



Signs of Autism in Girls & Women

Autism often presents differently in females than in males – which is why many women are diagnosed later in life or misdiagnosed altogether (often as anxiety, ADHD, or borderline personality disorder).

Girls and women may internalise their struggles, “mask” traits, and become experts at adapting – often at great emotional cost.

Social & Communication Differences

- Masking and mirroring: Copying others’ social behaviours, speech, or expressions to fit in.
- Exhaustion after socialising: Feeling drained or needing recovery time after social interaction.
- Difficulty understanding unspoken rules: May miss subtle cues, sarcasm, or tone changes.
- Intense empathy but emotional overwhelm: Feels others’ pain deeply, sometimes to the point of shutdown.
- One or few close friends: Prefers deep, loyal connections over large groups.
- Social anxiety or shyness: Particularly in unfamiliar environments.

Thinking & Behavioural Patterns

- Rigid routines or preferences: Finds comfort in structure, repetition, and predictability.
- Strong focus on specific interests: Can deep-dive into topics (e.g., psychology, animals, justice, astrology, etc.).



- Perfectionism or fear of failure: Driven to perform well or avoid mistakes.
- Literal thinking: May interpret things at face value rather than reading between the lines.
- Difficulty transitioning between tasks or environments.

Sensory & Emotional Experiences

- Heightened sensitivity: To light, sound, fabrics, smells, or crowded places.
- Sensory seeking: Enjoys certain textures, movements, or repetitive sensations.
- Meltdowns or shutdowns: Emotional overload may appear as anger, tears, withdrawal, or going quiet.
- Difficulty identifying or expressing emotions: Feels deeply but struggles to communicate it clearly.

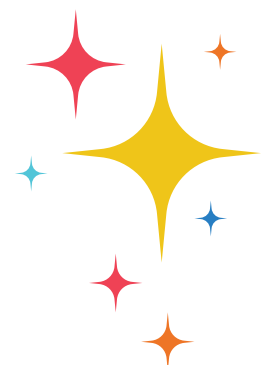


Internal World & Mental Health

- Chronic exhaustion or burnout from over-masking.
- History of anxiety, depression, or eating difficulties.
- Low self-esteem: Especially if she's been misunderstood or labelled "too sensitive" or "dramatic."
- Feeling "different" or "out of place" since childhood but not knowing why.
- Overthinking social interactions or replaying conversations repeatedly.

Strengths Often Seen in Autistic Women

- Deep empathy and intuition
- Creative problem-solving
- Exceptional focus on meaningful topics
- Strong moral compass and authenticity
- Heightened awareness of injustice or inequality
- Unique perspectives and emotional intelligence



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