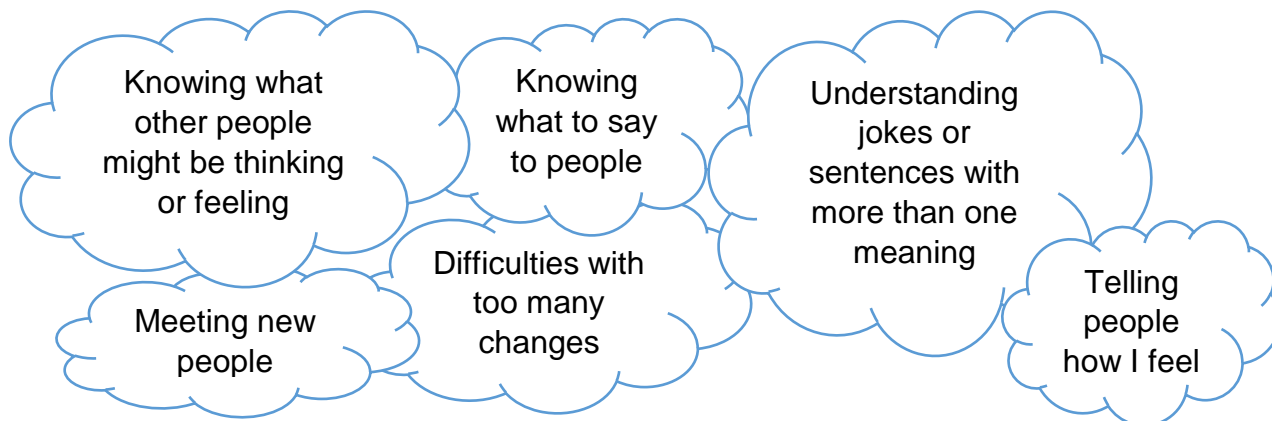


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Challenges & Going Forward

Autistic people with ASD might have some **challenges** such as:



People with ASD might also really like or really dislike:

- bright lights or colours
- loud noises
- certain smells
- hugging or being too close to people
- types of clothes or labels in clothes

Now that you have a diagnosis of ASD, teachers and parents/carers/carers will know where they can get advice from so that they can best support you with the things you might struggle with.

Telling others

You do not have to tell others that you have ASD if you do not want to.

If you choose to tell other people that you have ASD, you can tell them about the strengths and challenges that people with ASD might have.

Telling other people that you have ASD could help them to understand the things you might struggle with.

Looking to the future

Everyone has some things they are good at and things that they might struggle with.

An ASD diagnosis does not make you a different person.

You are still you!



How your parents/carers can help:

Your parents/carers know you very well and spend lots of time with you, so they may be able to help and support you.

They will try to be understanding and learn how to help, as they learn more about autism and what is best for you. They can help to teach you skills to help with communication, and social situations. They can also help you to manage changes, your emotions or worries.



You can think of learning these skills like filling a toolbox with helpful tools that you can use whenever you need them.



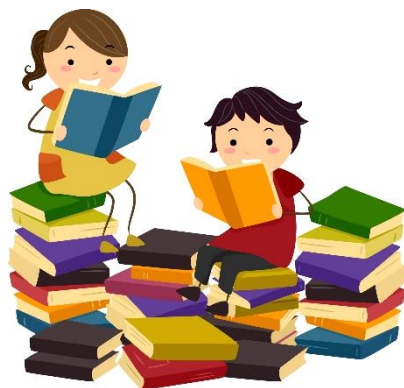
Your parent/carer may need help from other professionals in thinking about how to help you. This is okay. Your parent/carer has their own information pack. This pack tells them who they can talk to if they need more support.

How your school can help:

There are different types of schools. Some schools have a place where children go to get extra help with some of the things they find challenging. It will be run by a teacher called a SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). Other schools don't just have one place, they are specifically designed to always provide extra support for children's educational needs. Some schools have an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) who helps to teach children about emotions and social skills.

No matter which type of school you go to, your school will be able to help with the things you find challenging.

Your school might need to read through your ASD report from CAMHS to learn what you are good at and what you find challenging.



Your school will then be able to create a teaching and learning plan to help you to get the most out of your learning. You will sometimes hear this being referred to as an IEP (Individual Education Plan).

In some cases, your school and your parents/carers might ask for more resources from the council, so that they are able to provide extra support to help with your learning. You will sometimes hear this being referred to as an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan).

These plans are designed to help make things easier for you and your learning.

Remember: If you ever feel worried, upset or confused about something, you can always tell your parents/carers or teachers how you feel. They will be able to help.



Helpful Tips and Strategies



Below are some tips and strategies to help with things that you may find difficult. Everybody is different, so some of these tips may not work for you and that is ok, but they may give you some ideas.

Your parent/carer has been given a resource pack containing more information on tips and strategies that might help you.

General Advice

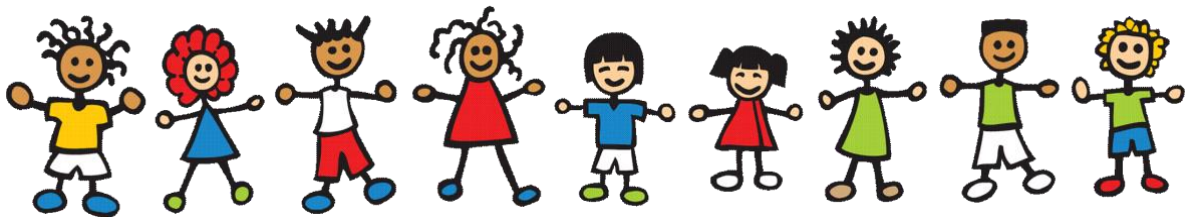
- **Break big tasks into smaller chunks** – e.g., do one thing at a time, then move on
- **Ask Questions** – if something doesn't make sense to you, if you don't understand why someone is cross or if you are not sure what someone is saying or asking you to do, don't be afraid to ask!
- **Pictures and visuals** can help **to remind you what is happening next** or what you need to do. Your parents/carers or teachers could help you to make a **visual schedule**.
- **Use words, signals or pictures to tell people how you are feeling.** If the people around you know how you are feeling, they will be better able to help.
- **Your own coping skills.** Think of things that may help you feel better when you are sad or angry. These could be things such as listening to your favourite music, playing a game, holding a favourite toy or hugging someone.

It is important for you to know what you find difficult and what things can help. Then you can tell others how they can help you. For example:

- You may need **more time to complete tasks** than others.
- You may need to ask for **more thinking time before you answer a question**.
- It may help to **have a warning before an activity finishes** or before you have to do something else.
- You might need to **take a break to rest** between activities.
- Sometimes decision making can be difficult. **It may be easier to make decisions when you are only given 2 options to choose from.**
- It might be difficult to concentrate when there are lots of distractions. **You might need an adult to help reduce distractions.**



THE END



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