

Navigating the Mental Health System

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GCA 5TH ANNUAL ADULT AUTISM SYMPOSIUM

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Objectives

- 1.Describe mental health and wellness and why it is important
- 2.Identify various types of mental health supports and interventions
- 3.Learn tips and obtain resources for accessing mental health services
- 4.Describe ways to advocate for their treatment when working with mental health providers



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Synergy Behavior Consulting, LLC.

- Established 2016
- Provide consultation, supervision, education and training
- Behavior consultation/coaching services



WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



MISSING

Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylvia duckworth

Mental Wellness

What Is Mental Health?

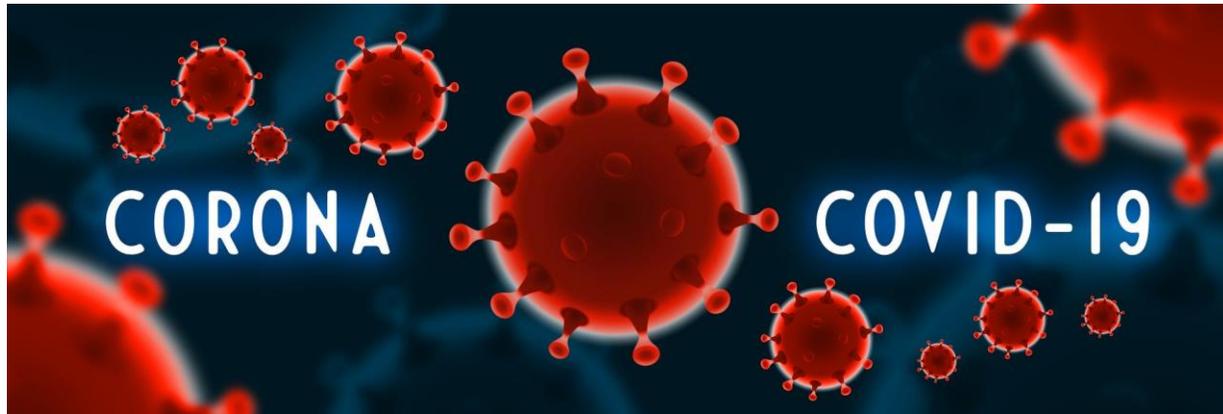
Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>



