



**Ambitious  
about Autism**

# **What's my 'normal'?**

## **Research findings**

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# How it all began

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# Research

How do people interpret normal?

How does a person's normal change when they are experiencing mental health issues?

What support was received?

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# Limitations

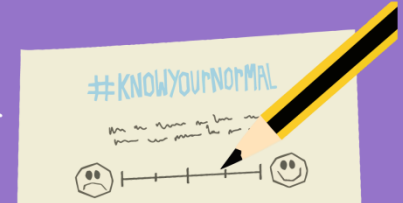
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Our research found that **4 OUT OF 5** young people with autism have experienced mental health issues.

**68%** feel unhappy/depressed compared to their non-autistic peers.



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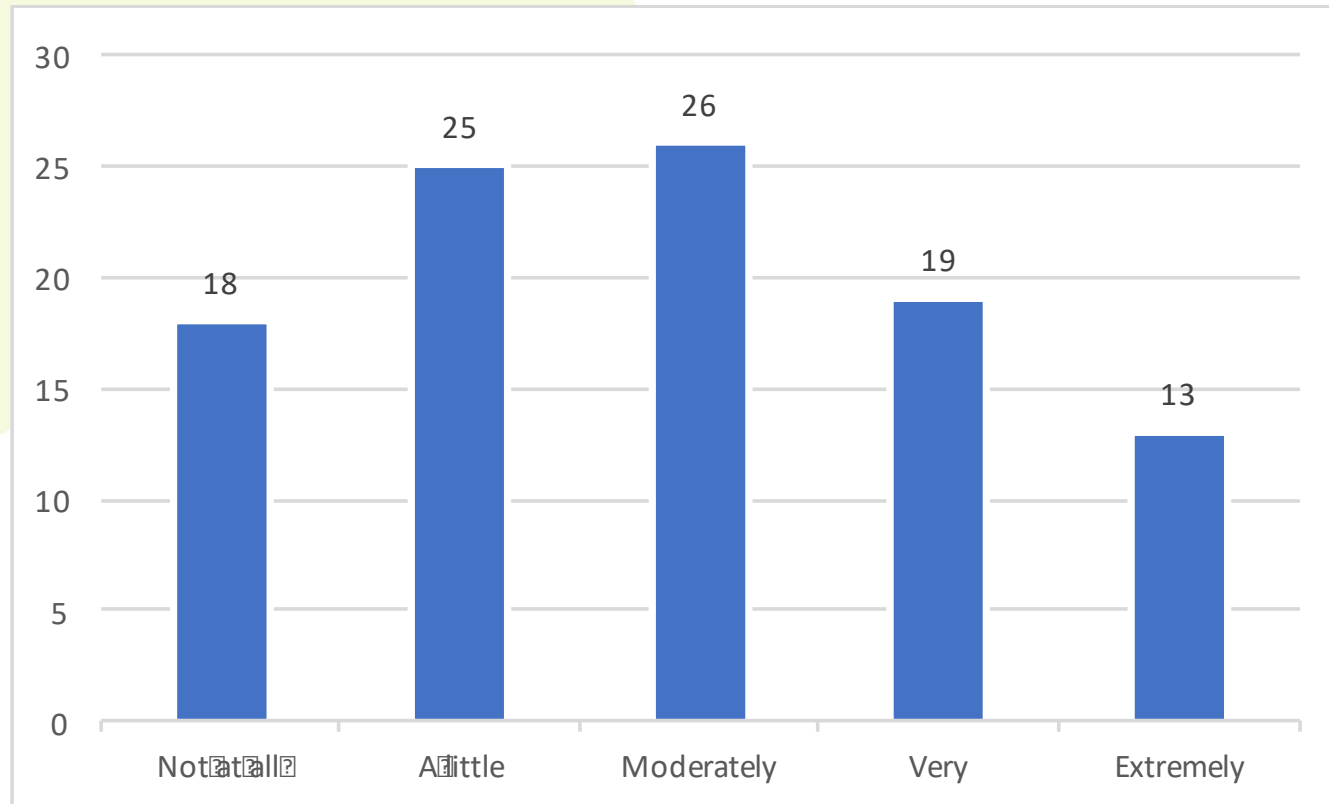
# Results

## What's 'normal'?

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# Are you confident in knowing you are experiencing mental health problems?



