

# **Stars for Life**

# **Adult Diagnosis Package**

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Stars for Life Foundation

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## **Disclaimer**

*This material is prepared by the Stars for Life Foundation for Autism with the intention that it provides general and specific information which is current when first published, to aid individuals with and searching for a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Services and resources stated should be obtained by each individual and or by family acting on behalf of the individual. While every care has been taken in the preparation of this material, the Stars for Life Foundation for Autism cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions in the material, including those caused by negligence or harm during the caring of any acquired services. The Stars for Life Foundation for Autism is not responsible for the accuracy of information contained on other websites accessed by links from this website.*

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## **What is Autism?**

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types,

The term “spectrum” reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism.

Autism’s most-obvious signs tend to appear between 2 and 3 years of age. In some cases, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. Some developmental delays associated with autism can be identified and addressed even earlier.

Adults with autism who are high functioning may have only mild challenges, others may have more severe symptoms, like impaired spoken language. No two people with ASD will have the same symptoms exhibited in the same way.

ASD symptoms commonly interfere with everyday life, regardless of the severity or how they are exhibited.

## **What Causes Autism?**

There is currently no known cause for autism spectrum disorder. However, scientists believe that some genetic and environmental aspects play a role in the cause of ASD. Genetically, it is believed that autism could be a genetic disorder or a genetic mutation in early stages of pregnancy. Environmentally speaking, there is some increased risk with advanced parent age, pregnancies spaced less than one year apart, and pregnancies with complications including; low weight birth, multiple pregnancies (twins, triplets, etc.), and extra premature births.

## **Executive Function**

Executive functioning is the process that aids people in their ability to mentally process a plan, focus their attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. Many people with autism spectrum disorder struggle with executive functioning and their ability to do the tasks stated above. They also struggle with the ability to sequence information, regulate emotions, and are not able to see the big picture while focusing on small details. Executive functioning can be divided into two categories, organization and regulation. Organization can be classified as gathering and structuring information for evaluation. Regulation refers to recognizing your surroundings and changing your behavior to respond properly.

The following are areas that individuals with executive functioning difficulties struggle with:

### **Impulse Control:**

Difficulties:

- May be very impulsive
- May not think before speaking or doing something.

Ways to help with impulse control include:

- Playing an instrument/ singing
- Video games
- Role-play
- Individualized tool box
- Yoga
- The STAR technique; Stop, Think, Act, Review.

### **Flexibility:**

Difficulties:

- May find it challenging to change their mind and make changes to their plans as needed
- May be stubborn
- May struggle with getting a disappointment off their mind
- Resists accepting a different way to solve a problem
- May become upset with new situations

Ways to help with flexibility include:

- Playing an instrument/ singing
- Video games
- Tools that help identifying problems
- Check lists / schedules
- Model and “Think out Loud”
- Self-talk
- Yoga

### **Emotional Control**

Difficulties:

- May overreact to small problems
- May have explosive, angry outbursts
- May be tearful

- May experience frequent mood changes

Ways to help with emotional control include:

- Understand own sensory triggers
- .Practice self regulation
- Adapt to their environment
- Yoga/ Medication
- Role-play

### **Task Initiation:**

Difficulties:

- May not take initiative
- May not be a self starter
- May need to be told to begin a task even when willing
- May have trouble coming up with ideas for what to do in play or free time
- May lay around the house a lot

Ways to help with task initiation:

- Schedules and checklists
- Step by step instructions, written or video
- Support initiation
- Alarms and reminders on cell phones
- Provide 3-4 choices, not free choice
- SMART goals

### **Working Memory:**

Difficulties:

- May be absent minded
- May only remember only the first or last step of instructions
- May experience trouble with multi-step chores

Ways to help with working memory:

- Provide written or video instructions
- Break big chunks of information into small, bite sized pieces
- Exercise
- Playing an instrument/ singing/ dancing
- Dual-N-back brain game
- Strategy games

- Yoga

### **Plan/ Organize:**

Difficulties:

- May have good ideas but struggle with following through
- May experience challenges organizing written work
- May start projects without the right materials
- May struggle to plan for future activities
- May underestimate time needed to complete tasks

Ways to help with planning and organizing includes:

- Check lists
- Break down task in smaller manageable pieces
- Graphic organizers
- Day planner, Google calendar or iCal
- Set time limits
- Declutter environment
- Timer

### **Self Monitor:**

Difficulties:

- May not ask for help when needed
- May not check work for mistakes
- May make careless errors
- May be unaware of how their behavior affects others
- May leave work incomplete

Ways to help with monitoring includes:

- Check lists
- Reminders
- Scripts

Executive functioning issues can be managed when using the suggested tools mentioned above. It is important to improve your self awareness and understanding when you are having executive functioning difficulties.



