

Adult Autism Spectrum Disorder Assessment

What is an adult Autism Spectrum Disorder Assessment?

These assessments specifically assess for the presence of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This is a complicated process, especially in adults who do not have a previous diagnosis of an ASD. This is due to the developmental nature of this disorder, which requires symptoms to be present in early childhood. As such a thorough developmental history is required. Furthermore, there are several conditions that have overlapping symptoms with an ASD. As such, it is essential that these other conditions are appropriately evaluated.

What is involved?

Typically, these assessments include an initial interview to determine if they are sufficient and appropriate to address an individual's concerns. The clinician will meet with you, collect a history of the concerns, and then provide a recommendation around what would be required to clarify whether or not a person has an ASD. In most cases, this will require several hours of testing in the office, completion of questionnaires, and a follow-up interview with the individual or a parent. Testing also includes an evaluation of cognitive abilities (i.e., intelligence tests) to rule out potential processing deficits/strengths that can mimic ASD symptoms. Once this is complete, a written report is typically provided that summarizes the testing results and provides a diagnosis, if one is identified.

Billing for Psychoeducational Assessments

It is important to understand the billing process prior to commencing an assessment. If you have insurance coverage for the assessment we highly recommend that you contact your provider and verify what they will cover. Please review the sample billing structure described below.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Hours Billed</u>	<u>Description on receipt</u>
Intake interview	1 hour	Psychological Consultation
Initial Testing Session (Cognitive Testing and Psychological Measures)	3 hours	Psychodiagnostic test administration
Second Testing Session (ASD Specific testing and clinical interview)	3 hours	Psychodiagnostic test administration
Scoring & interpretation and associated writing	2 hours	Psychodiagnostics test scoring and interpretation
Interview with teacher or other involved professional (if needed & with your consent) ·	15-30 mins (per interview)	Psychological Consultation
Follow-up Interview	1 hour	Psychological Consultation
Report writing	3 hours	Psychodiagnostics test scoring and interpretation
Feedback session	1 hour	Psychological Consultation
Total Approximate hours	14 hours (+ additional interviews)	

Note:

a) Exact amounts vary depending on the location and psychologist/psychological associate with whom you are working. If testing is required for students in French Immersion an additional hour may be required.

- b) Items in blue are done by the psychologist/psychological associate without the client or parent
- c) There are occasions when additional time may be required for the assessment process, if this is the case the clinician will review this with you in advance and seek your consent to proceed.
- d) The assessment report will typically be issued to you on receipt of payment for all billed services.

Risks and Benefits of a Autism Spectrum Assessment

Before initiating an assessment it is important to understand the risks and benefits of the going through the process. Please read through this information carefully. Your psychologist would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Potential Benefits

1. Increased awareness or understanding of your own functioning, behaviour, emotional state, and/or relationships.
2. Formal identification of behavioural or emotional disorder, that may help you advocate for appropriate supports/interventions.
3. Provide specific recommendations for treatment and/or accommodations at school or the workplace, such as educational placement decisions and individualized programming.
4. Monitor progress and change over time (in the case of multiple assessments).
5. Clarify complex historical and diagnostic pictures.
6. Integrate information from multiple sources to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of your history and current functioning.
7. Individuals often find the assessment process enjoyable, and appreciate receiving one-on-one attention and interest from a supportive person.

Risks

1. Assessments can uncover underlying problems/difficulties that you had not expected. For example, approximately 50% of individuals seeking these assessments at our clinic do not end up meeting criteria for an ASD. Often their symptoms are better understood as being related to another mental health condition or they simply have features of an ASD without meeting full criteria for the disorder.
2. You or your child may receive a diagnosis, which can be a difficult process for some individuals, for example
 - i. You may need to learn about what that diagnosis means.
 - ii. Individuals may have to come to terms with their own limitations/weaknesses.
 - iii. Some individuals worry that diagnoses may be associated with social stigmatization (e.g., being singled out or treated differently than peers), if

they choose to share the diagnosis with others.

iv. Can be experienced as a loss of what you had expected.

3. If a diagnosis was previously identified a re-assessment could find that the diagnosis is no longer appropriate. Therefore, it is possible that accommodations that have been in place will no longer be applicable. If this does occur, it is likely that transitional accommodation would be put in place to help the individual adjust.
4. What you learn about yourself may highlight the need for changes in yourself and your relationships.
5. Although this information is helpful in making decisions about placement and accommodations in academic/work settings, we cannot guarantee that you will receive the interventions/ accommodations that you are hoping for.
6. What you learn about yourself may not necessarily lead to a cure or complete resolution of the difficulties.
7. Psychoeducational assessments are time consuming. They require individuals to collect information (e.g., school records, previous assessments), attend multiple appointments, and engage in testing. For some people, the testing can be lengthy and some individuals feel fatigued, stressed, and/or frustrated with the process.
8. In order for tests to be valid they require that individual put forth their best effort. In some circumstances, if sufficient effort is not put in the results will not be valid. In such cases this will be noted in the report and the conclusions drawn from the assessment will be limited. In other cases, it may be necessary to stop the assessment if the psychologist feels the results could not be interpreted and/or would not be useful.
9. As part of the assessment, your emotional functioning will be assessed. This may involve answering questions or discussing events that are painful or difficult to discuss. Sometimes individuals may experience intense feelings of sadness or anger, although this is usually temporary. However, it this is an important part of the evaluation and it usually leads to an improved understanding of the difficulties that may be occurring.
10. Although these assessments assess most aspects of an individual's functioning, they do not assess issues related to child custody, access, or family functioning. Those assessments require a different assessment process. Please ask your service provider for more details if this is what you are looking to assess.