

My autistic life

Many of us may have a friend or family member who is autistic so you may have a basic understanding of what autism is. There are around 700,000 people (children and adults) in the UK that have a diagnosis of autism. Autism is a spectrum condition so people can be affected in different ways. Autism can come in different forms, such as Autism disorder, Asperger Syndrome and Pervasive Development Disorder.

Like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses. Appreciation of this has grown in recent years, especially so when the world's richest and influential person Elon Musk announced on a popular American TV show that he has Asperger Syndrome.

The different types of Autism

As we know, Autism is a spectrum and can affect people in different ways. The three main disorders are as below:

Autistic Disorder

Often referred to as "classic autism" as it is what most people think of when hearing the word 'autism'. Individuals who have autistic disorder will often have challenges with their social communication, they will also likely have unusual behaviours and interests. Out of the three autism spectrum disorders, individuals with autistic disorder are most likely to have an intellectual disability.

Asperger Syndrome

People with Asperger syndrome will tend to have milder symptoms of autistic disorder. They will often have similar challenges with social communication, they are also likely to have unusual behaviours and interests similar to those with autistic disorder. However, those with Asperger's syndrome typically don't have problems with language or an intellectual disability.

Pervasive Development Disorder

Pervasive Development Disorder is sometimes referred to as the “atypical autism”, or PDD-NOS. This is because people with PDD will meet some of the criteria for both Autistic Disorder and Asperger Syndrome but not all so they will be diagnosed with Atypical Autism. People with Atypical Autism will usually have fewer and milder symptoms than those with the other two disorders, for example, they may only cause social and communication challenges.

Anxiety and Autism

Anxiety is a very real issue for many autistic adults, especially when faced by a social situation or when there is a change. Anxiety can have a knock on effect for autistic individuals psychologically, physically and can impact their quality of life. Struggling with social situations and communication can also cause social anxiety which can deter individuals from engaging in social situations which can lead to withdrawal and create more anxiety for autistic individuals.

More information

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

Care first