There is currently no specific test that will identify if someone has an issue with executive functioning. Experts typically rely on different tests to measure certain skills, these tests can highlight the problems that individuals can have with executive functioning.

## **Sensory Processing Difficulties:**

It is very common for individuals with autism to experience sensory processing difficulties. This would mean that these individuals struggle with receiving information from one or more of their five senses; smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. There are two different ways that sensory issues can affect someone, hypo-sensitivity and hyper-sensitivity. Hyper-sensitivity is when your body over reacts to normal levels of sensory stimulation, whereas hypo-sensitivity is when your body under reacts to normal levels of sensory stimulation. Individuals who struggle with sensory processing will need to make adjustments and have specific accommodations in place to aid them in normalizing their senses in certain scenarios.

The vestibular receptors, located in the inner ear, tell the brain where the body is in space by providing the information related to movement and head position. These are key elements of balance and coordination, among other things. Those with hyposensitivity can often feel the need to be in constant motion; crave fast, spinning and/or intense movement, and jumping on furniture and trampolines. Those who are hypersensitive may be fearful of activities that require good balance, including climbing on playground equipment, riding a bike, or balancing on one foot, especially with eyes closed. They, too, may appear clumsy.

What are sensory processing difficulties?

Sensory processing difficulties were first identified by the idea that certain people's brains can not do what most people take for granted: process all the information coming in through seven — not the traditional five — senses to provide a clear picture of what's happening both internally and externally.

Along with touch, hearing, taste, smell and sight, there are the "internal" senses of body awareness (proprioception) and movement (vestibular). When the brain can't synthesize all this information coming in simultaneously, it has been described as "It's like a traffic jam in your head," , "with conflicting signals quickly coming from all directions, so that you don't know how to make sense of it all."

The internal senses: Proprioceptive receptors are located in the joints and ligaments, allowing for motor control and posture. The proprioceptive system tells the brain where the body is in relation to other objects and how to move. Individuals who are hyposensitive crave input; they may love jumping, bumping and crashing activities, as well as seeking deep pressure such as that provided by tight bear hugs, squeezing into tight spaces. Individuals who identify as hypersensitive, often have difficulty understanding where their body is in relation to other objects

and may bump into things and appear clumsy; because they have trouble sensing the amount of force they're applying, they may rip the paper when erasing, pinch too hard or slam objects down.

Some adults with ASD have found some of the following adaptations can help with sensory issues:

- Headphones, music player, ear muffs, noise cancelling headphones, & ear plugs.
- Sunglasses, tinted glasses, and hats with brims.
- Chewing gum or other chewable items.
- Stress balls or other "fidgets".
- Environmental aids- workspaces designed to remove or reduce physical barriers for individuals with autism. Such as standing desks or workspaces, reduced lighting, & minimized visual distractions
- Products such as therapy ball chairs, which are designed to help people gain a better sense of, and more control over, their own balance and coordination, by providing feedback to the sensory system.
- Smart phones, tablets, calculators, computers, managing calendars, setting reminders, and paper-based organizers like day planners or visual schedules can all help with organization and other executive functioning difficulties.

## **Autism Statistics**

Gathered by IAN (Interactive Autism Network) and other various organizations:

- 1 in 66 children in Canada have autism.
- 1 in 42 in males, 1 in 189 in females are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Independent adults with ASD can often have co-occurring conditions including :
  - o 60% may have Gastrointestinal problems
  - o 66% may have sleep issues
  - o 15% may have seizures

- o 30% may have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- o 24% may have OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
- o 67% may have anxiety
- o 72% may have depression
- o 18% may have bipolar disorder

## **Diagnosis and Screening**

### **Signs & Symptoms**

Listed below are possible struggles that individuals with ASD may experience.

