

For the Teenagers/Self-Diagnosis

A young adult friend of mine, who has experience with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD or Autism for short), through people she knows with ASD, and research she has done on the topic, shared the following advice with me, which I think is very helpful:

“Autism is a disability. Like needing glasses, you’re not broken or worth less than anyone else. But you do need help with some things, and while professional support is much less accessible than glasses, there are some things you can do to mitigate your symptoms. Remember, having a disability doesn’t mean you have to struggle. There is no shame in asking for help. You don’t have to wait for a meltdown to seek help.

Diagnosis, or even self-diagnosis is often very helpful, even without any other support, because it gives you the words to understand yourself with, i.e., “I’m not short-tempered, I’m overwhelmed”. The first thing is hard to deal with, the second can be resolved by removing yourself from a situation.

We all have bad days, and if earplugs help, then use them.

Even someone who doesn’t usually struggle with these symptoms can use these strategies for coping**.

**These symptoms” and “these strategies for coping” could also refer to the sorts of symptoms and suggestions for how to cope that I have described on my website, and in particular, in my Handbook†, and also other symptoms of ASD/Aspergers and other strategies for coping that you might find on other websites, or in other books, when seeking answers for yourself about ASD/Aspergers.

(† *Handbook for Teenagers with ASD/Aspergers, and their Parents*, which is available for free on my website).

Self-Diagnosis:

Not everyone who suspects that they have ASD wants to, or is able to, obtain a 'formal' diagnosis of ASD (i.e., a diagnosis from a psychologist who specialises in ASD, and/or other relevant specialists in ASD).

If you have been looking for answers to understand yourself, and to help yourself with certain difficulties that you have, and if you have read various sources of information about ASD (such as my website), you might come to strongly believe that you fit the traits/symptoms of ASD. This is often referred to as 'self-diagnosis'.

A self-diagnosis of ASD will not enable you to access professional support for your ASD issues. However, it can help you to understand yourself better, and it can lead you in the right direction to finding strategies to cope with your ASD difficulties.

There are websites that provide questionnaires containing specially formulated questions that you can complete, to see if you fit a diagnosis of ASD. However, **I personally would NOT recommend these**, as they tend to focus on limited stereotypical traits of ASD/Aspergers, and do not allow for just how different each person with ASD/Aspergers can be.