



Nicola Albrecht
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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER ASSESSMENTS

For a formal diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder in WA a multidisciplinary assessment approach is usually required. Diagnostic assessment requires that stringent diagnostic assessment criteria are met, as assessed by the following professionals:

Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, Speech Pathologists (with certification in ASD assessment and diagnosis) and some others, as appropriate.

Which professionals required for your child's assessment and diagnosis may vary depending upon your child's areas of difficulty; your intention to apply for supports following diagnosis (ie. NDIS, Department of Education etc). It can also be determined by the age of the child. This should be discussed with your diagnostician/s. However, generally speaking, a minimum of two suitably trained professionals would be required to agree upon a diagnosis (if Department of Education funding is sought). In some instances, the NDIS may accept single-clinician diagnosis depending upon level of support needs.

For families accessing assessments privately, the WA Autism Diagnosticians' Forum website (WAADF) may be a useful place to access a list of diagnosticians that may be able to assist with this process: <https://waadf.org.au/paad/>

It is important to note that assessment does NOT always result in diagnosis. All findings will be discussed with parents at the feedback meeting if requested, with suggestions about next steps provided via report/email, based on whether child does or does not meet diagnostic criteria.

Referral & Acceptance

Under best practice guidelines, referral to our service for psychological assessment of autism would come from a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist who has already undergone medical evaluation of the child. This is the ideal pathway for referral and assessment. Additionally, a nominal rebate via Medicare may be applicable **if** referred by Paediatrician/Psychiatrist. Please ensure that your referring Paediatrician/Psychiatrist provides a written referral under Medicare requirements, if you plan to apply for any applicable rebates.

However, given the significant demand for Paediatric/Psychiatric services in the current climate, timely access to these services is proving to be difficult. As such, it may be possible for the psychological component of assessment to be completed *prior* to involvement of medical professionals, with referral via allied health professionals or GP's for example. Some self-referrals may also be considered. Suitability for this referral/assessment pathway is assessed on individual case-by-case basis (and may be subject to interim medical evaluation via the child's GP). No Medicare rebate would be applicable via this referral pathway.

Under the APS Code of Ethics, the psychologist will assess each referral received to determine if this would be considered as a valid and appropriate reason for assessment. The psychologist determines this by considering whether the assessment will be suitable and beneficial for the child and is ethical under APS guidelines. The final decision regarding suitability rests with the psychologist. If it is determined that the assessment, psychologist, or referral reason is not suitable, this will be conveyed to the parent/s and/or contracting party and the psychologist reserves the right not to engage with the client in this service.



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Assessment Process

As part of the intake process, families will be asked to complete some information forms to assist in determining whether assessment via this service is appropriate. Please note that assessments are not guaranteed until all documentation including referrals have been received and reviewed by the psychologist.

Psychologist assessment for autism is a very detailed and comprehensive process. This involves careful observation and interpretation of specific characteristics such as social communication, behaviours and fixed interests etc. First, the psychologist will ask parents/caregivers to complete a number of pre-interview forms to obtain as much information as possible regarding the social and developmental history of the child.

Following receipt of these documents, there will then be a comprehensive semi-structured interview (based on the ADI-R) with parent/s to explore the child's presentation, including individual strengths, weaknesses and specific areas of concern. Parents are asked to provide (either via email or in person) copies of school reports, previous assessment and other health professional reports etc.

Following the parent interview, your child will attend an assessment session with the psychologist (done on a separate day). This will include careful interaction and observation of the child (usually through play), based specifically on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria. Depending upon your child's age, some self-report formalised assessments may also be included.

Parents (and teachers) will be requested to complete a number of evidence-based questionnaires and assessment tools to form part of the diagnostic process, as appropriate. These are generally online assessments.

In some circumstances, a cognitive (IQ) assessment may also be required. This will be discussed prior to assessment and provided in consultation with parents at an additional cost (approx. \$400).

