

For Adults

Autism Support Recommendations

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SECTION 1

Mental Health Support

It can be helpful to have a plan in place to support you through difficult times. Mind has a guide that explains how you can plan for a crisis, which could help you think about what you could do if you start to feel in crisis in the future, and what kind of support you think you might want.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/planning-for-a-crisis/>

These services offer confidential support from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. These services will only share your information if they are very worried about you or think you are in immediate danger.

Childline

If you're under 19, you can call 0800 1111. The number will not appear on your phone bill.

Shout Crisis Text Line

Text "SHOUT" to 85258. Text "YM" if you're under 19.

Samaritans

Email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours.

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Call 0800 58 58 58. Visit <https://thecalmzone.net>. Provides listening services, information and support for anyone who needs to talk, including a web chat.

Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L.)

Call 0800 132 737. Text "HELP" plus your message to 81066. Visit <https://callhelpline.org.uk>. Provides information and support for people experiencing a mental health problem in Wales.

Hub of Hope

Visit <https://hubofhope.co.uk>. UK-wide mental health service database. Let's you search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private, and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of support.

Befrienders Worldwide

Visit <https://befrienders.org>. Worldwide directory of emotional support helplines.

Further crisis services

Please visit Mind's webpage on Crisis services and planning for a crisis for further mental health crisis services: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/useful-contacts/>

Domestic Abuse and Autism Specific Resources

Domestic Abuse

There is support available if you are experiencing domestic abuse:

- **Women** can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 for free, any time, day or night. The staff will offer confidential, non-judgemental information and support.
- **Men** can call the Men's Advice Line on 0808 8010 327 (Monday to Friday 10am to 8pm) for non-judgemental support, or call ManKind on 0182 334 244 (Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm).
- If you identify as **LGBT+** you can call Galop on 0800 999 5428 for emotional and practical support.
- **Anyone** can call Karma Nirvana on 0800 5999 247 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) for support around forced marriages or honour crimes. You can also call 0207 008 0151 to speak to the GOV.UK Forced Marriage Unit.

Autism Specific Resources

In addition to the knowledge you may already have about autism, it would be helpful for you to access positive resources which aim to empower neurodivergent individuals. This would support you to construct a positive self-image and improve your self-esteem.

Some books that may be useful or interesting include:

- 'Unmasking Autism' by Devon Price
- 'Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity' by Steve Silberman
- 'We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation' by Eric Garcia
- 'Avoiding Anxiety in Autistic Adults: A Guide to Autistic Wellbeing' by Dr. Luke Beardon
- 'Autism and Asperger Syndrome in Adults' by Dr. Luke Beardon
- 'An Adult with an Autism Diagnosis: A Guide for the Newly Diagnosed' by Gillian Drew

Interesting podcasts include:

- 'The Late Discovered Club with Catherine Asta'
- 'Late to the Party'
- 'The Neurodivergent Experience'

Psychological therapy

You may want to consider whether accessing psychological therapy might be helpful. It can be difficult for some autistic adults, especially when diagnosed in adulthood, to cope and come to terms with their history of having undiagnosed differences. You could ask your GP about the services available, or your employer may also be able to help. Oakdale would also be happy to provide tailored support, if you are interested in this please call us to find out more.

More resources and sleep

Autism Specific Resources — continued

- The National Autistic Society is a very helpful starting point following a diagnosis. The National Autistic Society aims to build a space to offer support and information about autism and it includes information on training and current campaigns to raise awareness around autism and build an accepting community. It also offers information on residential services, education services, employment and support in the community: <https://www.autism.org.uk/>
- As part of the National Autistic Society, Autism Central is a peer education programme that is designed for families and carers to develop their knowledge and understanding of autism. You, and your family and friends may want to look into this to help you support you: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/autism-central>
- Autism Village (App) is an app that provides information about local autism friendly services and places worldwide: <https://about.autismvillage.com/app/>

YouTube has some videos created by autistic people that may be useful.

- Autism is a difference, not a disorder by Katie Forbes: TEDxAberdeen **Trigger Warning: suicidal references** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgOIGv2Vvvs>
- TED talk; 'The Benefits of Autism' by Zachary Betz, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPyPIAHJpxI>
- 'Copy and paste' Hidden Asperger's: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY2ctCuTWPw>
- Invisible Diversity: A Story Of Undiagnosed Autism; Carrie Beckwith-Fellows - TEDxVilnius <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF2dhWWUyQ4>

Sleep

Autistic people can often have trouble sleeping. There are a range of reasons for this including difficulties with relaxing or winding down and irregular melatonin levels.

Here is a helpful guide from the National Autistic Society: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/physical-health/sleep/autistic-adults>

Eating and Sensory Processing

Eating

Around 1.25 million people in the UK experience disordered eating, many in secret. They are all ages, genders and backgrounds – eating disorders do not discriminate. Eating disorders include bulimia, binge eating, avoidant / restrictive food intake (ARFID), other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED), and anorexia.

Support is available from Beat: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 801 0677

Email: help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Sensory Processing

Some people find that wearing sunglasses and tag-free clothing, as well as sniffing a smell you like when other smells become overwhelming, can help. Many people with sensory differences prefer wearing noise-cancelling headphones to help with noise sensitivities.

If you suspect that sensory differences are affecting any aspect of your life (e.g. self-care), keep a record of your reaction to things that you have trouble tolerating (e.g. types of soap, washing powder, or different textures of clothing or food). This can help you to adapt your routines to something you are more comfortable with.

