

## So, you've obtained a diagnosis of ASD for your teenager – what next?

### **Inform your teenager's school:**

I strongly recommend that you inform your teenager's school about their diagnosis of ASD, so that they can implement recommendations in the ASD assessment report.

To do this, in South Australia, you should contact the Inclusive Education Co-ordinator (or equivalent person) at your teenager's school, advise them of your teenager's diagnosis of ASD, and provide them with a copy of your teenager's ASD diagnosis/assessment report (and any other relevant reports that you might have). The school should then organise for a copy of the report(s) to be given to your teenager's teachers. If you don't know who the Inclusive Education Co-ordinator at your teenager's school is, or how to contact them, ask the staff at the school Office.

Each school in South Australia is allocated a bulk amount of funding from the Government to cater for the needs of their students with disabilities. This funding is used by each school to pay for Inclusive Education support staff, and to provide a small budget for the Inclusive Education team at each school to use to purchase resources for assisting their students with disabilities. If you don't inform your teenager's school of their diagnosis, your teenager will not be able to receive assistance from their school's Inclusive Education support staff, or have access to their school's Inclusive Education resources. My '[Handbook for Teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, and their Parents](#)' (*which is available for free on this website*) goes into more detail about what your teenager's school might be able to do to support your teenager with ASD/Aspergers, under the section called "**Different Learning Needs**".

However, if your child has not been diagnosed with ASD until they are a teenager, it might be because;

- They are good at 'fitting in' socially, perhaps because:
  - Their reactions to change, sensory triggers and emotional issues are not outwardly obvious, or bothersome, to most other people;

- Their stims and intense interests do not seem overly odd, or bothersome, to most other people;
- They enjoy social interaction and are able to feel and display empathy for other people;
- They have a good enough grasp of social interaction that their social behaviour, whilst it sometimes might seem a bit odd, is not odd enough to cause most other people to reject them, but rather, other people might see them as funny, intelligent and/or interesting;
- They might be good at mimicking appropriate social behaviour and/or ‘masking’\*;
- They might tend to withdraw when experiencing stressors, which might cause them to appear to be simply quiet and shy;
- They are good at academic learning, and don’t tend to have difficulty with their schoolwork.

*(\*I explain ‘masking’ in my ‘Handbook for Teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, and their Parents’, under the section called “**Social Issues**”, at pages 86-88).*

If this is the case, your teenager might be very sensitive about being labelled as ‘different’ to their peers. They might be terrified/mortified by the thought of their peers knowing that they are ‘different’, and that they are receiving special support at school. They might feel that their peers/friends might start to treat them differently, and even reject them. Parents and teachers need to be mindful of this. Some teachers are more sensitive than others when it comes to being mindful of the needs of their students with ASD/Aspergers, without broadcasting it to the other students.

Receiving a diagnosis of ASD is a relief for many teenagers/young adults, because it explains what they’ve always known about themselves, but perhaps didn’t understand. However, some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers might feel that accepting their diagnosis means that they are accepting that they are going to start to understand themselves, and view themselves, in a whole new way to how they did before. This could be an extremely distressing concept for them, and they might be very resistant to their diagnosis, and to informing their school.

Remember that your teenager has only just discovered that they have ASD/Aspergers. For most newly diagnosed teenagers, it will take them time to understand what their diagnosis of ASD really means for them, and to start to feel comfortable with themselves.

Some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers do not seem to need a lot of, or any, special 'formal' support at school, even though coping with life might often take more effort for them, than for their peers. In such cases, it might be preferable to some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, to not inform their school of their diagnosis, but to only receive extra support outside of school.

Unfortunately, many teenagers with ASD/Aspergers who have not been diagnosed until they are older teenagers, find it so difficult to cope in the mainstream high school environment, that they leave school early, in which case, the issue of informing their school becomes a moot point.

### **Register with Autism SA:**

Whether you decide to register with Autism SA, or not, I strongly recommend that you take a look at their website ([autismsa.org.au](http://autismsa.org.au)). It contains a lot of useful information, which anyone can access, whether they are registered with Autism SA, or not.

Autism SA offers a lot of services (i.e., supports, therapies, training and groups) for people who have a diagnosis of ASD, and their families. To access these services, you will need to apply to become an Ordinary Member of Autism SA (this is often called "registering with Autism SA"). You can do this for free if your teenager's diagnosis was obtained via a dual (or multi-disciplinary) assessment, regardless of whether your teenager's ASD assessment was conducted by Autism SA, or by a diagnostic team that is not associated with Autism SA.

