

How to Obtain a Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD for short) for Your Teenager, in South Australia

Firstly, there are two types of ASD assessment:

1. Dual assessment (or multi-disciplinary assessment):

This will be conducted by at least two accredited clinicians. It could be a paediatrician or a child and adolescent psychiatrist, plus a child and adolescent psychologist and a speech pathologist. Often it is a child and adolescent psychologist and a speech pathologist only. The assessment might take place at one appointment, or it might be conducted over a number of appointments.

If you have an ASD diagnosis by dual assessment, you can:

- Register with Autism SA and access their services; and
- Apply for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS for short) funding to pay for relevant support/treatment.

2. Single assessment:

This will be conducted by one accredited clinician only. It could be a paediatrician, or a child and adolescent psychiatrist, or a child and adolescent psychologist.

If you have an ASD diagnosis by single assessment, you can:

- Apply for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS for short) funding to pay for relevant support/treatment.

Secondly, there are three options for seeking an ASD assessment in South Australia:

1. **Public Health System:** (Further details provided on the relevant section of my website)

Cost: **This is the only option that is free of charge.**

Approximate waiting time before an appointment: **14 - 18 months*.**

*(*However, in reality, due to the approach taken by the public health system when a teenager presents with 'certain issues', as described on the title page of this website, there is a high likelihood that it will take **more than 18 months** before your teenager gets to the stage of being assessed for ASD through the public health system).*

OR

2. **Autism SA:** (Further details provided on the relevant section of my website)

Cost: **\$1,000.00 (\$600.00 if your teenager is over 18 years of age).**

Approximate waiting time before an appointment: **18 months.**

OR

3. **Private Clinic or Clinician:** - Private clinics or clinicians can offer either a dual (or multi-disciplinary) assessment, or a single assessment. (Further details provided on the relevant section of my website)

Approximate cost for a dual (or multi-disciplinary) assessment: **\$1,200.00 - \$1,800.00.**

Approximate cost for a single assessment: **\$600.00 minimum.**

Approximate waiting time before an appointment: **4 – 9 months†.**

(†You could phone a few different private clinics or clinicians, to find out what their current waiting time is. When the waiting list of a private clinic or clinician reaches 12 months, they usually stop taking any more bookings for a period of time).

The option you choose will likely depend on what you can afford, and/or which option has the first available ASD assessment appointment.

Please do not be put off by the difficult and lengthy processes that I have described for obtaining an ASD assessment for your teenager, nor by the substantial one-off cost, if you want to seek an ASD assessment via Autism SA or a private clinic or clinician.

Obtaining an ASD diagnosis is neither quick, nor easy, but it is well worth it.

I am an adult. I found my own ways to cope in life, long before my ASD diagnosis. I do not have private health cover, because I cannot afford it. At the time of my ASD assessment, I was unemployed. Yet, I still felt it was important enough for me to spend the money on an ASD assessment at a private clinic. It was well worth it for me. My diagnosis has given me a great sense of validation, and I feel that it has given me permission to be myself, to do the things I need to do to cope in life, and to ask for the things I need, without apologising or feeling embarrassed.

I desperately wish I had gone ahead with obtaining an ASD assessment for my daughter much sooner than I did. When I first booked an ASD assessment appointment for my daughter in 2016, I did not go ahead with it, for a couple of reasons. One of them was the cost. I had booked the appointment at a private clinic, because the waiting time for an ASD assessment appointment in the public health system seemed far too long. It was another three years before I finally took my daughter back to the same private clinic, and obtained an ASD diagnosis for her.

However, I essentially spent four years seeking help for my daughter, from various mental health professionals, being pointed first in one direction, then another, feeling like I was beating my head against a brick wall, without getting any clear answers or treatment that really helped my daughter. That was four years of my daughter suffering mental and emotional distress to varying degrees, without any clear explanation as to the cause, and without appropriate support and/or treatment, which could have greatly alleviated her suffering.