

ASD Family Help

Registered Charity No. 1135718

5 Top Tips - Self Identity



A diagnosis of autism helps define the autistic person and their identity. Your child is still the same person as before the diagnosis, however being diagnosed simply provides a medical explanation for why your child has a certain set of strengths and difficulties. By supporting and helping them embrace/understand their autism can really help them connect with themselves and slowly become confident and go on to live positive, happy lives. At this point it is important to make them aware that they do have a social belonging and they have a great deal to offer this world, however they can think and feel differently to those around them. Difference doesn't mean bad, we are all different, autism is just another difference.

1. Do I really need to tell them they are autistic? – Yes - When you talk to most autistic people they would say yes. By being aware you are autistic gives you a better understanding of yourself and a large bag of tools/ support mechanisms you can tap into, as well as being an advocate for yourself. Not telling could have a negative impact on their future mental health. It's important they don't feel it's their fault or the need to fix themselves. What is important that they learn to embrace who they are and life makes sense.

2. When should I talk to my child? – There isn't a right or wrong answer to this question. Every family will be different, it's when you feel it is right. However, we would say when your child starts to notice that they see the world differently and question this with you. Sometimes they can become self-critical about themselves. This could be when they are young or later in their teens. Here are a few tips to think about as you prepare:

***Talk about neurodiversity *Be positive *Choose the right time *Talk about strengths
*Talk in small amounts *Use books and videos *Difference does not = defective
*Make them aware of famous autistic people * Together understand their traits/abilities**

Be prepared for all sorts of reactions, for some of our older children it can take time to accept for others it maybe a huge relief. Try not to make a big thing about it, bring it up from time to time

3. Creating a personal PowerPoint / Poster – It may really help by putting together a visual tool that the young person can create with you, add to and revisit this whenever they need to. They may also feel ok to share this with other family members/friends or school. Please contact us as we can send you a template to help you with some ideas.

4. Being an expert – As a parent/carer you are the expert on your child, however please do not put too much pressure on yourselves we all get it wrong sometimes. It can take time to learn about autism and how autism impacts your young person and how do you share this with them. Your child's understanding of autism, like yours, will grow overtime and with lived experience. Try to seek out peer support and from others that truly understand. Discovering what autism means with others can really help, especially from other autistic people. Pop along to our events.

5. Help to identify what works and what doesn't work – Talk about their passions and their exceptional skills, these can really help build their self esteem and confidence. Sometimes amazing careers. Help them understand sensory difficulties and how the environment may impact on them, what tools can they use. As things pop up, talk about them. Using Comic Strip Conversations will help make it visual. Slowly learn what works and amend your approach on what doesn't work.