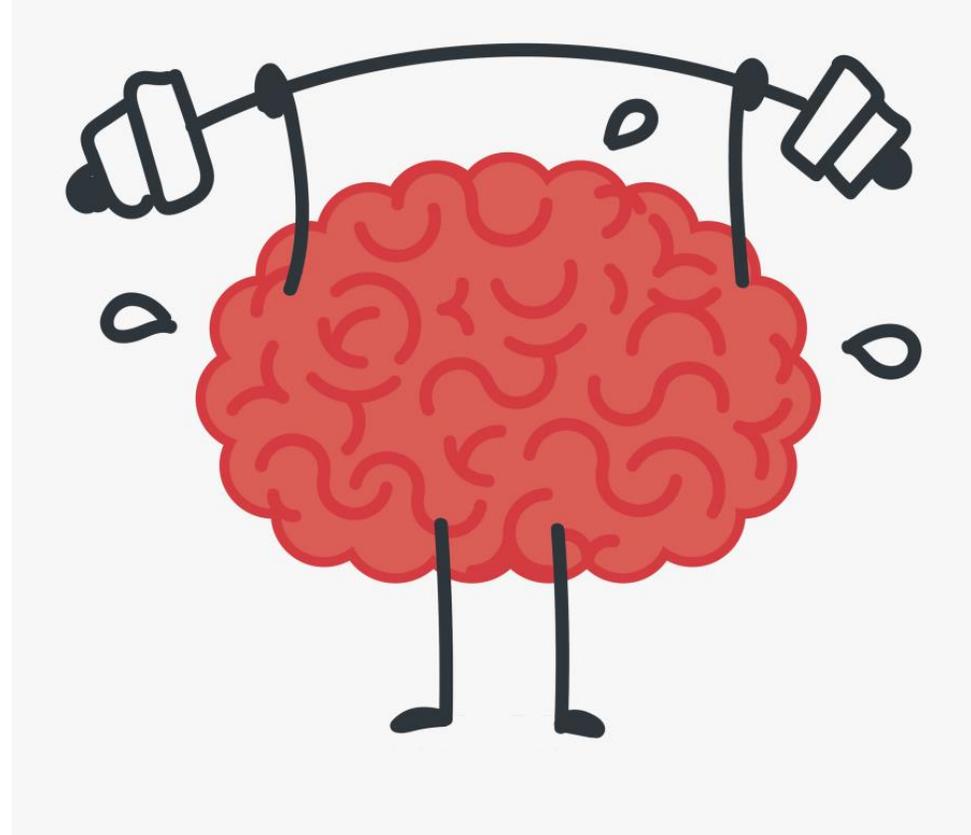
Mental health spectrum





Protective Factors

Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events.



Mental Health

Adapting to adversity

Resilience is the ability to adapt to difficult situations. When stress, adversity or trauma strikes, you still experience anger, grief and pain, but you're able to keep functioning — both physically and psychologically. However, resilience isn't about putting up with something difficult, being stoic or figuring it out on your own. In fact, being able to reach out to others for support is a key part of being resilient.

Resilience and mental health

Resilience can help protect you from various mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety. Resilience can also help offset factors that increase the risk of mental health conditions, such as being bullied or previous trauma. If you have an existing mental health condition, being resilient can improve your coping ability.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/resilience-training/in-depth/resilience/art-20046311#:~:text=Resilience%20can%20help%20protect%20you,being%20bullied%20or%20previous%20trauma.>

Mental Health

Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.



<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190718-samhsa-risk-protective-factors.pdf>

Risk Factors

- Biophysical
- Psychological
- Social
- Spiritual

<https://www.americanmentalwellness.org/prevention/risk-and-protective-factors/>

Risk Factors

Co-occurring Diagnosis

Bipolar disorder: 7.3% in individuals with ASD and just 0.9% in controls

Depression: 54.1% and 28.9%, respectively

Anxiety disorder: 50.0% and 22.2%, respectively

Patients with ASD were fully nine times more likely than controls to have clinically diagnosed bipolar disorder (hazard ratio, 9.34) and roughly three times more likely to be diagnosed with depression (HR, 2.81) or anxiety (HR, 3.45).

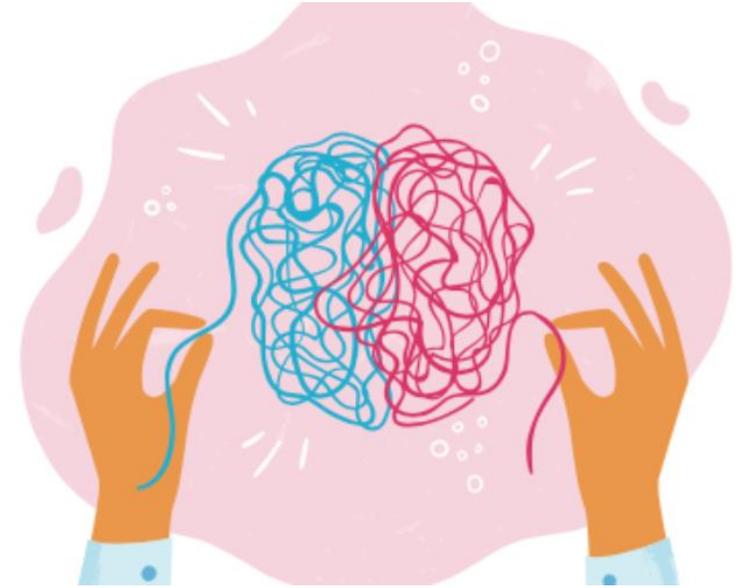
Risk Factors

Co-occurring Diagnosis

Until recently, suicidality in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was rarely discussed. A cluster of recent articles, including an article by Culpin et al.¹ in this issue, has highlighted not only that suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts can occur in adolescents and young adults with ASD, but also that suicidality is likely more common in ASD than in the general population.

The emerging studies indicate that the increased risk of self-injurious behavior in younger and less cognitively able children with ASD^{3,4} is matched by an increased risk of suicidality in those at a more advanced developmental level.