I strongly recommend that you register your teenager with Autism SA, and become a member of Autism SA yourself, if you are eligible to do so. It might be that you and/or your teenager don't feel ready to engage with Autism SA's services immediately after your teenager's diagnosis. However, after you have had time to process your teenager's

diagnosis, and to start to form an idea of what sorts of supports and/or information could be helpful to you and/or your teenager, you might come to realise that Autism SA does offer some of these sorts of supports and/or information.

There are two ways to register with Autism SA:

1. Phone Autism SA on **1300 288 476**, and ask to register your teenager with ASD (you can also ask to become a member yourself);

**OR**

2. Complete and return the appropriate form to apply to become an Ordinary Member of Autism SA. To obtain this form:
  - Go to the Autism SA website home page. Up the top you will see some headings. Click on the heading called “About Autism SA”. This will bring down a drop down list. From this drop down list, click on “Membership”. This will bring up a new page with the heading “Become a member”.
  - On this new page, scroll down to the heading “How do I apply for Autism SA Membership?” Under this heading you will see options to apply to become a member.
  - Click on the ‘apply to be an Ordinary Member’ option. This will bring up a new page with the appropriate form.

You will need to print the form, complete it, and submit it to Autism SA, by either:

- Emailing it to **[admin@autismsa.org.au](mailto:admin@autismsa.org.au)**;

**OR**

- Posting it to **PO Box 556, Melrose Park DC SA 5039.**

I chose to register my daughter, and to apply to become a member of Autism SA myself, over the phone, as I felt this was the easier option, and it meant that I could ask questions.

However, a lot of Autism SA's services are not free, and you would still need to either pay for them yourself, or apply for NDIS funding to pay for them. Further, some of the services will have long waiting times before you are able to access them.

I would definitely recommend Autism SA's "newly diagnosed support", and their "NDIS pre-planning support", both of which are free. If you have registered with Autism SA, you can request this support, and a consultant will contact you within a few days.

Autism SA also has a Resources Library (both hard copy items and eBooks), which you can access for free, if you are registered with them. If you are not eligible to register with Autism SA (i.e., if your teenager's ASD diagnosis was by single assessment only), you can apply to become an Associate Member of Autism SA for an annual fee of \$66.00. This would entitle you to access their Resources Library. Autism SA's Resources Library contains many books that are relevant and helpful for teenagers with ASD/Aspergers. There are some that I can personally recommend\*, and many more that I would like to read when I have the time. (*\*I have listed these under the section of my website called "Further Sources of Information"*).

Also, do not be afraid to simply phone Autism SA and ask them what they can do for you.

### **Apply for NDIS funding:**

In Australia, we have a government agency called the **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**, whose role it is to implement and manage the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**, to ensure that people with a disability can afford to obtain and continue to receive the support they need.

People with what I sometimes like to call Aspergers\* might not seem to be obviously disabled. The term 'disabled' might not seem appropriate for them. These days, having ASD is often described as being 'neurodivergent'.

Some people with ASD do not like the terms 'disorder', 'dysfunction' or 'disability' to describe their 'condition'. However, the term 'disability' needs to be used in order to obtain NDIS funding. Many people with ASD, including people with what I sometimes like to call Aspergers, will need to obtain NDIS funding in order to pay for support and/or treatment to help them cope with life.

**Please do not be put off by the term 'disability'.** I assure you that your teenager with 'Aspergers', if diagnosed with ASD, is entitled to NDIS funding.

*(\*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'?")*

I strongly recommend that you take a look at the NDIS website ([ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au)).

Once your teenager has a diagnosis of ASD, you can apply for NDIS funding to pay for appropriate support/treatment/therapy for them. I strongly recommend that you apply for NDIS funding as soon as possible after your teenager has received a diagnosis of ASD, as it can take at least a couple of months to get the NDIS funding in place, ready to use.

The process of applying for NDIS funding involves quite a lot of thought and effort, and can seem quite complicated. **Please do not be put off by this.** It is well worth obtaining NDIS funding for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers. Many teenagers with ASD/Aspergers desperately need regular, ongoing ASD specialised support/treatment/therapy throughout adolescence and young adulthood, which can be an extremely difficult and traumatising time for them. Many people with ASD/Aspergers will need some level of support/treatment/therapy throughout their whole lives. In order to provide this for them, and set them up for their future needs, unless you are extremely wealthy, you will need NDIS funding for your teenager.