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***“Autism isn’t a mental health problem, it’s just how I am, my mental health stuff isn’t a constant, it’s things I have gradually ended up with or things that come and go. My brain is always autistic”***

***“My anxiety is caused by the stress of being in environments designed for non-autistic people”***

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#KNOWYOURNORMAL

The infographic banner features a red background with a white banner at the top containing the hashtag #KNOWYOURNORMAL. Below the banner, the text reads: 'Our research found that: 67% of young people with autism had little or no confidence that they would receive appropriate support if they contacted mental health services.' The text '67%' is in a white box, and 'no confidence that they would receive appropriate support' is in yellow. The background has abstract geometric shapes in shades of brown and green.

Our research found that:

**67%** of young people with autism had little or no confidence that they would receive appropriate support if they contacted mental health services.



# Results

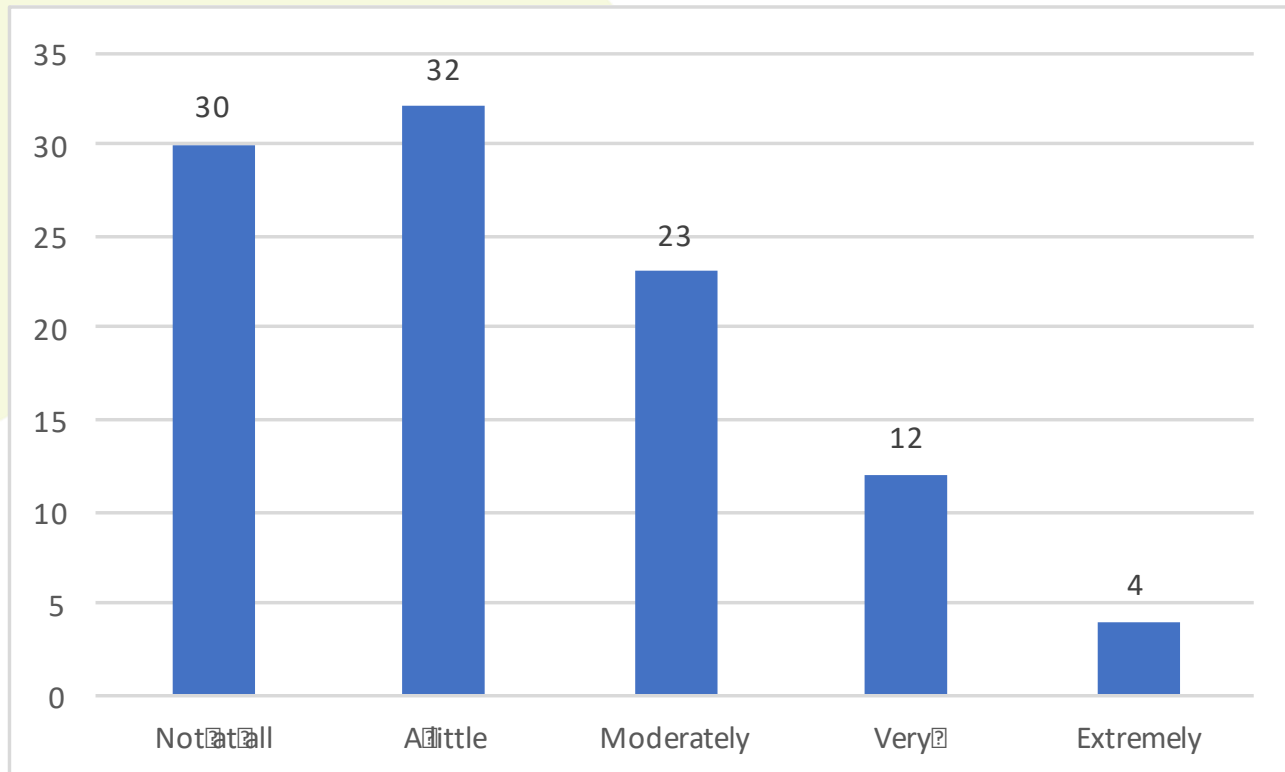
## Support for mental health problems

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# Are you confident in knowing who to contact, should you be experiencing mental health problems?



