

Girls with Autism

Autism can often go undiagnosed in girls due to differences in presentation compared to boys with Autism, with boys being 4 times more likely to receive a diagnosis. This can also sometimes be missed by professionals, as the diagnostic criteria for Autism was created through research on boys with Autism. Girls with Autism may also learn to mask their difficulties from a young age, and often show less 'disruptive' behaviours than boys, meaning their difficulties are often overlooked. Undiagnosed Autism is known to cause further difficulties in life, which is why it is important to understand the different presentations of Autism and knowing what to look for.

Signs of Autism in Behaviour:

- Special interests: This interest is more than a hobby. Has an interest become ritualistic and obsessive? These interests can often involve animals and/or literature
- Masking: Girls can learn to mask by watching human behaviours. This can allow them to mask their own difficulties by imitating what has been learned
- Sorry: Girls may frequently apologise and try to appease in social situations
- Anxiety: They are often prone to anxiety when changes occur unexpectedly
- Stimming: Stimming may be milder externally, but may be internalised together with internal thoughts
- Perfectionism: Girls may show this in certain aspects of life, as a means of control
- Sensory: They may have aversions or attractions to certain stimuli, such as foods, textures and sounds

Signs of Autism in Communication:

- Vocab: They may have exceptional vocabulary
- Mimic: Girls may mimic rather than exhibit an appropriate natural response in conversation
- Non-verbal: They may struggle with non-verbal communication, such as body language, gesturing, facial expressions and tone of voice
- Unexpected: They may have difficulty dealing with unexpected verbal responses
- Aware: Girls may be more aware of the need for social interaction
- Reactions: They may have over the top reactions to events and interactions

Signs of Autism in Social settings:

- Shy: Girls may appear excessively shy, avoid interactions where possible and usually won't make the first move
- Conversations: These may make them feel uncomfortable and eye contact can be difficult for them
- Fitting in: They may want to have friends but find it difficult to fit in and find friends of their own
- Mothered: They may be mothered by others in primary school but may be bullied in secondary school
- Explodes: At home they may explode into meltdown but can somehow hold it together in public
- Friends: They may only have 1 or 2 close friends