#### **Social Interactions Struggles that May Affect Individuals with ASD:**

- Be unaware of what is socially appropriate and have difficulty choosing topics to talk about or choosing inappropriate topics.
- Have a small amount or no friends and may choose not to socialize very much.
- Experience anxiety in social situations and group settings, possibly resulting in experiencing repetitive behaviors as coping mechanisms
- Find small talk and chatting very difficult.
- Have problems understanding double meanings, for example not knowing when people are teasing you or taking what people say very literally.
- Feel more comfortable with people much older or much younger but have trouble connecting with peers.

#### **Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Struggles that May Affect Individuals with ASD:**

- Have difficulty understanding gestures, body language, and facial expressions.
- Not be socially motivated because they find communication difficult.
- Have difficulty making eye contact.

- Have difficulties expressing themselves especially when talking about emotions as well as difficulties identifying others emotions.
- Find participating in conversation to be challenging.
- Use flat, monotone, high pitch, or robotic speaking patterns that may not reflect the intended emotion.
- Invent their own descriptive words and phrases.
- Not understand figures of speech in terms of phrases such as; the early bird catches the worm.
- Have difficulty respecting other people's personal space.
- Use words out of context of their usual meanings.

**Repetitive Behavior that Individuals with ASD May Display:**

- Have an obsession with rigid routines and experience severe distress if routines are disrupted.
- Display a deep knowledge about a few specific areas of interest, and prefer to keep focus on that area in conversation.
- Display repetitive movements or tics.
- Communicate with repetitive verbalizations such as echoing or quoting directly from movies or books, particularly when anxious or agitated.
- Use objects in a repetitive manner, such as lining things up, patterning objects, or handling objects in your hands.

**Other common Symptoms that May Affect Individuals with ASD:**

- Be extremely knowledgeable in one or two academic subject areas, but have challenges being as successful in others.
- Have problems with forecasting plans for the future, and have difficulties organizing daily life.
- Respond emotionally when something unexpected happens or when things are moved or rearranged.
- Have difficulty reading and writing

- Experience hypersensitivity or impaired sensitivity to sensory input such as sounds, smells, tastes, textures, lights and/or colors.
- Feel clumsy and have difficulty with coordination.
- Be more socially isolated.
- Be perceived as eccentric or an academic
- Exhibit visual problems such as staring at spinning objects or light, fleeting peripheral glances, side viewing, and difficulty attending visually.

Autism can go undiagnosed into adulthood for various reasons. Sometimes it can be misdiagnosed as Schizophrenia, ADHD, anxiety disorder, or OCD, as symptoms are often similar. As ASD information becomes more readily available adults are starting to connect signs and symptoms to their own feelings and behaviors.

Autism has a broad spectrum of signs and symptoms. No one person will experience every trait but may experience struggles with social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors.

To receive an official diagnosis you will have to go to a healthcare professional, however, if you are still curious about doing more self-screening, Autism Canada has developed an online self screening questionnaire. This is by no means a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, but it will help individuals gain some more knowledge and clarity around what they may be experiencing or having challenges with. The test will ask you a series of 50 questions with four possible answers available. After finishing the questionnaire the computer will evaluate your results and give you a score to fit in the categories of low, average, and high risk. This test is a helpful way to guide you to the next step of the process. Follow the link

<https://autismcanada.org/about-autism/diagnosis/screening-tools/adult/>

## **Next Steps with a Doctor**

Since ASD is primarily known as a disorder diagnosed in childhood the vast majority of evaluation methods are designed for children. This makes it that much harder to diagnose adults. Because of these limitations the most common way that an adult gets evaluated for ASD is through observation. A healthcare professional will conduct a discussion with the patient about challenges in areas of communication and social interactions while observing the patient's behavior.. According to an article posted by ADDitude called *Professional Guidelines for Diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder*, some of the tactics that are used in the evaluation process are:

- Asking the patient to explain how other people would describe them such as friends or family. This is to see if he/she has a sense of how they may impact's others and how they are viewed.
- Asking the patient how someone close to them would describe them versus someone who is not close to them. This is to see if the patient has an understanding of how different people experience them differently.
- Practicing role-play with the patient to see how they do with conversation.
- Show the patient pictures of emotional faces and see if they can name the emotion being displayed. This helps to see if the patient understands emotions and if they can recognize them.
- Describing social scenarios to see if the patient has an understanding of what's appropriate and inappropriate in certain situations. Along with if the patient understands when they are being rude or polite.

