

SUPPORT AFTER AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS

Tips for partners and whānau of newly diagnosed autistic adults

A DIAGNOSIS IS A POSITIVE THING

Most autistic adults who have just been diagnosed are relieved - they finally have an explanation for how they've felt and the things they've experienced all their life! There is often an enormous sense of new understanding when an autistic adult is diagnosed, and they will probably want to talk about all the new things they understand about themselves and their relationships.

YOUR PERSON HASN'T CHANGED

Your partner, friend, or family member is still the same person they were before they got their diagnosis. It may seem like they need more support or accommodation since the diagnosis, but they have always needed that support - they've just now acquired the self-knowledge and ability to articulate what they need and why they need it.

READ ARTICLES AND RESOURCES WRITTEN BY AUTISTIC PEOPLE

The viewpoints of other autistic people will help you understand your friend, partner or family member. Neuroclastic.com is a good place to start, as is the #actuallyautistic hashtag on Twitter (be aware though that if you aren't autistic, it's not appropriate for you to use the hashtag yourself).

THINGS TO SAY

"It must be awesome to have that new knowledge about yourself!"

"Do you want to tell me about what being autistic means for you/what new things you've found out about yourself?"

"Let me know if you figure out anything we can do to make living together/working together/communicating easier for you."

THINGS NOT TO SAY

"I'm so sorry."

"But you don't look autistic."

"You're nothing like my cousin/my friend's kid/that character from that TV show."

"You've never acted like that/needed that support before."

For more information about autism and the services we offer, head to autismnz.org.nz

This resource was written by an autistic author, with lived experience of the diagnosis process.