

Navigating a Diagnosis

Autism and ND Advocacy Association

How to reach out to an evaluator:

Go to [Psychology Today](#) and search for a mental health professional that can perform a diagnosis. It will usually list in their description that they can perform the diagnosis. Make sure to look for PhD level psychologists or certified psychiatrists. Therapists cannot diagnose these disorders, although they can help and give a good estimate of a diagnosis.

How to prepare for an evaluation:

It is a good idea to take an online test before an evaluation, to gauge where your symptoms are coming from and what a possible diagnosis could be. It is important to remember diagnosis is very complex and a psychologist has the final say, not an online test.

Online tests:

[ADHD](#)

[Autism](#)

[Dyspraxia](#)

[Schizophrenia](#)

[Bipolar Disorder](#)

It is a good idea to look on youtube or other social media platforms for resources from those with the disorder. There are many videos on youtube where you can learn more about certain disorders from those who have it.

If you are nervous, or tend to get anxious or freeze up in these types of situations, it may be beneficial to complete a document before hand outlining your symptoms. Look up diagnostic criteria and put together details about yourself that match each criteria. We have forms available for download for a few disorders listed on our website [here](#) under the resources tab.

Barriers to Diagnosis:

- Cost - no insurance
- Difficulty finding appointments / someone near them who can evaluate them (low-income areas possibly)
- Professional who is not educated on the atypical presentation of disorder
- MISdiagnosis of another disorder
- Lack of direction after diagnosis for adults
- Uncomfortable evaluations, causing neurodivergent people to not think clearly and forget to disclose things

Things to Bring to an Evaluation:

- Health insurance card (if you have one)
- Something fun to do in case you have to wait (examples: book, puzzle, fidgets, music player)
- Sensory items (examples: sunglasses, chewing gum, headphones)
- A list of questions or things you want to talk about with your healthcare provider
- Any logs or diaries you keep related to your health problems (examples: blood sugar measurements, blood pressure measurements, symptom trackers)
- Containers (bottles, tubes, etc.) of all of your current medications.
- The next best thing would be a list of all current medications, including any new or changed medications
- Anything your healthcare provider has asked you to bring (if they have asked you to bring anything)
- A short summary of your medical history
- Your old medical records (if you have them)
- Names and addresses (or fax numbers) of your past healthcare providers or any other healthcare providers that you are still going to (your primary care provider and any specialists) Names and contact information of people who may be involved in your healthcare. Examples include the person they should contact in case of an emergency, your Healthcare Power of Attorney (the person who would make health-related decisions for you if you ever could not make

them yourself), a guardian (if you have one), and anyone who helps you communicate between visits.

- Your intake form, if you filled one out at home.

Sources:

Most sources are embedded in the document.

https://www.autismandhealth.org/inc/forms/hc_prep_checklist.pdf