

Skills for
Health



orca



How to do a great assessment for someone who has autism

Published by Skills for Care, West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP
www.skillsforcare.org.uk

and Skills for Health, 4th Floor, 1 Temple Way, Bristol, BS2 0BY
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

© Skills for Care & Skills for Health 2015

Copies of this work may be made for non-commercial distribution to aid social care workforce development. Any other copying requires the permission of Skills for Care and Skills for Health.

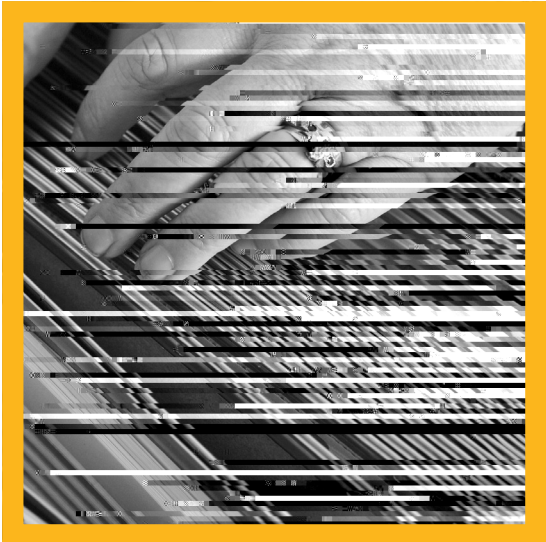
Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development, and is the home of the National Skills Academy for Social Care.

Skills for Health is an employer-led organisation working to improve healthcare and the patient experience by supporting employers to deliver high quality, cost effective and efficient services.

Bibliographic reference data for Harvard-style author/date referencing system:

Short reference: Skills for Care & Skills for Health [or SfC&SfH] 2015

Long reference: Skills for Care & Skills for Health, How to do a great assessment for someone who has autism (Leeds, 2015) www.skillsforcare.org.uk
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk



Contents

Things to think about when doing any assessment for someone with autism

The assessment

What attitudes, knowledge and skills are required to carry out effective assessments with people who have autism?

Attitudes

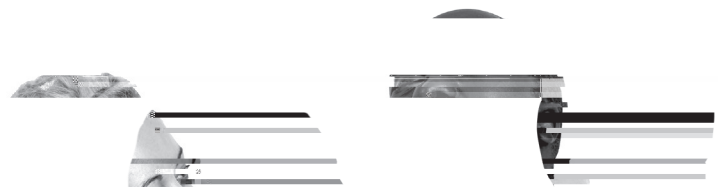
Knowledge

Actions

Who has contributed to the development of this guide?

Resources

Acknowledgements



Things to think about when doing any assessment for someone with autism

In order to conduct a fair and accurate assessment effectively it is essential that you are able

Adapting your communication:

- ✓ **Speak to the person who made the referral or someone who knows the person well. Ask them about the best way to communicate and**



What attitudes, knowledge and skills are required to carry out effective assessments with people who have autism?

Below are examples of the attitudes, knowledge and actions that people with autism and their families felt were important from any professional doing an assessment of someone who has autism.

| Attitudes | Knowledge | Actions |
|---|---|--|
| <p>People with autism have feelings.</p> <p>Be concerned with the long term of someones life, not just the minimum they need to survive right now.</p> <p>Be positive about autism – see the good things as well as the difficulties. Show this with your language and body language.</p> <p>Accept how the person sees their autism – as an asset and/or a disability.</p> <p>Accept and embrace the persons (and their family's) individuality – work with them not against them.</p> <p>Believe that all (autistic) people can and do communicate.</p> <p>Be supporting and non-judgemental.</p> | <p>Understand what 'neuro-typical bias' is.</p> <p>It's hard for non-autistic people to imagine all the ways autism can affect someone. This makes it hard for them to assess properly.</p> <p>Know the person as an individual including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their background how autism affects them their aspirations and future plans their wishes, preferences, hobbies and interests. <p>Understand what the person's sensory differences actually are.</p> <p>Know behaviour is communication, even challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Know that autism is not curable.</p> <p>You need to consider all my needs not just the one your team covers.</p> | <p>Ask for, and read, the person's 'one page profile' or ask them to send you some brief information about what's important to them.</p> <p>Explain what you are doing and the process you'll follow – consider using diagrams or timetables to show the stages of a process and the time available.</p> <p>Use the most familiar method of communication and find the right tools.</p> <p>Use familiar language not medical jargon.</p> <p>Spend time finding out how it feels – 'walk a mile in our shoes'.</p> <p>Use 'adult' language with adults and accurate language with children.</p> <p>Do a holistic assessment of the 'whole person'(and where relevant their family) – considering their wellbeing and hopes and fears for the future expect their values and beliefs.</p> <p>Be creative – bypass managerial (and budgetary) constraints.</p> <p>Practice personalisation in its true sense.</p> |

Attitudes

Knowledge

Actions

Accept 'stimming' activities, routines of actions or language and that 'paying attention' might look like 'not paying attention'.

Be enabling and encouraging – people can grow and develop throughout their lives.

People can contribute to training.

Some people want to be part of an autistic community – some don't.

All services can always be improved.

Equality of opportunity means doing things differently for people.

Know your limits and signpost to others or get advice if you can't help.

Attitudes

Think about how your attitude affects the person you are assessing and the outcome of the assessment.

The best assessors think about how I might feel and react to something that they say, even if it isn't meant to sound bad.



Knowledge

The best workers know that autism can affect someone differently in different situations and environments.

The best workers...

- understand about autism not just in an intellectual way but in a feeling and experiential way.
- understand that autism can be very different for different individuals.
- understand the individual and what's important to them.
- respect my lifestyle and home.
- understand my specific needs, e.g. memory, communication, sensory and behaviour differences, etc..
- understand somebody with autism can be very skilled in some aspects of their life but desperately struggling in others – and may feel ashamed of this.
- know about a range of tools and resources that might help e.g. tools to help with communication and ways to help sensory differences.
- have knowledge of the individual's cultural and religious or similar needs and background.
- if they don't know, ask, or go and find out!
- are aware of the individual's health needs.

The worst workers...

- don't know anything about autism and are not prepared to learn.
- think IQ or verbal skills equals life skills and competence.
- don't understand the real pain and distress that sensory differences cause.
- record literal answers to questions in a superficial way.
- think they are experts in what they do just because they have been working with people with autism for a long time.
- make assumptions.
- treats somebody like a child.



Actions



Who has contributed to the development of this guide?

In June and July 2015 a group of people worked together with Skills for Care and Skills for Health to think about what really makes a great personal assistant for someone with autism.

The group included:

people with autism

carers and family

advocates

personal assistants