Observation, interview and collateral data are then carefully interpreted against specific DSM-5 diagnostic criteria. A comprehensive report of findings is then prepared and provided to parents electronically (approx. 4 weeks following assessment).

The opportunity for a feedback session (of 30 mins) is offered at this time (not included in package fee but offered at a reduced rate of \$90.00).

Engagement of Services

Upon agreement between parent/caregivers and the psychologist, suitable dates and times for each stage of the assessment process will be arranged. Included in the packaged cost of **\$1,550.00** for autism assessment is:

- A parent interview appointment – allowing approx. 1.5 hours (up to 2 hours)
- Observation and assessment of the child – allowing up to approx. 1 hour (up to 1.5 hours)
- Psychologist review of supplementary data including school reports, medical/allied health professional reports, liaison with teachers/daycare/other health professionals, as required.
- Preparation of a comprehensive assessment report (allowing approx. 3-4 hours)



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- Emailed feedback and PDF of report. If more comprehensive feedback is requested, a face to face or phone/ZOOM feedback session can be arranged at a discounted rate of \$90 per 30-minute session.

Costs of Assessment and Payment

From January 2025, the cost of assessment inclusive of services listed above is \$1,550.00.

***Additional costs may be incurred if site visits (home/school/daycare) are required. All additional charges would be discussed and agreed upon PRIOR to service delivery, if applicable. If not all components listed above are required, total cost will be reduced accordingly (adjustment on final invoice).*

On occasion, the need for further/additional assessments may be required and will incur additional costs. Time taken to conduct additional assessment/s or gather further data outside of the above will be charged at the current clinician hourly rate of \$240.00, but will only be carried out in consultation with parent/caregiver.

Invoices will be issued for the full amount at the initial session. Please note that report **will not** be released until payment of assessment has been received **IN FULL**.

The report will be provided to the parent/legal guardian only. A copy of report and/or letter of result will be provided to the referrer as a matter of professional courtesy. Copies of the report will only be shared with outside parties with consent of the parent/legal guardian.

Payments for completed parts of the assessment process are chargeable and non-refundable in the event that the client (or our service) chooses to disengage or terminate the assessment process for *any* reason, including child behaviour or legal/ethical reasons.

Payments can be made via:

DIRECT DEPOSIT TO:

Child & Adolescent Psychological Assessment Services – Nicola Albrecht

BSB: 062-692

ACCOUNT: 46905127

Reference: ASD first name & surname of child (eg: ASD Andy Smith)

Please email payment confirmation to Nicola at psychassessments@outlook.com

CREDIT CARD (Visa or Mastercard Only) via SQUARE is accepted, however please note that the surcharge fee of approx. 2.2% is payable by the customer on any credit card payment.

CASH

Receipts/invoices are sent automatically to main contact email address on file and are formatted to provide clients with an estimated breakdown of fees, as they may wish to check eligibility for claiming part of the assessment via private health insurance, if applicable.



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Cancellation of assessments

Appointments are precious! Not only are there families who would like to the opportunity of earlier assessment dates, as a small business, late cancellations and no-shows impact us significantly. There is a lot of administrative and preparation work involved outside of clinic-based appointments.

As such, cancellation of any booked appointments or assessments must be done by providing a **minimum of 48 hours' notice**. In the case where insufficient notice (less than 48 hours) or a missed appointment occurs, a cancellation fee of **\$250.00** is payable to cover costs associated with preparation, administration and room rental fees. This includes circumstances where appointments need to be cancelled due to medical reasons, however please discuss your specific situation with Nicola.

The cancellation fee can be waived at the services' discretion, if a medical certificate can be provided, if requested.

It is extremely important that, if you or your child are unwell, you do not attend face to face appointments. Instead, you are encouraged to contact us as soon as symptoms are noticed, to try and arrange a telehealth session (where appropriate) or discuss rescheduling (cancellation fees as above may apply - please discuss this with Nicola).

