

# Diagnosing Anxiety and Depression in ASD

This resource reviews how a mental health professional might check to see if an individual meets the criteria for a diagnosis of anxiety or depression.

## CLINICAL INTERVIEW

Mental health professionals can diagnose anxiety and depression by asking questions. These questions include details about the individual's history, mood symptoms, appetite, sleep patterns, and other signs of anxiety or depression. They will use that information to determine if the individual meets the criteria for anxiety or depression and make a plan to treat the anxiety or depression.



## SCREENING TOOLS

Screening tools ask about specific symptoms an individual might have. Screening tools can be completed by the individual, a family member or support staff who knows them well. A mental health professional will interpret the screening tools and discuss the results. Screening tools can also be used to help track anxiety and depression over time to see if symptoms improve.



## INPUT FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Sometimes it's hard for individuals with autism to describe their thoughts or feelings to others. Some people might not notice concerns with their mood or behavior. It is important for mental health professionals to get input from people close to the individual to make a correct diagnosis.

## WHO CAN DIAGNOSE?

There are many health professionals who can diagnose anxiety or depression. Some examples are: a psychologist, a psychiatrist, a primary care physician, a physician's assistant, or a nurse practitioner.