

Signs of autism in adults - the 8 unique personality traits

AUTISM looks different in children and adults and it's not uncommon to be diagnosed with the condition in later life rather than as a child.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that impacts how you communicate and interact with others. Autism is not an illness or disease, being autistic simply means your brain works in a different way from the majority of people. A huge one in 100 people are on the autistic spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK, according to the National Autistic Society. Even though you are born with autism, some people go undiagnosed until they are adults.

Autism is a spectrum and some people have the disability in a very minor form and it's more discrete, so these people may not be diagnosed until later in life.

Autism means you communicate differently from others and might find it hard to understand how other people think or feel. Being autistic can make it tricky to understand information. You may get upset about unfamiliar situations and social events, or dislike change.

Autistic adults may also find it difficult to understand social rules, such as not talking over people. They may avoid eye contact or not understand personal space or get upset if someone gets too close or touches them.

People with autism are often great at noticing small details, patterns, smells or sounds that others do not and they tend to have a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities. Autism can be different in men and women, with women considered better at 'masking' the disability.

The NHS website points out that autistic women may be quieter, may hide their feelings and may appear to cope better with social situations. This means it can be trickier to get an autism diagnosis if you're a woman.

Autistic studies suggest that there are three times as many males as females but this could be because many autistic women get no or a late diagnosis and have had difficulty getting the support they need.

Females have characteristics that don't fit with the profile and often don't get diagnosed.

Female autism is often camouflaged,

traits in girls are often underreported by teachers so fewer girls are diagnosed. Alternatively, it could be the case that a range of biological and environmental factors may simply mean men have a higher prevalence of autism.

Autism is different in children and adults. In adults the main symptoms are:

- finding it hard to understand what others are thinking or feeling
- getting very anxious about social situations
- finding it hard to make friends or prefer to be on your own
- seeming blunt, rude or not interested in others without meaning to
- finding it hard to say how you feel
- taking things very literally – for example, you may not understand sarcasm or phrases like “break a leg”
- having the same routine every day and getting very anxious if it changes
- liking to plan things carefully before doing them