Name some types of
mental health services or
supports?



Mental Health Interventions and Supports

TYPES OF SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS

Interventions and Support

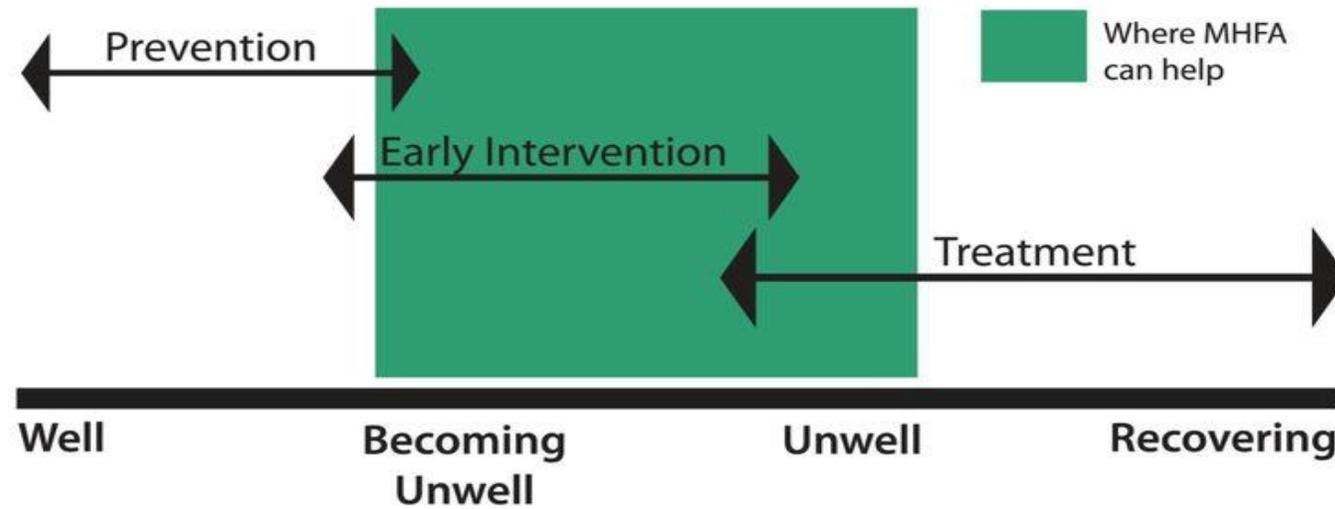
INTERVENTION

Intervention is the act of recognizing a problem and doing something to stop the problem from becoming worse and to begin the act of being well/recovering.



<https://www.americanmentalwellness.org/intervention/definitions/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20World%20Health,to%20his%20or%20her%20community.%E2%80%9D>

Spectrum of Mental Health Interventions



Spectrum of mental health interventions from wellness to mental disorders and through to recovery, showing the contribution of MHFA

Interventions and Supports

Common needs of autistic individuals

Risk factors or lack of protective factors specifically in due to biopsychocial and social factors

- Organic or psychiatric diagnosis
- Support with anxiety or need for additional coping skills
- Behavior Supports
- Support with romantic and personal relationships
- Advocacy skills
- Need for skills training
- Employment, financial security and basic needs
- Discrimination, lack of inclusion or accommodations

