

# Women and girls on the autistic spectrum



All people with autism have differences in their communication, social understanding, social imagination, processing and flexibility.

The presentation of autism spectrum conditions can be very different in women and girls and is often missed or becomes a mis-diagnosis, as the diagnostic systems available to clinicians often focus on male examples which can cloud the issue in diagnosing women and girls.

Women and girls with autism spectrum conditions:

- Are more likely to be able to follow social actions by using delayed imitation, observing and copying others – this is known as ‘masking’ and this can therefore hide their difficulties.
- Are often involved in social activity but are often led by their peers rather than initiating.
- Have more active imaginations and may have a rich and elaborate fantasy world with imaginary friends, often escaping into fiction and a fantasy world.
- Have interests that are often similar to those of other girls and women – animals, horses, classical literature, celebrities which are not unusual, however it is the quality and intensity of these that is different.

Autism East Midlands recognises that diagnosis and support for women and girls on the Autism Spectrum can be a significant challenge and as part of the Autism Alliance we have worked with the Royal College of GPs to raise awareness within general practice.

Autism East Midlands welcomes and supports all areas of research into this issue in order that women and girls on the spectrum can receive the support to which they are entitled and achieve their potential.

Autism East Midlands is the largest autism specific charity in the East Midlands, we have a range of services that support both children and adults with autism as well as their families, including:

- a specialist school
- adult residential and day services
- family support hubs
- outreach services
- specialist training for parents, carers and professionals

If you are interested in more information please contact us on 01909 506 678

Or email

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