

Existing Research on Autistic Individual's Access to Mental Health Support

Existing research suggests that there are the following problems with access to mental health services for autistic people:

Understanding what support is available:

Only 1/3 of autistic individuals are confident that they would know who to contact in a mental health crisis (Crane et al., 2019)

Lack of appropriate services:

Services for neurotypical people often cannot meet need for autistic individuals, but services for autistic people are often targeted towards those with co-existing learning difficulties (Crane et al., 2019).

Research suggests that whilst GPs understand autism on a theoretical basis, they do not always understand how to support autistic individuals in practice (Unigwe et al., 2017).

Over 60% of autistic individuals report difficulties with engaging in telephone conversations (Cassidy, 2017). Furthermore, autistic individuals may require more processing time and may struggle with open-ended questions, as they may feel overwhelming.

Screening tools are not always appropriate:

Autistic individuals are sometimes not identified as being in crisis, because they do not interpret the screening tools used by clinicians as intended (Cassidy et al., 2021). Lai et al. (2017) found that some common screening questions such as 'Are you having thoughts of suicide right now?' may be misinterpreted by an autistic individual who will be more likely to answer literally (namely consider only that exact second).

The Here to Help 'resources', which include but are not limited to, website, information sheets, and in person workshops are intended to provide general information only. The 'resources' provided by 'Here to Help' do not replace, or supersede, professional and/or medical advice. Users should take professional advice before taking action which contradicts previous medical guidance. So far as permissible by law, SJOG does not accept any liability related to individual's use or interpretation of the 'resources' provided.

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References:

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