

What is autism?

Autism is a developmental difference in the brain. It affects the way a person interacts with and understands the world around them.

We still don't know exactly what causes some people to be autistic and not others. There is no 'cure' for autism, and the idea of a cure is often deeply upsetting to people on the autism spectrum and their families, who may see autism as a big part of their own or their loved one's identity.

Autism is a lifelong disability, so autistic children will become autistic adults. Many autistic adults develop strategies which help them interact with others and lead an independent life. Others might have very complex support needs and require a lifetime of specialist support.



The most important thing for people to know is that everyone on the autism spectrum is different.

Whilst autistic people share some common difficulties, each person's experience of autism is entirely their own. Some people have sensory difficulties, whilst others might not. About 40% of people on the autism spectrum also have a learning disability, which may bring its own challenges or compound the challenges brought by that person's autism.

It's really important to treat autistic people as individuals. As the saying goes - 'if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism'.

Go to our website for more information on ['what is autism?'](#).