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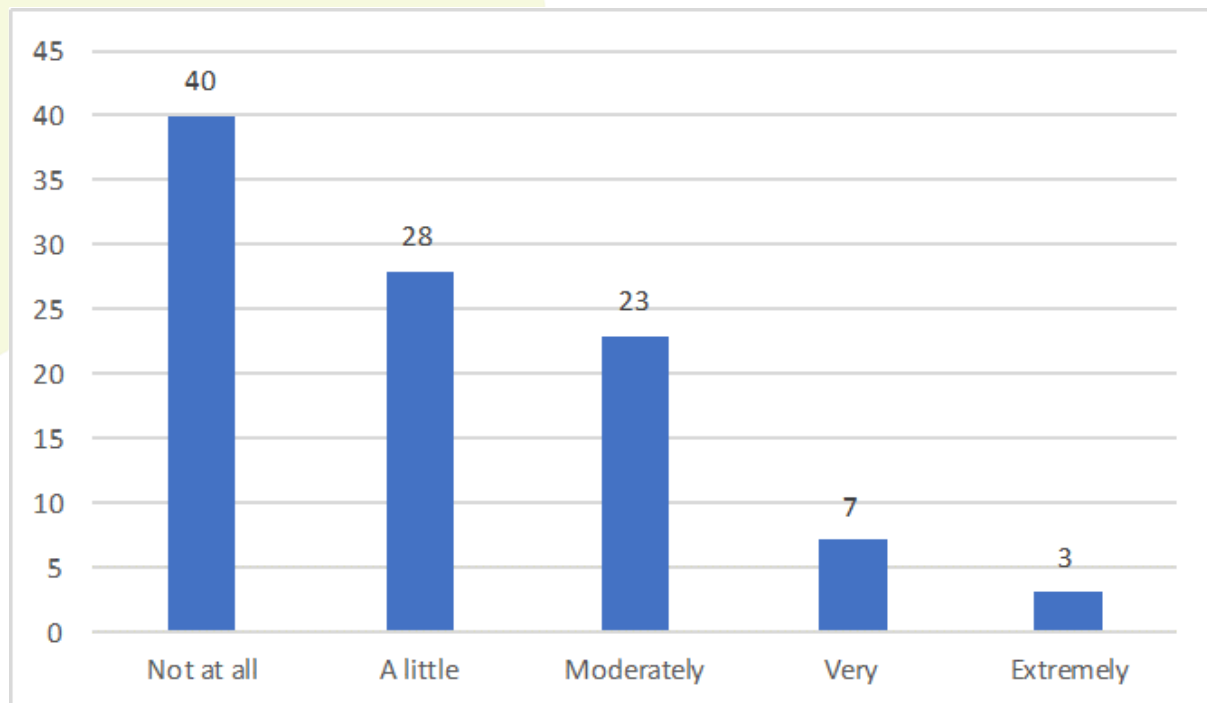
***“Most of the time it feels like there isn't actually any support out there to get, and when you do ask, waiting lists are long and people often don't understand what autism+ mental health issues looks like. Accessing help is such a long drawn out task that it's often more stressful than it's worth. So no, I don't feel confident knowing who to contact because no one seems to be any use and everyone who in theory COULD help, often cannot.”***

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# Are you confident that, if you sought help, you would get appropriate support?



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# Who did you seek help from?

- Clinical or healthcare professionals?
- School/college/university?
- Family?
- Friends?

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***“I’ve sought help from a charity and the GP and am on long waiting lists for help from both. Even when help is available, not everyone understands that autism affects communication and relationships anyway, so a lot of what is normal for me is judged not normal by mental health standards, which means you then have to educate the person who’s meant to be helping you, which then drains you, which isn’t helpful to your mental state at all. Medical people really need to learn about neurodiversity more, they don’t take it enough into account”***

***“Went to the doctor again a few days ago, was given a number to call to ask about counselling. I do intend to follow that up, but I’m scared of phones, so that’ll be fun”***

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***“When I visit A&E during suicidal episodes, I’m informed that I’m too intelligent and articulate to have anything wrong with me, my calm and emotionless demeanour is mistaken as being well or not at a severe crisis point and I’m informed there’s nothing they can do to help me”***

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## Transition from child to adult services

***“You hit 18 and all your services just go poof and just disappear”***

***“It’s kind of like a massive gap, like mentally I wasn’t an adult. I’d only just come out of hospital, I hadn’t experienced like a good couple years of my life, I hadn’t been at school. I was still like really immature anyway and I didn’t act like an adult and it was kind of like they were there treating me, expecting me to behave like an adult, not taking into perspective what actually had happened in my past”***

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**It's not all bad!**

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***“ The lady I worked with helped me so much, she listened when others didn’t she was there for me when I needed her to be. I feel like if I wasn't able to have worked with her when I did at some points in life then I don’t think I would be here today. She helped me so much just by listening to me.”***

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***“Something  
needs to  
change”***

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