

Insight into diagnosis in adulthood

We had a chat with an autistic lady, who gave us her insight into late diagnosis in adulthood.

"In common with many other people I received an autism diagnosis after my child was diagnosed. That was 13 years ago and long before I started to use social media where I have since learned so much about autism from the wider autistic where I have since learned so much about autism from the wider autistic community."

When I started to read up about autism, the information I came across did not help me fully understand my girl (due to her undiagnosed cooccurring conditions), but it did explain a lot of things that had been problematic in my life. For example, difficulty maintaining friendships, finding "easy" things tricky and vice versa, perfectionist tendencies, over-analysing, sensory differences and last, but definitely not least, anxiety.

I sought a diagnosis mainly because I wanted to know if autism did in fact explain these things. My diagnosis was validation. I recall at first feeling like telling the world, shouting it out from the roof tops. I then realised it was not such a good idea as there is still a lot of ignorance about what being autistic means.

Some friends and family were dismissive, "you must be mild" or "it is just like personality traits", however being autistic is much more than that. selective regarding how I talk about autism and instead talk about specifics, rather than the "autism" label itself.

I am glad I sought a diagnosis. I am a lot more understanding of differences and it has helped me make sense of things that have happened in my life. My perfectionist tendencies have moderated, I have learned it is OK for friendships to look different and that having interests and passions is so important.

I am also more forgiving, accepting that I need more "down-time" to recharge and head off "burnout".

I feel that I am privileged to have received a formal diagnosis, as this is not accessible for everyone and can be missed for outdated reasons such as having friends or empathy."