Some individuals may feel it is not necessary to get a proper diagnosis and are content with a self-diagnosis. However, receiving an ASD diagnosis for those that seek one can be very beneficial for many reasons. Some of these reasons include:

#### 1) Understanding Yourself

Many people may struggle with not understanding certain difficulties that they face daily, or have received a misdiagnosis with some confusion. With a proper diagnosis of ASD individuals may feel relief finally knowing why they experience their symptoms. They will be able to learn about their disorder and access necessary supports.

#### 2) Gaining the Understanding of Others

Those diagnosed as adults may have felt misunderstood their whole lives. Unfortunately, people can easily be teased or bullied for being a little "different" than others. Even your friends and family may make you feel misunderstood. A diagnosis can help people to better understand your social and communicative difficulties and will make it easier for them to empathize with you.

#### 3) Receiving Proper Services

There are support programs and services available for adults with ASD to help them navigate through day to day life. With a proper diagnosis individuals will be able to access ASD-specific care and services.

#### 4) Joining the ASD Community

There can be a sense of relief to meet with people who share your experiences and struggles. Being able to compare and share stories can be very beneficial and supportive for individuals with ASD. Becoming a part of a community that fully understands you can be very beneficial.

### **Seven tips for those who have received an autism diagnosis as adult:**

- 1) Seek help:** Seeking the help of a counselor is a good idea so that you have someone to talk to about your feelings and concerns. An adult support group may be beneficial so that you have other people to talk to who are going through the same thing or are further along in the journey.
- 2) Get family counseling.** Parents can feel guilty about a late diagnosis and blame themselves for not recognizing the signs of ASD earlier. Feeling overwhelmed about the future after being diagnosed is also common. Siblings may also need support with the new diagnosis and how they best can help.
- 3) Reach out to the family doctor:** Parents may also want to make an appointment with their family doctor to keep them informed. Short term medication may be needed if you are experiencing depression or high levels of anxiety.
- 4) Research adult services in your area.** Research and make a list of what services you might need: work support, post-secondary support, independent living skills training, and social skills training. Connect with local disability organizations.
- 5) Look into province-wide services.** Go to the provincial government's website and read about Persons with Disabilities. There are tax breaks, benefits that can be applied for, and housing support. Learn about your legal and financial rights and what supports you may need for future planning based on UNCRPD.
- 6) Educate yourself.** There are some great resources about adults on the spectrum. There are more authors writing about topics that affect adults. Talk to other individuals, families, and support people who are further along on the adult journey and ask questions. Those who are navigating the same journey are often a wealth of information and most are eager to share valuable information.
- 7) Keep calm and know that this is a process.** It will take time to get support in place and there will be challenges along the way. Some supports and resources will work and others may not be as helpful.

## **Reflections of Adults on the Spectrum**

Nick aged 17 when diagnosed,

*“ Embrace the unorthodox, something that you think may not work to help you, could surprise you!”*

Billy aged when diagnosed,

*“ Knowing that there is a reason why I am the way I am.”*

Devin diagnosed aged 25,

*“ The people in my life are more understanding of me”*

*“ Autism is very manageable if you work at it”*

## **Post Secondary Education**

### **Canada Student Grant**

The Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities is available to students for each year of your studies. The qualifications required and listed on the Government of Canada website include:

- You must be a full-time or part-time student that has applied and qualified for financial assistance (have at least \$1 of assessed financial need)
- You are enrolled in a full-time or part-time program at any of the following institutions.
  - o Holland College- Prince of Wales Campus
  - o Holland College- Summerside Waterfront Campus
  - o Holland College- Atlantic Police Academy
  - o College de l'île
  - o Holland College- Georgetown Centre
  - o Marguerite Connolly Training and Consulting Nursing School
  - o Maritime Christian College
  - o Private Institute of Hair Design & Aesthetics
  - o JVI Transportation and Safety Academy
  - o Hair Concepts Training Academy
  - o Academy of Learning
  - o Homburg Institute
  - o University of Prince Edward Island



- o Holland College- Tourism and Culinary Centre
- You must meet the definition for a student with a permanent disability
  - o “A functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary school level or the labor force; and is expected to remain with the person for the person’s expected life”.
- Must be able to provide one of the following for proof of your disability:
  - o A medical certificate.
  - o A psycho-educational assessment.
  - o Documents that prove you have received federal or provincial permanent disability assistance.

