

11. There are lots of great Autistic people out there to look up to – below is just a few of them!



**Guy Martin**

British lorry mechanic better known publicly as a motorcycle racer and a television personality.



**Lionel Messi:**

Argentinian footballer



**Daryl Hannah**

American film actress



**Chris Packham**

British naturalist and TV presenter.



**Jessica-Jane Applegate**

Paralympic gold medallist, setting the world record for the 200m freestyle swim.

**12. Take things one step at a time.**

Getting a diagnosis of autism doesn't change who you are or what you can be. What it can do is help you understand your strengths and why you might find some things difficult. Understanding more about yourself means you can build on your strengths and also get support for what you find difficult. This will help you to live your life and achieve what you want to the best of your ability, just like anyone else.



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## After an Autism Diagnosis Next Steps for Children and Young People: Give Yourself Time

Autism is a condition or way of being that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others.

Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. There is not something 'wrong' with you if you are autistic, you just experience the world slightly differently to people who are not autistic or 'neurotypical'. Autism can make things more difficult at times, especially schools, friendships or managing things such as change, new places and experiences. You may also have sensory sensitivities such as a sensitivity to noise, sounds, touch or smells which can make certain situations such as large crowds or busy supermarkets difficult. Whilst there are lots of challenges there are also a lot of strengths to being autistic too such as problem solving skills, visual learning skills, memory skills and a great way of seeing the world. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity.



**1. Give yourself time to adjust.**

Some people feel relieved when they are diagnosed with autism, as it helps them understand some of the things they have been feeling or finding difficult, whilst others can feel worried. Remember that you are the same person today, after diagnosis, as you were before. Give yourself time to understand what autism is and what your diagnosis means for you.



## 2. Give the *people around you* time to adjust, and keep them in the loop.

Like you, your friends and family may know nothing about autism to begin with, and might not know what to say. If you are ready you can help them by saying things like:

It's ok to ask me questions, but I might not know the answers yet

## 3. Talk to your parents/ carers if you are not sure about something.

There is a lot of information about autism on the internet, be careful what you read because a lot of it is not true. This even includes people trying to sell cures. You do not need to be cured – autism is a neurological condition, not a disease. But there is a lot of useful information, too. The more you learn, the more your perspective and understanding of autism will develop. However, the most important thing to learn about is you. You know how you feel, what you enjoy, what you are good at and what you find difficult. No matter what other people write about autism, you are the expert in you.



## 4. Take time to think about who to tell.

Being diagnosed with autism is nothing to be ashamed about (in fact lots of people think it is pretty awesome to be autistic!). You don't have to tell people if you don't want to, but you do not have to keep it a secret either. Think with your parents, teacher or someone who supports you about who to tell first and how you might want to tell them. Some children and young people choose not to tell their friends at first whilst others choose to tell their whole school, it really is about what is right for you

## 5. Give yourself time to figure out what autism means for you.

Autistic people's brains work in similar ways, but they are all different. Learn to recognize what sensory things might bother or interest you – such as the feel of clothes, noise, taste and lighting. Learn to recognise when time with other people overloads you, and take time to 'decompress'.

If there are certain things that trouble you then try to tell the people that support you such as your parents, carers or teachers. If you find it hard to say then maybe draw a picture or write it down. You might find that doing certain things can help you feel better and other people might not understand why - if you can tell or show them that it helps it might help them to understand.

## 6. Learn about how your brain works.

Some autistic people find it hard to understand their feelings or senses because of the way their brains work. At times there may be things that bother you and you might not know why. If this happens don't worry, it might take time to work things out. It might help to keep a record of the things and times you find difficult and what helps.



## 7. Give yourself time to work out what works for you.

Everyone communicates, but saying what you think or feel can sometimes be hard for autistic people. Even if you speak a lot you may still find it hard to say exactly what you think or feel. This can be frustrating at times when you think other people should understand. Take your time; they are not deliberately trying to annoy you (even if they are being annoying at times!) If something has been difficult to say, sometimes it helps to talk about it another time, when you are feeling ok, so that your parents/carers will understand what is happening if you feel like that again. You may even agree a way of telling them next time, such as drawing a picture or sending a text!

## 8. Who do you think could help? What do you think would help?

At the same time you are learning about what autism means for you, your parents, carers and teachers will also be learning about what they can do to help and support you. They will be learning about what helps you and what doesn't help, and what support can be put in place for you at school. It is best if they work with you to find out what works best. Understanding about autism will help them to think more about what support might help you.



## 9. Everyone is different.

You might already know someone who is autistic. You may have similarities to them, but you may be nothing like them. No two autistic people are the same, just as no two 'non' autistic people (sometimes referred to as neurotypical people) are the same. We are all different.

## 10. Give yourself space to grow and change.

There are things that will change for you. Things you find difficult now might get easier as you get older. You may grow out of some things you enjoy now. Some things may stay the same. Just like anyone else you are growing and developing.