Getting the first NDIS funding plan in place is probably going to involve the most effort, and even once you get the first plan in place, it might take you quite a while to figure out how best to use it (i.e., what sort of support/ treatment/therapy is best for your teenager). However, you will gradually figure this out, I promise.

Once your teenager has obtained their first lot of NDIS funding, and has started receiving some ASD specialised support/treatment/therapy, you and your teenager will get a clearer idea of what is going to work best for them. When it comes time to renew your teenager's NDIS funding plan (usually after 12 months), the process should be easier, as you will know what to expect, and you will have a better idea of what sort of support/treatment/therapy to ask for continued, or further, funding for.

The NDIS website provides instructions on how to apply for NDIS funding, and provides a lot of useful information to help you through the process. However, you might still find it overwhelming and confusing.

If your teenager has a diagnosis of ASD by dual (or multi-disciplinary) assessment, you can register with Autism SA. If you are registered with Autism SA, you can ask them to provide you with "NDIS pre-planning support". I did this and found it very helpful.

However, not everyone is eligible to register with Autism SA. I have prepared instructions of my own for how to apply for NDIS funding, which I have broken down into steps, together with some advice, which you might find helpful, under the section of my website called:

[How to Apply for NDIS Funding](#)

### **Book appropriate support/treatment/therapy for your teenager:**

You do not need to wait until you have NDIS funding approved before you start looking into what support/treatment/therapy would be best for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers. In fact, as soon as possible after your teenager has received a diagnosis of ASD, it's a good idea to start looking into this. Your teenager's ASD assessment report should contain recommendations of what type of support/treatment/therapy your particular teenager

might benefit from. If you are unsure, ask the clinician or clinicians who diagnosed your teenager to clarify this. For example, it's likely that your teenager will need sessions with a good, private psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers. They might also need occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy, and/or sessions with a food/eating therapist.

**If you are looking for a psychologist for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers, I would recommend you look for a clinical psychologist, rather than a registered psychologist, and, of course, make sure they specialise in ASD/Aspergers.**

As soon as possible after your teenager has received a diagnosis of ASD, it's a good idea to start putting your teenager on as many waiting lists as possible for the sort of support/treatment/therapy you think will be best for your particular teenager, because waiting lists for good, private therapists who specialise in ASD/Aspergers are usually very long (they are in South Australia, anyway). You might as well have your teenager with ASD/Aspergers moving slowly up the queue on these waiting lists whilst waiting for the NDIS funding to come through.

When my daughter was first diagnosed with ASD, what she really needed at that point was regular ongoing sessions with a good, private psychologist who specialised in ASD/Aspergers, and especially in the most up-to-date knowledge and understanding of ASD/Aspergers in females. (My daughter had actually really needed to start receiving this sort of therapy about four years before she was finally diagnosed with ASD. However, this was never going to happen until she obtained a diagnosis).

These sorts of psychologists seem to be the rarest, and have the longest waiting lists. I wish I had put my daughter on a waiting list for this sort of therapy immediately after she received her diagnosis. However, I simply had no idea how to find a good, private psychologist who specialised in ASD/Aspergers, who would be suitable for my daughter. The only appropriate clinic I knew of was the one where my daughter had been assessed and diagnosed with ASD. However, at that time, this clinic did not seem to have any appointments available with an appropriate psychologist, at least not at a location that seemed convenient.

In hindsight, the location that I had thought was too inconvenient at the time, due to distance, was probably not really too far away, after all, and I think that this clinic might



well have had an appropriate psychologist available. I wish I had put my daughter on a waiting list for therapy with an appropriate psychologist at this clinic, despite the location, immediately after she received her diagnosis.

However, initially after my daughter's diagnosis, I was overwhelmed and confused by all of the information I had to try to process, and all the decisions I had to make. I did not want to set my daughter up to see a psychologist at a potentially inconvenient location, then find that it was too difficult for me to continue to take her to that location, on a regular, ongoing basis, due to my work commitments at the time. That would mean that I might have to get her to switch to seeing yet another new psychologist, at a more convenient location.