It may be that the sensation of water on your skin from a shower is uncomfortable, so you could try bathing instead or use a preferred fabric for washing, such as a sponge or flannel. Perhaps the smell of a particular soap, shower gel or shampoo is an issue, so you could try unscented or hypoallergenic alternatives. Check that the washing powder or fabric conditioner you are using is not irritating your skin and try alternatives for sensitive skin if necessary.

Helpful books on sensory processing include:

- 'Sensory Issues for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder' by Diarmuid Heffernan & Dr Luke Beardon
- 'Looking After Your Autistic Self: A Personalised Self-Care Approach to Managing Your Sensory and Emotional Wellbeing' by Niamh Garvey

Employment and Workplace Support

- You may want to learn more about 'Business Disability' and how workplaces can strive to provide inclusion to all employees. On the Business Disability Forum website, there are different podcasts/webinars that are free to access. All previous webinars are available on YouTube and podcast streaming services.
- 'Changing the image of disability' is a campaign which aims to increase representation. <https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/changing-the-image-of-disability/>
- SCOPE provides practical information and support, including the support to work programme <https://www.scope.org.uk/employment-services/support-to-work/>
- There is information on the Department for Work and Pensions government website about the welfare support and benefits which are available to individuals whose working lives are impacted by neurodiversity: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>
- The Access to Work Scheme provides funding for reasonable adjustments in the workplace to help autistic people maintain employment. <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>
- Employment resources: <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment>
- Support at work - A guide for autistic people <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/employment/support-at-work/autistic-adults>
- Employment: reasonable adjustments for employers and employees (video - PDF transcript available) <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/employment-adjustments-tips>
- A selection of articles and opinion pieces written by professionals and autistic people regarding professional practice: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice>
- Autistica have an informative webinar about "Levelling the employment playing field" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUZYC9BdKxZw>
- The Citizens Advice Bureau can provide more information about protecting against and challenging possible discrimination at work [https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/discrimination-at-work/)



SECTION 8

Education / University

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is support to cover the study-related costs you may have because of a mental health problem, long-term illness or any other disability; this can include autism, ADHD, or a specific learning need such as dyslexia. This can be on its own or in addition to any student finance you receive. The type of support and how much you will get depends on your individual needs – not your household income.

More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

The National Autistic Society has several web pages to help support autistic people who are starting or leaving university.

- Starting University <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transitions/scotland/starting-college-or-university>
- Leaving University <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transitions/scotland/leaving-college-or-university>
- Reasonable adjustments disability passports
https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Reasonable_Adjustments_Disability_Passports_2019_WIP5%20%28logo%20change%29%20secure.pdf
- Autistica have an informative webinar about "Managing worries around settling into University"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0FPGTJpe98>

Some individuals may struggle to retain information and find it hard to select relevant information when studying at university or when working. Dekko Comics creates fun, engaging comic strips that transform university research into colourful, accessible presentations that enable creative study skills. You can subscribe to them online to gain access to over one hundred existing school-subject comics. The comics can also be found on a online-digital format: <https://dekkocomics.com/dekko-for-free>

Student Minds works with students to develop their knowledge, confidence and skills to look after their own mental health. They have resources on challenges that student life can bring, including starting university, exam stress and mental wellbeing. They also offer peer support programmes and support finding on campus services: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>

Financial support and intersectionality

Financial Support

- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** can help those aged 16 and over with extra living costs. People who have additional needs, and have difficulty doing certain everyday tasks or getting around because of their needs are eligible to apply. For more information about how to apply, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/pip>
- **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** You can apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you have a disability or health condition that affects how much you can work. ESA gives you money to help with living costs if you're unable to work and/or support to get back into work if you're able to. You can apply if you're employed, self-employed or unemployed. <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance>
- **Universal Credit** is a monthly payment to help with your living costs. You may be able to get it if you're on a low income or out of work. You might get an extra amount of Universal Credit if you have a health condition or disability that limits how much work you can do. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) refers to this as your 'capability to work'. <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-disability-universal-credit>
- For more advice about funding, visit: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/benefits-and-money/benefits/benefits-you-can-get/benefits-for-autistic-adults>
- The Citizens Advice Bureau can offer support with these applications <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Intersectionality and LGBTQ+

- LGBT Foundation has an autistic and neurodivergent programme that creates accessible social spaces for autistic and neurodivergent LGBTQ+ people. They currently run one online event on the first Friday of every month from 6-8pm via Discord. <https://lgbt.foundation/autistic-and-neurodivergent-programme/> — you can sign up using the registration form linked from their programme page.
- Twainbow is an organisation for LGBTQ+ people who are also autistic. It has multiple resources, including a Facebook group that helps autistic and LGBTQ+ people connect with and empower each other. <https://www.twainbow.org/resources/>

Communities, addiction and burnout

Autism and Minoritised Ethnic Groups

The 700,000 or more autistic people in the UK come from all backgrounds, identities and cultures. There is a lack of research about the experience of minoritised ethnic groups. This means it can be even harder for the autistic people from these communities to get the support they need.

It is important to understand the experiences of autistic people and families from different backgrounds and cultures, to help create a society that works for all autistic people. For further advice and support see: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/autism-and-bame-people>

Addiction

Both autistic people and non-autistic people experience addiction, but the reasons for their addiction may be different. More information regarding addiction can be found on the National Autistic Society website: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/addiction>

Autistic Burnout

Autistic burnout is considered long term (typically 3+ months) of feeling exhausted and overstimulated, as a result of chronic life stress and a mismatch of expectations and abilities without adequate support.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/autistic-burnout>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/health-and-wellbeing/physical-mental-wellbeing/autistic-burnout>

More questions?

If you have any questions about these recommendations, please get in touch — we are happy to help.

Contact Us ↗