Please note that cancellation or reschedule of appointments on more than two occasions may mean that your child is placed back on to the waitlist for service.

Confidentiality and Reporting

Our service upholds client confidentiality in line with the Australian Psychological Society charter.

As per the APS Code of Ethics A.5.2:

The psychologist will disclose confidential information obtained in the course of their provision of psychological services **only** under any one or more of the following circumstances:

- (a) with the consent of the relevant client or a person with legal authority to act on behalf of the client;
- (b) where there is a legal obligation to do so;
- (c) if there is an immediate and specified risk of harm to an identifiable person or persons that can be averted only by disclosing information; or
- (d) when consulting colleagues, or in the course of supervision or professional training, provided the psychologist:
 - (i) conceals the identity of clients and associated parties involved; or
 - (ii) obtains the client's consent and gives prior notice to the recipients of the information that they are required to preserve the client's privacy, and obtains an undertaking from the recipients of the information that they will preserve the client's privacy.

All client records and information will be stored securely and in accordance with APS guidelines.

Following the assessment process and once payment is made in full, a written report is produced, including reporting of relevant history and background information (based on information obtained through interview, assessment, observation and collateral data). The final written report becomes the property of the client (and



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client's parent/legal guardian), and may be shared by the parent/legal guardian with other health professionals and or relevant services at their discretion.

RECORDING OF SESSIONS FOR CLINICAL NOTE TAKING

This service uses an audio-text app called Patient Notes for the purposes of our commitment to improving clinical documentation and enhancing patient care, aiming to provide more accurate and detailed documentation, as well as enabling greater focus on interpersonal communication during sessions.

The Patient Notes app is a secure and encrypted platform, which converts the audio from consultations into tailored clinical notes. It adheres to global encryption standards. Importantly, **the recordings are not stored**; instead, they are transformed into text using AI and stored in our current Patient management system (Halaxy).

PatientNotes.app is fully compliant with AHPRA and HIPAA standards.

More Information can be found on the Patient Notes site:

Privacy Policy: <https://www.patientnotes.app/privacy>

Security Information: <https://www.patientnotes.app/security>

This format of note-taking is used at the discretion of the psychologist with consent of the client. By completing the consent form via link below, you (client) are acknowledging use of Patient Notes in this practice for the purpose of transcribing medical notes, however the assessor will always request verbal consent prior to recording of sessions regardless - No sessions will be recorded without your consent and your consent can be withdrawn at any time.

IMPORTANT

Please note, your psychologist **will not** provide any court reports or any medico-legal reports under any circumstances.

The psychologist reserves the right to restrict or terminate services if Growing Minds Clinical Psychology/Child & Adolescent Psychological Services: become aware at any time that you are using our services to support any legal or court proceedings or applications; if your psychologist receives any legal subpoena or summons initiated by you and/or your legal representatives; or if you or your legal representatives attempt to involve your psychologist and/or the Practice in any court or legal proceedings/applications or in any formal notification or dispute process without our express written consent.

The psychologist also reserves the right to terminate services if there are any concerns relating to personal safety, including threats or verbal abuse from clients or their families.

The psychologist practices under the APS Code of Ethics.

Our service values its clients and welcomes any queries or feedback (positive and negative).

Please direct any such communication directly to Nicola via email at psychassessments@outlook.com or feel free to discuss this during your scheduled appointments.



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Please take the time to carefully read through this information and refer to the FAQ's on the website, or contact us should you seek clarification. Should you wish to proceed with our services, please complete the consent form attached – this will be required by the psychologist prior to commencement of services. Please retain this information, terms & conditions document for your reference.

Please let Nicola know if you have ANY queries or concerns regarding an information contained in this document, prior to signing and returning the consent form.

A consent to service form must be completed to secure service booking.

CONSENT TO SERVICE

Online consent documents are accessible by clicking on the link below, or scanning the QR Code

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9WJDT8L>

