

*Embracing  
Autism*



# Moving on (after diagnosis) – What next?

## Post Diagnosis Workshop 5



# Objective of the Workshop

- Providing you with a 'tool kit' to enable you to move forward
- Telling people about your diagnosis
  - Positives and negatives
  - Things to consider
- Support available for you
- Support for partners and families
- Employment advice
  - Disclosing your diagnosis at work
  - Advice for employers



# Telling People about your Diagnosis



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Telling people you have autism can be a daunting task. It has to be the right time for each individual – it can take some time to accept the diagnosis before you feel ready to tell people. You may worry that people will judge you or reject you. Here are some tips to help with telling people you have autism:

- Consider who you want to tell. You can choose who you disclose your diagnosis to, or you may choose not to tell certain people about your diagnosis.
- It may be helpful to make a list of the advantages and disadvantages



# Positives & Negatives



## Positives could be:

- People who know about your diagnosis may be more understanding or empathetic to difficulties you face.
- People may understand you better once they know you have autism
- You don't have to try to hide your autism
- Anything else?



# Positives & Negatives



## **Negatives could be:**

- You may worry you will be met with lack of understanding or prejudice from others
- It may be difficult to fit in with others
- People may ask inappropriate or insensitive questions
- Anything else?



# Things to Consider



- If you choose to tell someone about your diagnosis you may wish to consider who you tell and how you will tell them.
- It can be helpful to explain what autism spectrum condition is and how it affects you individually. Give the person an opportunity to ask questions to help them understand the condition.  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>



- Consider where and when you will tell the person. A quiet private space, at a time that you are both free and have time to discuss in full is best.



- Make it clear whether this is confidential information and who you are happy to know you have autism. If you do not want the person to tell anyone else, you need to explain this to them.
- If you are not sure about whether to tell someone new you have autism, you could ask for advice from a family member or friend who already knows you have autism.





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- If it doesn't go well, or the person has a negative reaction, try not to take it personally. They may not know about the condition or may have misconceptions about autism.
- Focus on what you like about yourself, and positive reactions you have had. Just because one person had a negative reaction it does not mean that everyone will.



# Support Available to You



- Coaching and Mentoring
  - Aspiration, OAADSS website [www.oaadss.org.uk/](http://www.oaadss.org.uk/)
- Benefits Advice
  - BBMH, Citizen's Advice, and Oxfordshire Welfare Rights
- Social Groups
  - Aspiration Café/Cinema groups, Oxford Aspies, Banbury Aspies
- Housing Support
  - Connection Support, Oxfordshire Mind Housing
- Adult Social Care
  - Care Act Needs Assessment

Refer to handout for more information



# Care Act Needs Assessment



- If you have support needs that require on-going weekly support, you may be entitled to a personal budget to pay for support.
- You will need to undergo a Social Care Act needs assessment with the local authority. A social worker will talk to you about your support needs and assess your eligibility for a personal budget.
- This can be arranged by contacting Oxfordshire's Social and Health Care Team on 0345 050 7666.
- For more information about the Care Act eligibility and to request an assessment visit <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/getting-needs-assessment/members-public>



# Support for Family and Partners



- **Acceptance**

- Supporting your partner to acknowledge that your condition is lifelong can often be difficult at times. However, coping strategies can help which makes daily life less stressful for both you and your partner. For example, routines and agreed timetables can help, as can looking at how you communicate.



# Support for Family and Partners



- **Behaviour and Relationships Strategies**

- Your partner may have difficulties understanding you sometimes. It can help to talk to your partner about any relationship problems you are having and explain your feelings in a calm, reasoned way using clear language.

Oxfordshire Relate Centre OX4 1EH 01865 242 960

<https://www.relate.org.uk/>



# Support for Family and Partners



- **Talking to Someone who Understands**

- Autism is a complex condition, and it is important that support is informed and understanding of these complexities. There are family groups in the area, and these can be very supportive. The benefit in talking to someone who understands should not be under-estimated.



# Support for Family and Partners

Many autistic adults have partners and families. Some people manage relationships and family life without difficulties while others may need support at times.



A support group for parents

- [www.parents-talking-aspergers.co.uk](http://www.parents-talking-aspergers.co.uk)
- A friendly charity run by parents for parents/carers who are raising children/young adults on the spectrum
  - <http://oasionline.org.uk/>
- Information, advice and support for adults caring for adults in Oxfordshire
  - [www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk)
- Different Together is a safe and supportive community for the **partners** of people with autism
  - <https://different-together.co.uk/>



# Employment Advice



- The work environment can be a difficult place at times, especially if you have autism. There are lots of unwritten rules and office politics that may not be clear.
- The National Autistic Society has advice on how to cope with interaction at work:  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx>



# Employment Advice



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You may be thinking about whether your employer and colleagues will understand and react to your disclosure in a positive way.

## **Consider the benefits and drawbacks**

### **The benefits of disclosing:**

- Employers are legally obliged to support you and make reasonable adjustments.
- There may be better understanding from your colleagues and manager.
- You won't have to try and hide that you are autistic.
- Anything else?



# Employment Advice



## The drawbacks of disclosing may include

- You may be met with a lack of understanding and adjustments.
- You may be worried about prejudice from your employer.
- You may find it more difficult to fit in with your colleagues.
- Anything else?



# Employment Advice



## To help you decide

- Try drawing up a list of benefits and drawbacks, ask a friend, colleague or adviser to help.
- List your strengths and potential difficulties.
- Identify what adjustments could be made and discuss these with your employer, you could also let them know what you do and don't want your colleagues to know.



# Advice for Employers



- Reasonable adjustments in the workplace:  
Small adjustments which may help
- <https://youtu.be/bcMMW8Yjod8>



# Advice for Employers



**A guide has been produced by  
The National Autistic Society that aims to-**

- raise awareness of autism among employers
  - outline the benefits of employing someone with autism
  - help employers understand the adjustments that someone with autism may need in the workplace
  - inform employers about their duties to people with autism under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
  - provide information about the support programmes available to both employers and people with autism
  - signpost employers to further information and advice on autism.
- **Link to guide:** <https://www.autism.org.uk/~media/nas/documents/get-involved/campaign%20for%20change/employing%20people%20with%20autism-northern-ireland.ashx?la=en-gb>



# Moving forward with life with autism



- Accepting that your brain processes and responds to information differently to some other (neuro-typical) people
- Accepting your difference and stopping trying to be someone you aren't (masking-which is exhausting)
- Avoiding situations you don't need to go to/do if it is difficult and not really necessary
- Finding coping strategies for situations/events you can't avoid
- **Prioritising de-stressing time for yourself**
- Making reasonable adjustments where helpful (or asking for them)
- Recognising and using your strengths as much as possible (builds confidence and self-esteem)

**BEING KIND TO YOURSELF**



# Acknowledgements and further information

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<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

<http://www.oxfordshirewelfarerights.btck.co.uk/>

<https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/what-we-do/benefits-advice>

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/adult-social-care/working-and-learning/oxfordshire-employment/>

Autism A very short Introduction Uta Frith OUP

The facts: Autism and Asperger Syndrome Simon Baron-Cohen OUP

Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals and Asperger Syndrome and High functioning Autism Temple Grandin and Kate Duffy APC

Survival strategies for People on the Autism Strategy Marc Fleisher Jessica Kingsley

Asperger Syndrome and Employment Sarah Hendrickx Jessica Kingsley

Love, Sex and Long-term Relationships Sarah Hendrickx Jessica Kingsley