Further, because of the traumatic and confusing four years prior to my daughter's diagnosis, I was extremely wary of taking my daughter to see yet another psychologist who was NOT suitable, i.e., someone who was NOT a specialist in the most up-to-date knowledge or understanding of ASD/Aspergers, or someone who was simply going to treat my daughter for 'standard' anxiety and/or depression, in a standard way, which did not seem to help her much, and in some cases, seemed to make her feel worse.

After my daughter was diagnosed with ASD, it took me about six months before I contacted a private clinic and booked an appointment for my daughter to see a particular psychologist there, because that was how long it was before I met someone who I felt had the relevant knowledge, and who I felt I could trust, who was able to recommend an appropriate psychologist for my daughter at a convenient location. Then, from the time I contacted this private clinic, the appointment was a further five months away.

**In order to help other parents of teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, who have no idea how to find a good, private psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers, my website contains a section called "Therapists, Clinics & Services That I Recommend, or Have Been Recommended to Me, for Teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, in South Australia".**

These sorts of psychologists often work at private clinics that also provide other ASD therapies, such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, food/eating therapy and social skills groups. However, sessions with an appropriate psychologist are a good place to start. The psychologist might then be able to suggest what, if any, other therapies might benefit your teenager, such as a social skills group. Your teenager might need to start off with one-on-one sessions with a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers before they feel

ready to try attending a social skills group, as this can be very daunting for them. It's good if there is a social skills group run by the same clinic where your teenager attends their psychologist. However, if not, your teenager's psychologist should be able to suggest an appropriate social skills group, elsewhere, if necessary.

Once you have managed to get your teenager set up with regular, ongoing sessions with an appropriate psychologist, **you can and should** ask your teenager's psychologist any questions that you might have from time to time, about your teenager's treatment and/or wellbeing, and also tell them about any concerns that you might have from time to time, about your teenager's wellbeing. You might be observing concerning behaviours or signs of mental unwellness in your teenager at home, but they might present quite differently when they are attending upon their psychologist, and they might not mention any of these things to their psychologist themselves.

Your teenager's psychologist will not be able to report to you everything that your teenager tells them, as this would be a breach of your teenager's trust, and could discourage them from being open with their psychologist.

However, hopefully, your teenager's psychologist will bring you into sessions with your teenager from time to time, to discuss issues that have been raised during your teenager's psychotherapy sessions that could, hopefully, help you to better understand and support your teenager.

### **Consider whether you need to apply for a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP):**

If you manage to obtain an appointment for therapy for your teenager with a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers, before their NDIS funding has come through, you could ask your GP to provide your teenager with a MHCP\* for psychology sessions, to help cover the cost. (*\*A MHCP is a system available in Australia to help subsidise the cost of mental health treatment*).

To apply for a MHCP:

- Book an appointment for your teenager with their GP. When booking the appointment, tell them it is for a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP).
- At the appointment, ask for a MHCP for psychology sessions for your teenager.
- Your GP will have to ask your teenager a series of questions, and your teenager will have to complete one or two brief, multiple-choice type questionnaires.

If you obtain a MHCP for your teenager, and provide it to your teenager's treating psychologist, Medicare will provide you with a rebate for about half of the cost of up to 20 psychology sessions per year (it used to be only 10 sessions per year, but was increased to 20 in October 2020). However, to start the process, your GP can only refer your teenager for up to six psychology sessions. After the six sessions, if your teenager needs more, then your teenager can be referred for more, i.e., up to 20 per year.

When using the MHCP, you will usually have to pay for each psychology session up front on the day. Most clinics will send the claim form to Medicare for you, on the day of the appointment, then Medicare will deposit the rebate for that session into your nominated bank account, within one or two days (or mail you a cheque for the rebate, if that is what you request). However, if you are using a MHCP, when you first attend a clinic for psychology sessions, you should always check with them how they deal with MHCP Medicare claims.

Most private, clinical psychologists charge about \$240.00 for a one hour psychology session. This is a reasonable cost for their expertise. The MHCP Medicare rebate for a one hour psychology session is \$128.40 (i.e., about half of the cost). This means that you will still have to pay about \$111.60 yourself, for each one hour psychology session. Many people simply cannot afford that.

However, once your teenager's NDIS funding comes through, you can switch to using that to pay for psychology sessions for your teenager, as opposed to using the MHCP Medicare rebates.

**Consider whether you need to apply for Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance:**

Carer Payment and Carer Allowance are payments that, if you are eligible, you can claim through Centrelink, which is a service available through Services Australia.

