

## **How to seek an ASD assessment via:**

### **2. Autism SA:**

If you are considering this route, I recommend you take a look at their website, or even phone them to ask about the process. Their consultants are very helpful.

Website: [autismsa.org.au](http://autismsa.org.au)

Telephone: **1300 288 476**

The Autism SA website provides a lot of helpful information, including checklists of signs of Autism.

However, NOT ALL of these checklists will be very relevant or helpful for teenagers with what I sometimes like to call Aspergers\*, especially teenagers who have not yet been diagnosed with ASD.

*(\*I explain my use of the term 'Aspergers' under the section on my website called, "What do I mean by "Autism Spectrum Disorder, or what some people call Aspergers"?")*

Based on the noticeable signs of Autism in my daughter (who received a diagnosis of ASD at age 16) and myself (who received a diagnosis of ASD at age 47), I would rate/recommend Autism SA's checklists for signs of Autism as follows:

**Signs of Autism in females:** I found this checklist to be very relevant and helpful.

**Signs of Autism in males:** I cannot comment, as I am neither a male myself, nor have I had a male child/teenager with ASD.

**Signs of Autism in teenagers:** I found that only about six to 12 of the signs seemed relevant to either my daughter or myself, and even these were not things that would probably stand out to most people.

- Signs of Autism in children:** I found that only about four to eight of the signs seemed relevant to either my daughter or myself, and even these were not things that would probably stand out to most people.
- Signs of Autism in adults:** I found that only about four to eight of the signs seemed relevant to either my daughter or myself, and even these were not things that would probably stand out to most people.
- Signs of Autism in babies:** I did not find this checklist to be very relevant or helpful at all.

Of course, no two people with ASD/Aspergers are the same. You might find some, or all, of Autism SA's checklists for signs of Autism to be more relevant and helpful than I did. The reason I have included my own personal ratings/recommendations above, is to highlight the fact that even if your teenager does not seem to fit many checklist points on Autism SA's checklists for signs of Autism (or any other checklists that you might find elsewhere), it does not mean that they don't have ASD/Aspergers, **so don't let that stop you from seeking a diagnosis.**

**You do NOT need a referral to book an ASD assessment with Autism SA. You can refer yourself (or your teenager),** by one of the following methods:

- Complete and submit the online self-referral form, which is on the Autism SA website; OR
- Complete a hard copy of the self-referral form and post it to Autism SA; OR
- Phone or email the diagnostic team, to request a self-referral form, which you will then need to complete and return to Autism SA.

However, it might be that a GP or other healthcare professional notices possible signs of ASD in your teenager, and considers referring your teenager to Autism SA for an ASD assessment. If this is the case, your GP will first undertake investigations to rule out other possible underlying causes for your teenager's 'certain issues', and perform a screening test or informal assessment of your teenager, for ASD. Some GPs will be better than others in this regard. Some GPs might have a special interest in the area of ASD, but others will not. Even if a GP has a special interest in ASD, they still might not have a great level of knowledge or understanding of what I sometimes like to call Aspergers.

If your GP or other healthcare professional decides to refer your teenager to Autism SA for an ASD assessment, they will complete the appropriate referral form based on what they have observed in your teenager, and in consultation with you, the parents, and they will submit the referral form.

If your GP conducts a screening test or informal assessment of your teenager, for ASD, and informs you that the results do not indicate that your teenager might have ASD, remember that your GP is not an expert in ASD, and that the screening test or informal assessment that they conducted is not foolproof. If you feel that these results are not correct, and you still want your teenager to be assessed for ASD, **you can still submit a self-referral form for your teenager, and book an ASD assessment yourself, without any referral from your GP or other healthcare professional.**

Once you have submitted/sent in the self-referral form, or your GP, or other healthcare professional has sent in the referral form, and it has been received, Autism SA will send some information and forms to you. These will include detailed questionnaires for you (the parents) and your teenager's teachers to complete.

Once you have completed and returned these forms, and they are received by Autism SA, the waiting time for the ASD assessment appointment is:

**18 months.**

Yes, this is a very long waiting time. However, it is not the fault of Autism SA, but due to the extremely high demand, and not enough resources to meet the demand.

It will be a multi-disciplinary assessment, usually conducted by a psychologist and a speech pathologist at one appointment.

The cost of an ASD assessment with Autism SA is as follows:

- If your teenager is under 18, an Autism SA multi-disciplinary assessment will cost: **\$1,000.00.**
- If your teenager is over 18 (or if an adult seeks an ASD assessment for themselves), an Autism SA multi-disciplinary assessment will cost: **\$600.00.**
- If you are seeking confirmation of a diagnosis\* it will cost: **\$500.00.**

*(\*A confirmation of diagnosis through Autism SA is something you might consider seeking if you have already obtained a single diagnosis of ASD from an accredited clinician [usually a psychologist] for your teenager. You might wish to have that single diagnosis confirmed by another accredited clinician, so that your teenager will have a dual [or multi-disciplinary] diagnosis).*

If you have private health insurance, it might cover some of the cost of an ASD assessment. You will have to contact your private health insurance provider to check.

It is my understanding that, for a teenager over the age of 13:

- Medicare will only pay \$128.40 towards the cost of an ASD assessment (if anything). To obtain this rebate, you would have to ask your GP to prepare a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP) for your teenager that includes an ASD assessment.
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will not pay for an ASD assessment.

**FYI: There is a good chance that you will be able to obtain an ASD assessment appointment with a private clinic or clinician sooner than with Autism SA. Further, the cost for a dual (or multi-disciplinary) assessment at some private clinics is not much more than \$1,000.00.**

Autism SA has two main hubs:

**1. Northern Hub:**

1/57 Elizabeth Way, Elizabeth SA 5112 – **Ph: 8379 6976**

**2. Southern Hub:**

6 – 8 MAB Cct, Tonsley SA 5042 – **Ph: 8379 6976**