

GETTING ASSESSED · 3.4

What Happens at an Autism Assessment

What an adult or paediatric autism assessment actually involves: the structure, the ADOS-2 and ADI-R, what the clinician asks about, and what happens after.

FOR

Adults and parents preparing for assessment

AUDIENCE AGE

All ages

REVIEWED

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PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

What Happens at an Autism Assessment

What the assessment covers

- **Paperwork in advance.** A clinical history form, sensory and social communication questionnaires, and a request for developmental information. Schools and parents are part of the standard for paediatric assessment.
- **Two to three sessions in clinic.** Adult assessment usually totals four to six hours of clinical time. The structure covers developmental history, direct observation, current functioning, sensory profile, and differential or co-occurring conditions.
- **Gold-standard tools are used.** The ADOS-2 for direct observation, the ADI-R for developmental history with a parent or family informant. Both are international gold standards in autism diagnosis.

What the clinician is doing

- **Looking at a lifelong pattern.** The developmental history is the diagnostic anchor. Old school reports, parental memories and childhood photos all help.
- **Observing social communication directly.** The ADOS-2 is a structured set of activities and conversations. There is no pass or fail; the clinician is looking at how social communication is organised, not at academic success.
- **Mapping the sensory profile.** The full eight senses, including the internal ones. Concrete examples help: which lighting bothers you, which textures, which body signals you pick up clearly and which you do not.
- **Looking at the whole picture.** Anxiety, depression, ADHD, sleep, eating, trauma and physical health are all common alongside autism. A good assessment considers everything together.
- **Considering myths that may have got in the way.** Empathy, eye contact, marriage and employment do not rule out autism. The clinical picture is more nuanced than the stereotypes.

How we can help

- **Adult and paediatric autism assessment to the NICE standard.** NeuroFX uses the ADOS-2 and the ADI-R alongside a full clinical interview for adults and for children aged 6 and upwards.
- **Combined ADHD and autism assessment.** Where a dual picture is suspected, NeuroFX assesses both conditions in the same pathway rather than running them in sequence.
- **Bring developmental history.** Old school reports, parental or sibling memories, childhood photos. The more concrete the evidence, the more complete the clinical picture.
- **Post-diagnostic support is part of the package.** Reports cover practical next steps as well as the diagnosis: sensory and environmental adjustments, workplace or school adaptations, signposting to autistic-led peer networks.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

If you are recognising the pattern in yourself or your child, NHS routes start with GP referral. NeuroFX offers private autism assessment for adults and for children aged 6 and upwards. Seek same-day help via 111 (or 999 in an emergency) for any mental health crisis.

SOURCES

NICE CG142; NICE CG128; Lord et al. 2012 (ADOS-2); Rutter et al. 2003 (ADI-R); DSM-5-TR

NEXT STEPS**Speak to NeuroFX**

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
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