Depending on your circumstances, you might need to apply for Carer Payment, so that you can afford to stay at home and support your teenager with ASD/Aspergers.

Under the section on this website called “How to Apply for NDIS Funding”, is a further section called “More Detailed Examples of What to Record in Preparation for First NDIS Funding Planning Meeting”. This section highlights the sorts of supports that parents often have to provide to their teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, particularly under the segments called “Your Current Support Networks”, “What Does Your Week Usually Look Like?”, and “Carer Statement”.

Further, my ‘Handbook for Teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, and their Parents’ talks about the demands on parents under the section called **“Different Learning Needs (& Thought Processing & Communication Issues)”**, at pages 146-149.

Reading these sections/segments on my website, and in my Handbook, could help you to decide whether you feel that you need to stay at home and support your teenager with ASD/Aspergers. It might well be that supporting your teenager with ASD/Aspergers has already greatly affected your capacity to work in a paid job. If you need to apply for Carer Payment to be able to afford to stay at home and support your teenager with ASD/Aspergers, reading these sections/segments can help you to think about:

- What sorts of needs does your teenager with ASD/Aspergers have, for which they require support?
- If you want to be the one to provide (or continue providing) that support, it would be difficult for you to work (or continue working) in a paid job. Therefore, do you need/want to apply for Carer Payment?

If you wish to make phone enquiries about Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance, you could phone **Centrelink's 'Disability, Sickness and Carers' line (Ph: 132 717)**.

However, phoning Centrelink usually involves going through a voice recorded menu, and waiting on hold for a long period of time. If you want to find out more about Carer Payment and Carer Allowance, I strongly encourage you to take a look at the Services Australia website instead of trying to phone Centrelink, or at least take a look at the website first, before trying to phone Centrelink. See below.

To find out more about Carer Payment and Carer Allowance:

- Go to the Services Australia website home page ([servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au));
- Up the top of this page, you should see some headings. Click on the heading called "Health and Disability". This will bring up a new page;
- On this new page, click on the tile called "Caring for Someone" (you might have to scroll down a bit to find this tile). This will bring up a further new page;
- On this new page, click on the tile called "Getting Support". This will bring up a further new page;
- On the left hand side of this new page, you should see a menu. On this menu, click on the heading called "Getting a Payment". This will bring up a further new page;
- On this new page, you should see a heading called "What Payments You can Get as a Carer". In the body of the text under this heading, you should see underlined links to "Carer Payment" and "Carer Allowance". If you click on either of these links, it will bring up a further new page containing information about each of these payments.

This information should help you to work out whether you are likely to be eligible for one or both of these payments, based on your income and assets, and your teenager's care needs. You should also be able to find details about how to make a claim for one or both of these payments, and what sort of information you will need to provide when making a claim.

Some people might find that the information on the Services Australia website is a bit overwhelming and/or confusing. Basically, to be eligible to claim Carer Payment, you must be under the pension income and assets test, AND:

- You need to provide constant care (in the home) to someone with a severe disability; and
- The care needs of the person you are caring for must score high enough and they must need care for six months or more.

The above criteria might be a bit confusing for parents of a teenager with ASD/Aspergers. If your child has not been diagnosed until they are a teenager, then, most likely, they are able to walk, talk, read, write, feed themselves, bathe themselves, dress themselves and to be 'physically' and 'theoretically' capable of doing most routine personal activities. Initially, I wasn't sure if the above criteria really applied to my daughter, even though I knew she needed me to care for her.

However, the difference is, a teenager with ASD/Aspergers won't necessarily do any of the routine personal activities mentioned in the preceding paragraph, if you, their parent (Carer) don't prompt them, remind them, coax them, help them or organise things for them.

You might need to not only prompt, remind or coax them on what or when to eat, but you might also have to supervise them to ensure they eat at all. You might have to manage their medication for them, and make sure they take it when they need to.

You might need to supervise them to ensure that they don't harm themselves (including suicide watch). You might have to provide them with a lot of emotional support every day.

I have prepared instructions of my own for how to apply for Carer Payment, which I have broken down into steps, together with some advice, which you might find helpful, under the section of my website called:

[How to Apply for Carer Payment](#)

**Seek help, and look after yourselves, as parents:**

Most of my website is focused on helping parents to figure out if it's possible that their teenager might have ASD/Aspergers (and/or helping teenagers to figure this out for themselves), what sort of help/understanding a teenager with ASD/Aspergers might need, and how to obtain it.