If you qualify for this grant you will receive \$2,000 each year of post secondary school. This includes undergraduate and graduate levels.

To apply for the grant you will need to contact the province's student financial assistance office.

The other grant that goes hand and hand with the *Canada Student Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities* is the *Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities*. This grant allows for students to receive funding providing them with necessary education-related services or equipment. This grant has two additional requirements:.

- Provide a written confirmation that you are in need of an exceptional education-related service or equipment from a person qualified to determine such a need.
- Provide a written confirmation of the exact cost of the equipment or service required

Upon receiving the Grant it will be your responsibility to provide your school with receipts for the equipment or services that you have purchased with the grant money. If you do not provide those receipts you are liable and any outstanding balance is deducted from your funding for the next year.

As long as you qualify for this grant you could be receiving up to \$20,000 each school year. To apply, contact the province's student financial assistance office at (902)-368-4640. For further information please refer to the Government of Canada’s website specified in disability grants <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/education/grants/disabilities.html>.

## **The Academy of Learning**

The Academy of Learning Career College offers courses to students that need extra assistance when learning. The academy conducts learning with assistance from the Integrated Learning System (ILS) which is a self-directed, multisensory learning experience. The purpose of ILS is to provide students the opportunity to make connections between experiences and learning so that information and skills can be applied. It gives students the opportunity to guide their own learning and have very hands-on experience. The academy offers a wide variety of courses to choose from, the PEI courses are listed on their website

<https://www.academyoflearning.com/programs/prince-edward-island/>.

For more information contact Katherine McQuaid at [kmcquaid@aolpei.ca](mailto:kmcquaid@aolpei.ca) or (902) 894-8973

## **University of Prince Edward Island**

University of Prince Edward Island offers many support services and equipment to those in need. When you are applying to UPEI and you have a documented temporary disability, you will be able to access UPEI's Accessibility Services. To go about accessing these services you will need to request an appointment with one of the case managers at the school. You can book an appointment by calling 902-566-0488 or by emailing [studentserv@upei.ca](mailto:studentserv@upei.ca). You will need to provide medical documentation of your need for your specific accommodations at the appointment to clarify that you qualify for the program's services. Here is an example of the medical form that you will need

[https://files.upei.ca/studentlife/medical\\_assessment\\_form\\_students\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](https://files.upei.ca/studentlife/medical_assessment_form_students_with_disabilities.pdf). Aside from what your doctor is suggesting for support services the case manager will assess what services you were provided in high school if you happen to be coming directly from high school. A transition meeting will be scheduled with resource teachers from high school, your UPEI case manager, yourself, and your guardian. This meeting will be extremely helpful when deciding what support services will aid you best in receiving the most out of your education. Services that could be offered to you as a student with a temporary disability include:

- Campus accessibility
- Confidential consultations
- Test, exam, and classroom accommodation
- Assistance with grants
- Assistance with adaptive technology
- Note taking, tutoring, and mentoring
- Use of a scribe or oral testing

- Learning-strategy support
- Assistance with self-advocacy
- Transition planning with high schools and families
- Textbook to audio/pdf
- Special residence accommodations

These services will all be determined by the medical suggestions from your doctor and based off of what was decided in the meetings with your case manager. To access the required medical form you will consult with your doctor. If you are unsure of which forms are required, follow this link to see the guidelines UPEI has for medical documentations

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BdKCOC768Tfth\\_tNB5oGY-KybwQA-HMyTivl80b77Ps/e/dit?ts=5ef397b7](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BdKCOC768Tfth_tNB5oGY-KybwQA-HMyTivl80b77Ps/e/dit?ts=5ef397b7). Provided below is a checklist that students can utilize to help them navigate the steps for applying and receiving proper support.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qQeH62qhY8SvloAKPTstjJtNAbnm\\_95Kfy0\\_ALolpMY/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qQeH62qhY8SvloAKPTstjJtNAbnm_95Kfy0_ALolpMY/edit). For more information regarding UPEI's Accessibility Services please refer to their website <https://www.upei.ca/accessibility>.