Supports

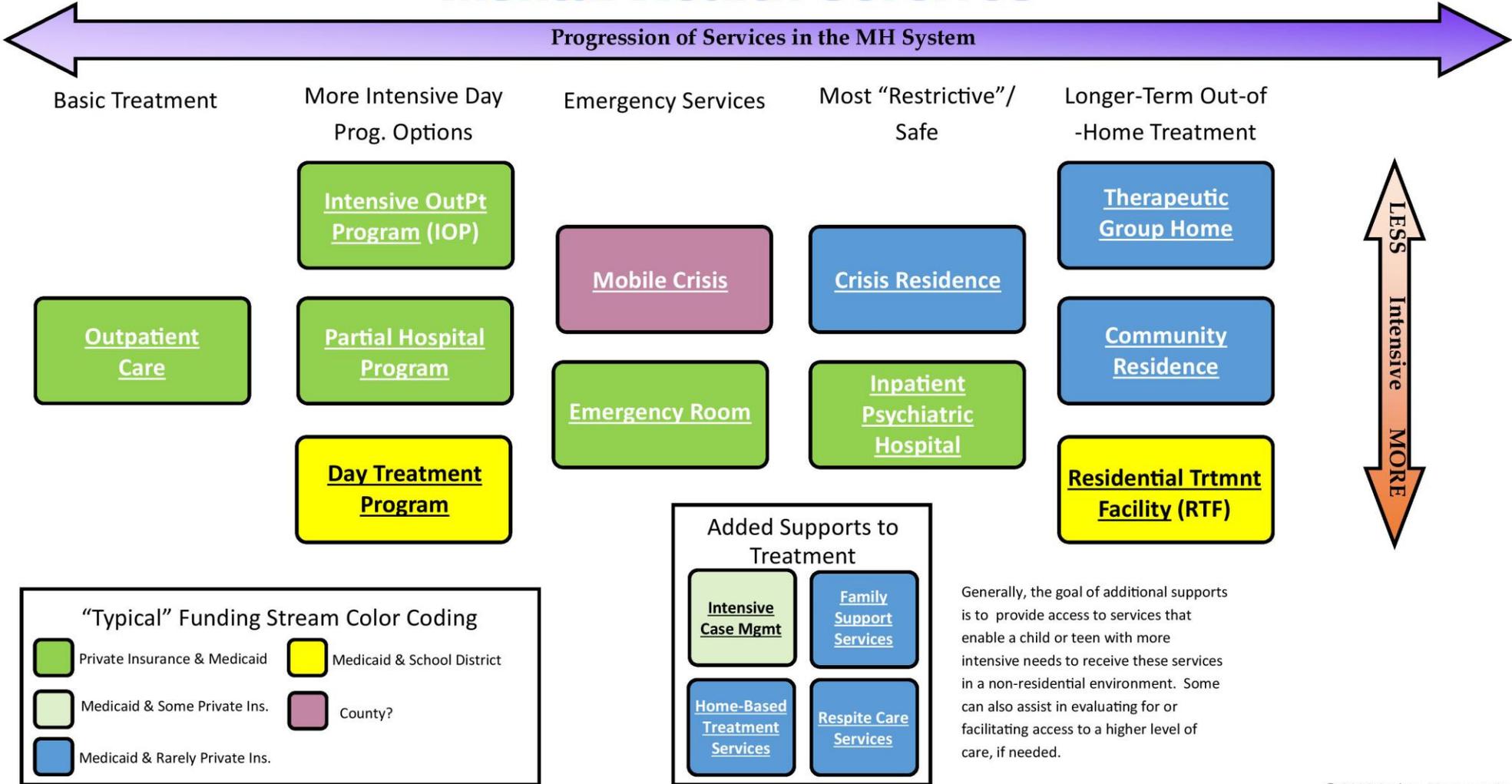
- Support needs will vary throughout the life time
- Range from basic to more specialized and based on level of intensity
 - How much of the service do you receive?
 - Where is the service delivered?
 - How urgent is the service?

Intervention and Supports

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

- A mental health professional is someone who works in the field of mental health.
- Examples include counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, social workers, case managers, peer specialists, etc.

Continuum of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services



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Intervention and Supports

Self Help/Self Management

- Coping Skills
- Apps
- Leisure Activities
- Boundary setting
- Peer groups
- Community or social involvement



Services

Service	Example	Who is this best for
<p>Outpatient Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variety of different types of settings• Doesn't require an overnight stay• Delivered by a variety of different providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual or group therapy• Support groups• Coaching• Medication Management• Psychological assessments or testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals who need to learn new skills or cope with stressors

Services

Service	Who is this best for	Examples
<p>Structured Outpatient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More comprehensive treatment experience.• Detailed schedules that use a variety of therapeutic techniques, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, group process therapy and even holistic practices, like yoga or meditation.• More treatment hours as well.• Lasts anywhere from six to 35 hours each week.• Clients often attend structured outpatient programs three to five days each week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals who need more intensive services than outpatient• Next step after inpatient (step down) or preventative step before inpatient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensive Outpatient Services (IOP, IFI)• Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP)