**However, the parents of teenagers with ASD/Aspergers need help for themselves, too!**

Once you get your teenager set up with the appropriate support/treatment/therapy, you might be able to step back a bit from having to personally try to provide your teenager with all the support/care they need. This will hopefully alleviate some of your stress about your teenager's wellbeing, and enable you to spend a little bit of time looking after yourself. It might also mean that you will be able to go back to work, or increase your work hours, and alleviate some of the financial strain that you might be experiencing.

I hope that the information contained on my website can help you to work through the practical steps that you might have to undertake, in order to set up your teenager with the support/treatment/therapy that they need.

However, the process of setting up your teenager with the support/treatment/therapy that they need is going to take time. It might take many months. It is a marathon, not a sprint.

When your teenager receives a diagnosis of ASD, it might initially feel like a great relief to finally have an answer to why your teenager has been struggling. However, receiving a diagnosis of ASD for your teenager is only the start of your journey to setting them up with the support/treatment/therapy that they need, to help them to feel much better in the short term, and to continue to cope with the rest of their life. The problem is, by the time your teenager receives a diagnosis of ASD, you might have already been on a long, exhausting and frustrating journey with your teenager. You might feel that you do not have the strength to start another difficult journey, at least not immediately.

There is so much that you have to process, such as:

- What will your teenager's diagnosis of ASD mean for them and their future?
- What will it mean for you and your future?
- What sorts of support/treatment/therapy will they need?
- How do you figure this out?
- Where do you find it?
- How do you apply for it?
- How do you fund it?
- How long will it take to set it all up?
- How will your teenager cope in the meantime?
- How will you cope with/help your teenager in the meantime?

There is so much to try to learn, figure out, decide, and so much work to do. It is overwhelming. At the same time, your teenager still needs you to help them with all the things you usually help them with, and they particularly need you to be present for them, to provide emotional support, to help them to process the news of their diagnosis.

You might have to try to understand your teenager in a completely new way. You might have to come to terms with the fact that your teenager's future, and your own, is probably going to be quite different to what you had previously imagined.

It is okay if **you**, the parent, need to take time to let the news of your teenager's ASD diagnosis sink in, and to process what it means for your teenager and for yourself.

You might need to arrange for your teenager to spend some time with a responsible adult family member or friend, so that you can have some time out for yourself, to process your own emotions, and to have a break, before you are ready to start the next phase of the journey towards setting up your teenager with the support/treatment/therapy that they need.

The next phase of the journey is hard work, and it can be overwhelming, there is no way around that, especially if you are a single parent trying to do it all on your own.



You might really need someone to help talk you through, and walk you through, and practically assist you with carrying out all of the steps that you need to take.

You might really need someone to talk to (who actually understands) about what you are going through, and the emotions you are feeling.

Once you have obtained a diagnosis of ASD for your teenager, if you are eligible to register with Autism SA, you can contact them and ask them for advice and assistance regarding all of the steps you might have to take next. Their website ([autismsa.org.au](http://autismsa.org.au)) contains a lot of helpful information, including **a register of support groups for parents and/or families**, and they provide helpful services, such as **training classes for parents**.

However, not all of their services are free. You might need to apply for NDIS funding to be able to pay for some of their services. **Autism SA can provide you with advice about applying for NDIS funding.**

If you have obtained a diagnosis of ASD for your teenager by single assessment, and are therefore not eligible to register with Autism SA, you can still apply for NDIS funding to take your teenager to see a private psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers (which I recommend you do). Such **private clinics might also provide training classes for parents, or be able to direct you to one. They might also be able to direct you to support groups for parents and/or families.** You can also still access **Autism SA's register of support groups** on the Autism SA website.

Sometimes parents of children/teenagers with ASD/Aspergers blame themselves for their child/teenager's difficulties. They might wonder if they are doing something wrong that is causing their child/teenager to struggle, or if they are not doing enough to help their child/teenager. A young adult friend of mine, who has experience with ASD, through people she knows with ASD, and research she has done on the topic, has advised me that it is:

“NOT parents fault. The whole world is noisy, impatient, judgmental and inflexible.”

**If you are struggling to deal with your own emotions, as a parent, please don't hesitate to call Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14.**

There is hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel. With the right help, teenagers with ASD/Aspergers can do very well and be very happy in life. It just takes a lot of time and effort.