Apart from the UPEI Accessibility Services, UPEI offers other programs such as The Gateway Program, the Best Buddies Program, and the Campus Life Program. The Gateway Program is available to all UPEI students and is completely free. The program consists of sessions with student mentors provided by professional staff to help develop skills such as time management, organization, note taking, studying skills and more. You will also be able to meet with the program coordinator on a regular basis to help provide you with what you need. For more information on The Gateway Program visit [upei.ca/studentlife/gateway-program](http://upei.ca/studentlife/gateway-program) or contact Keith Lawlor, Program Coordinator, at [kjlawlor@upei.ca](mailto:kjlawlor@upei.ca) or at 902-566-6001.

The Best Buddies program was founded in the United States and is now available in every province in Canada. The program offers individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability the chance to communicate with each other and with other individuals, who do not have a disability. If you are interested in being a part of the Best Buddies Program you can talk with your case manager or support worker to help you sign up.

The Campus Life Program is available to all students to help gain memories, create friends, and be more involved in the university life. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 6-10 pm at Dalton Hall Student Affairs, 5<sup>th</sup> floor you will be able to join UPEI's Campus Life Advisors to play games, watch TV, study, or just relax.

As a student dealing with a disability it may be difficult to handle a full program of study, with this being said UPEI offers students the ability to be an Unclassified Student. An Unclassified

Student has permission to apply for undergraduate courses at UPEI without applying or being admitted into a program of study. To register to become an Unclassified Student you will need to fill out an Unclassified Student Registration Form and pay a tuition deposit.

Steps to apply as an unclassified undergraduate student:

- Students will create an account at [upei.ca/apply](http://upei.ca/apply).
- Once an account is created, start a new Undergraduate Application.
- Once in the application, students must choose “Undergraduate” as “Admit Type”.
- When prompted to select a program, select “Unclassified Undergraduate Level Courses”.
- Complete all required fields on application.
- In order to submit you will need to pay the \$50 CAD non-refundable application fee.
- Once submitted the Registrar’s Office will review your application and be in contact if additional information is required.
- If admitted to register as an unclassified student you will be sent communications with your student ID and login information and instructions on how to pay the \$250 non-refundable tuition deposit required to register for classes.

To qualify to be an Unclassified Student there are many requirements and regulations such as;

- The student is permitted to register but is not admitted to a specific program of study at the university. Previously admitted students may register as Unclassified Students, but registration does not constitute readmission to the University.
- Students who have been required to withdraw from this or any other post-secondary institution within the last 12 months are not permitted to register as an Unclassified Student.
- Transcripts of previous post-secondary work, and proof of English Language Proficiency, must be presented to the Registrar’s Office if requested.
- Prerequisites must be met where applicable. Checking for prerequisites is the students’ responsibility.
- The student is subject to an initial maximum registration limit of 10 three-credit courses as an Unclassified Student. To register in additional courses as Unclassified, a student must seek

permission from the Registrar's Office and may be required to meet with an Academic Advisor prior to registration being processed.

- Summer Session Unclassified Students may enroll in a maximum of two courses (six semester-hours) per session. Fall/Winter Unclassified Students will need special permission from the Registrar's Office, to enroll in more than two courses per semester (maximum of five).
- An unclassified Student may apply for admission to the Fall or Spring Semester before the published deadlines through one of the approved admission routes. If an Unclassified Student applies to a program/faculty for a specific semester (Fall/Spring), the student cannot be registered for that same semester as an Unclassified Student.
- Upon admission to a specific program, courses completed as an Unclassified Student may be counted toward the student's program, subject to Academic Regulations and the appropriate rules of the faculty/school.

