

Autism Hub

West Cheshire



Processing an autism diagnosis as an adult

Why get a diagnosis?

- “It can be extremely powerful and important identification in terms of understanding of the autistic person, and a huge help in explaining what various support mechanisms might be useful (and which are not)”. (Beardon, cited in Hewitson, year 2018, p. 27)
- It can be a signpost to strategies, services and support.



The autistic voice



“Getting the right label was one of the best things that has ever happened to me...frankly I prefer the official label...the right ‘label’ is simply a way of describing someone which allows people to understand their differences better.”

(Sainsbury, 2000, pp30-31).

Label or signpost?

- *“Signposts do something more than labels they help people find their way on their journey”*

(Collins, 2019, p. 9)



What now?

- “following identification or diagnosis of autism the question often asked by autistic adults is ‘where to from here?’”

(Hearst 2019, cited in crane et al., 2020, n.p.).



The autistic voice



“ A diagnosis of autism does change the way other people can view you, even those closest to you. But it can also change the way you view yourself, give you a starting point to work out how to make things better, and build a positive future for yourself.”
(Williams, 2019, p. 18).

Discuss...

Mixed feelings:



“It was very strange and quite an emotional experience to see it written down for the first time” (Collins, 2019, p.9).

Discuss...

Positive emotions:

“Suddenly there was an explanation...the relief was palpable”
(Heppel, 2019, p. 22)



Negative emotions:

"THE DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS ITSELF OFTEN HAS A FOCUS ON NEGATIVE, RATHER THAN POSITIVE ASPECTS OF AUTISM". (CRANE ET AL. (2018)

THE PROCESS CAN BE CHALLENGING, BRINGING BACK MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES. THERE IS OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TIME TO PROCESS (CRANE ET AL. 2018)



The autistic voice

“My positive autistic traits had no home in the clinical diagnosis process.”



A sense of loss or anger:

IT IS NORMAL TO GO THROUGH DIFFERENT EMOTIONS ON YOUR JOURNEY...

RECENT THREAD ON TWITTER ADVISES THAT THESE EMOTIONS WILL PASS EVENTUALLY, THAT SEEKING OUT OTHER AUTISTIC PEOPLE TO TALK TO, SHARING EXPERIENCES IS HELPFUL! GIVE YOURSELF THE TIME A SPACE YOU NEED TO PROCESS THE DIFFERENT EMOTIONS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING.



Positive emotions:

“THERE ARE OTHERS LIKE YOU, YOU AREN’T DEFECTIVE OR WRONG, IT’S NOT YOUR FAULT. YOU ARE JUST DIFFERENT. THAT’S YOU” (WILLIAMS, 2019, P. 18).



“FOR ME A DIAGNOSIS MEANT VALIDATION.” (WILLIAMS, 2019, P. 19).

CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?



RECEIVING AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS

RELIEF

A SENSE OF
BELONGING

VALIDATION

LOSS

DIFFICULT
EMOTIONS

?

SELF
KNOWLEDGE

ANGER



**MOVING
FORWARD**

Learn about what autism means for you. We can: support you to develop strategies building on your strengths, help you with the things you struggle with.

"I AM ME-AND THAT IS OK. I AM OK."

(Collins, taken from Autangel handbook.)

