



Leaflet 1: What Is a Collaborative Discussion?

Understanding the Collaborative Discussion in Autism and ADHD Assessments

At The Autism Clinic, we use the term *collaborative discussion* to describe a key part of both our **adult** and **child** assessment processes. This is not a test, but a structured conversation designed to help us understand how a person experiences the world, communicates, thinks, and regulates.

For Adults

The collaborative discussion is a 60–90 minute session between you and one of our clinicians (please allow up to 3 hours). It can take place online or in person. Together, we will explore:

- Your focus, attention, and energy levels
- Communication preferences and social interactions
- Sensory experiences and emotional regulation
- Routines, interests, and how you manage change
- Any challenges with burnout, masking, or identity

You are encouraged to share in whatever way feels comfortable—speaking, typing, using visuals, or bringing notes. We can adjust the session to meet your needs.

For Children

The collaborative discussion focuses on the child's current presentation and daily life. We usually meet with the child and parent/carer together (or sometimes separately), depending on what suits them best. We might use visuals, toys, or child-friendly language to help them engage.

We explore:

- How your child communicates and socialises
- Their play and interests
- Emotional responses, meltdowns or shutdowns
- Sensory sensitivities
- Routines and transitions



We also consider how the child presents across settings (e.g. home vs school), and whether masking may be present.

Why Do We Use This Term?

“Collaborative discussion” reflects our neuroaffirmative approach. It is a respectful, two-way conversation—working *with* the person being assessed rather than applying a checklist *to* them. It forms one part of a broader picture alongside developmental history, observations, and feedback from others.