Services

Service	Who is this best for	Examples
<p>Emergency Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imminent harm to self or others• Need for immediate assessment and support• Top priority is safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate danger to self or others• Self-injurious behaviors or suicide attempts• Psychiatric crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile Crisis• Emergency Room

Services

Service	Who is this best for	Examples
<p>Inpatient Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Person has been assessed and its determined they are not safe to be supported in the community• Need for stabilization• Involve an overnight or longer stay in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric unit of a general hospital• Involve voluntary or involuntary admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest and most restrictive level of care• Immediate danger to self or others• Self-injurious behaviors or suicide attempts• Assessed to need to be supported in a restricted environment• Medication Stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychiatric Hospital• Crisis Stabilization Unit or Home• Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF- lower level of care but longer term)

Services

- Substance Use and Detox Services
- Behavior Intervention Services
- Telehealth Services

Intervention and Supports

- Most interventions are most successful when paired with other interventions and supports
- Mental Wellness is a spectrum and is not linear
- We may require different supports during different parts of our lives depending on what is going on

What are some
other barriers
to accessing
services?



Barriers to Accessing Supports

Barriers to Accessing Supports

- Lack of trained professionals
- Funding/Insurance
- Lack of education on the needs of individuals on the spectrum
- Exclusionary policy
- Lack of preventative and support services



Barriers to Accessing Supports

- Adverse outcomes when crisis intervention is needed
- Under or Misdiagnosis of mental health needs
- Stigma
- Challenges navigating service systems



Supports and Services

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Supports and Services

- Check with your insurance provider
- Ask friends and peers
- Ask current providers
- Directories for Mental Health Providers
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists>
 - <https://therapyforblackgirls.com/>

Supports and Services

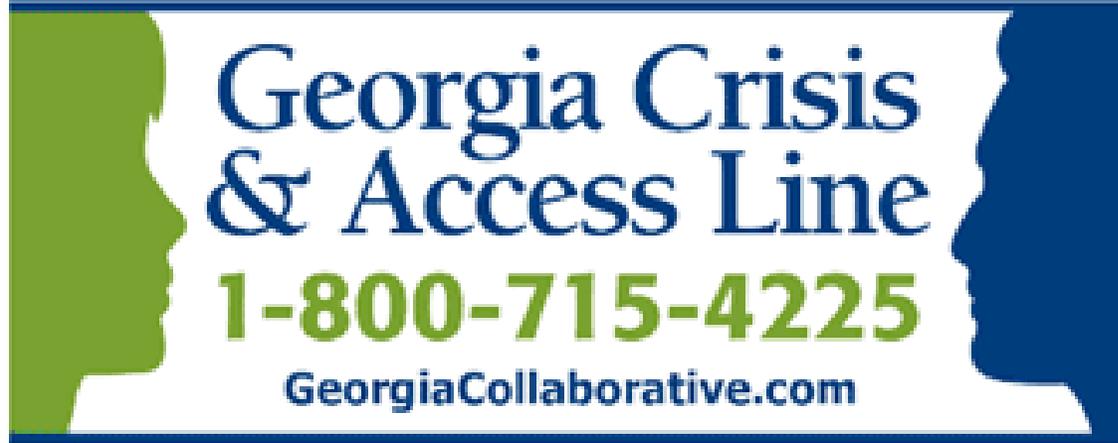
- Local Community Service Boards or county/state mental health providers
 - GA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Peer or Support Groups
- Local autism groups or centers
- Local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) groups

Supports and Services

- Mobile Applications
- Telehealth Services
- State or National Crisis Lines

Supports and Services

A CRISIS HAS NO SCHEDULE



Help is available 24/7 for problems with developmental disabilities, mental health, drugs, or alcohol.



Provided through the Georgia Collaborative ASO

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255



Supports and Services

- Ask potential providers questions
 - Have you ever supported a autistic client before? Are you comfortable supporting and my needs?
 - What is your general philosophy and approach to helping? Are you more directive or more guiding?
 - How do you set up counseling goals? What are they like? What is success for you?
 - What is typical session like? How long are the sessions?
 - What kind of homework/reading do you give patients?
 - How do I prepare for my first session?
 - What are your strengths and limitations as a counselor?
 - Have you been in therapy yourself? How recently?
 - How often do you seek peer consultation?

