



## Understanding Autism in Adulthood: Seeking a Diagnosis

While autism is typically diagnosed in childhood, growing awareness has led to more adults receiving a diagnosis later in life. However, many adults remain undiagnosed due to factors like unrecognized behaviors, reliance on coping strategies, or the high cost of a formal diagnosis.

**Why Many Adults Are Undiagnosed** Some adults may not recognize their behaviors as linked to autism and instead develop coping strategies. For others, the cost of diagnosis or limited access to specialists may prevent them from seeking help. While many undiagnosed adults live fulfilling lives, others struggle with relationships, careers, and isolation, making a diagnosis a source of clarity and relief.

**How to Seek an Autism Diagnosis as an Adult** To determine if you are autistic, seek a diagnosis from a trained clinician, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. You can start by visiting your primary care physician or checking with local autism centers. Insurance providers may also help you find covered options for autism evaluations.

**What to Expect During Adult Autism Testing** Adult autism testing typically involves multiple sessions, including discussions about your history, cognitive assessments, and questionnaires. There are no physical exams or blood tests involved. Diagnosing autism in adults can be more challenging, as clinicians often ask about early childhood development, which some adults may not remember.

### Benefits of an Adult ASD Diagnosis

A formal autism diagnosis can provide access to services and protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), such as accommodations at work or school and protection from discrimination. A diagnosis may also qualify you for vocational support programs, including job placement and counseling. Additionally, understanding that behaviors are linked to autism can provide emotional relief and clarity about strengths and challenges.

### When to Seek a Formal Diagnosis

Consider pursuing a diagnosis if you need services specifically available to those with autism, if you want access to essential disability services or legal protections, or if your insurance or funding sources require a formal diagnosis for coverage.

Getting an autism diagnosis as an adult can be a transformative step toward understanding oneself more deeply and accessing crucial support that can significantly enhance quality of life. By recognizing the signs of autism and seeking the appropriate diagnosis, adults can gain clarity, find the help they need, and live fuller, more fulfilling, and satisfying lives.

**Your BHS plan may include coverage for certain conditions and behavioral symptoms associated with autism. For information on available resources and treatment options, call BHS at 800-245-1150.**



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