<https://www.washingtonian.com/2016/03/03/the-14-questions-you-must-ask-a-therapist-before-your-first-appointment/>

Supports and Services



1. What are your Autistic clients' common treatment goals?
2. Tell me about your office space.
3. I'm not sure I can tolerate talking to a new person for 45 minutes. What can you do to help me get comfortable?

<https://reifpsychservices.com/find-a-therapist-for-autistic-adults/>

Supports and Services

Describe your needs

- What do you want support with currently?
 - Navigating social situations, anxiety, death of a loved one, traumatic experience
- Describe your interests
- Describe how you best understand things or concepts
 - Do you need things concretely expressed? Do you want them to incorporate your interests into the therapy?
 - Example- Train references
- Tell them what overwhelms you or what it looks like to be overwhelmed
- Tell them if you would like to use visuals in therapy

Supports and Services

How to Get the Most Out of Services/Therapy

- Say (communicate) what you need to say
- Come prepared with questions
- Communicate your goals and discuss your expectations
- Practice implementing what you learn in session
- Keep a log/journal your challenges
- Discuss difficulties
- Let your therapist or provider know what works and what they are doing right

Accessing Services and Supports

More intensive services or restricted settings

- Describe your environmental needs
 - Ask for headphones, dim lights, food preferences
 - If you are not able to describe this in the time of a crisis ask a supporter to do this or have a prepared document/"health passport"/ Medical alert documentation
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/physical-health/my-health-passport>
- http://psychiatry.emory.edu/programs/autism/medical_alert.html

My Medical Alert Passport

PLEASE RESPECT ME AS AN ADULT

I will try my best to answer your questions and if I am unable to do so, my _____ is here and can help.

Personal Information

Name: _____ I like to be called: _____

Caregiver Name: _____ Ph. # _____ Guardianship: Self Other: _____

Known Allergies: _____ Dietary Restrictions: _____

History of Seizures: Y N If yes, describe: _____

Medication(s)

Current medication(s): _____

Medication(s) I don't respond well to: _____

Please don't make any changes to my medication without first talking to my prescribing physician:

Name: _____ Role: _____ Phone number: _____

Communication

How I communicate: _____ How I would like you to communicate with me: _____

Notes before filling out the Medical Alert Passport.

Pain: Please do
How I experienc



Going to hospital



An ambulance or taxi may drive you to hospital.
Or a friend, family member or carer may take you to hospital.



Things to bring



Bring nightwear and toiletries.

My Health Passport

For autistic people



Healthcare staff, please consult this passport before you assess me or carry out any interventions.

Hospital staff, please keep this passport with my notes at the end of my bed and return to me when I am discharged.

Please look at the guidance notes before filling out your health passport the notes are at www.autism.org.uk/health-passport

Personal information

Name: _____

I like to be called: _____

Date of birth: _____

Supports and Services

More intensive services or restricted settings

- Ask for your case manager, therapist or/and the patient advocate
- Ask them if they understand your ASD diagnosis and how it impacts you
- Ask them to include you in treatment team development and planning (Or the legal guardian)
- Ask them to explain the diagnosis and what the medications are for
 - Ask them to explain how you met the criteria
 - Warning: May receive pushback

Summary

- The mental health system can be complex but it can be navigated
- You lead your treatment
- Its ok to ask questions
- Advocate for your rights



Resources

The Center for START Services

- <https://www.centerforstartservices.org/>

The National Association of Dual Diagnosis

- <http://thenadd.org/>

Mental Health America

- <https://www.mhanational.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- <https://www.nami.org/Home>

Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC)

- <https://iacc.hhs.gov/>
- https://iacc.hhs.gov/meetings/working-group-meetings/2019/health-outcomes/workshop/may21/materials_052119.pdf

Resources

Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)

- <https://www.aane.org/misdiagnosis-co-occurring-condition/>

Chattanooga Autism Center

- <https://www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org/>

American Association of Suicidology

- <https://suicidology.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Autism-Crisis-Supports-FINAL.pdf>

National Suicide Prevention hotline

- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Contact

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