For further information on Student supports at UPEI please refer to;

- The Student Affairs staff at <https://www.upei.ca/student-affairs/staff>.
- The Health Centre staff at <https://www.upei.ca/health-centre/staff>
- Math help center 902-628-4349, mathhelp@upei.ca, [www.smcs.upei.ca/help](http://www.smcs.upei.ca/help)
- Computer science help center 902-628-4349, [www.smcs.upei.ca/help](http://www.smcs.upei.ca/help)
- Chemistry help center 902-566-0314, [www.upei.ca/science/chemistry/help-centre](http://www.upei.ca/science/chemistry/help-centre)
- Career Counseling 902-620-5088, careerservices@upei.ca , [www.upei.ca/careerservices](http://www.upei.ca/careerservices)
- Food bank 902-894-2876, foodbank@upei.ca
- Student Union 902-566-0530, admin@upeisu.ca
- Library Services 902-566-0583, reference@upei.ca
- MAPUS (Mature Student Association) 902-566-0448, mapus@upei.ca
- First- Year advising 902-628-4353, apply@upei.ca
- Off- Campus Housing Coordinator 902-566-6012, offcampushousing@upei.ca

Along with general scholarships and bursaries UPEI offers specific scholarships and bursaries to individuals with disabilities. Here is a list of those specific scholarships and bursaries:

- [UPEI Memorial Bursary for Students with Disabilities](#)

- [UPEI MyAbilities Scholarship](#)
- [UPEI Access and Inclusion Award](#)
- [Mattinson Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [NEADS Disability Scholarships](#)
- [PEI Council of People with Disabilities scholarship](#)
- [Sarah Gaulin Memorial Scholarship](#)

## **Holland College**

When applying to Holland College you will be asked a question on your application stating whether or not you have specific physical or learning requirements. When you select yes to this question you will be advised to contact Academic Support Services so they are able to assist you in the needed areas. Once you contact the Academic Support Services they will review your file and consult with you to determine necessary supports. When it comes to ASD they often look at the supports that were in place with that student in High School and see if those supports were suitable. The college may also assign a Student Support Worker to the individual with autism to aid them in academics, problem solving, and social and group settings, primarily group projects. The student support services that Holland College provides include:

- One on one support
- Time management and organizational skills
- Study skills
- Accommodations for physical needs
- Confidential consultations
- Individualized program for academic learning
- Test and exam accommodations
- Assistance with funding applications
- Access to and training of assistive technologies
- Note-taking, tutoring, and mentoring
- Learning- strategy support

- Campus accessibility
- Support with self – advocacy
- Transition planning with high schools and families

Holland College assists students to be independent and reach their full academic potential. They focus their support to try and target individualized needs in learning. All services provided are free of charge.

For more information on what Holland College offers students with disabilities please contact Velda Crane Coordinator of Student Support Services at (902)-629-4237 / [vcrane@hollandcollege.com](mailto:vcrane@hollandcollege.com) or visit Student Support Services at Prince of Wales Campus, 140 Weymouth Street, Charlottetown Prince Edward Island.

### **Scholarships, Bursaries & Grants**

The Island Advantage bursary for low to middle income students is a new grant that is needs-based. This grant will match the Canada Student Grant that a student with disabilities can receive. To be eligible for this grant;

- You must be a Canadian citizen, or permanent resident.
- You must have applied for a student loan.
- You must be enrolled in a full time program at UPEI, Holland College, Maritime Christian College, or College de L'Île.
- Your total family income for the previous calendar year of application must be less than the income cut-off amount listed in the table below:

| <b>Your family size</b> | <b>Gross annual family income eligibility for maximum bursary</b> | <b>Gross annual family income eligibility for bursary cut-off</b> |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 person                | \$ 31,243   | \$ 62,756   |
| 2 people                | \$ 44,184   | \$ 87,789   |
| 3 people                | \$ 54,114   | \$104,790   |

|           |            |           |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 4 people  | \$ 62,485  | \$115,302 |
| 5 people  | \$ 69,861  | \$125,008 |
| 6 people  | \$ 76, 529 | \$134,221 |
| 7+ people | \$ 82,660  | \$142,184 |

After applying for a student loan your income will be assessed as part of the application process and you will be advised if you are eligible for the award. The award may be credited directly to your school account.

The Debt Reduction Grant can be applied yearly for students that attend a college or university on or off Island. Every year you attend a college or university you can receive \$3,500 to pay off your student debt. To be eligible for this grant you must complete your program, reside on PEI, or decide to come back to the Island. There is no deadline to apply for this grant, however the earlier the better. To apply for this grant you can access an application form online at Student Financial Services, staff can provide further information and answer questions over the phone or in person.

For more information you can contact your administrative services at your financial institution or contact Student Financial Services at (902)-368-4640 or access their website:

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/student-financial-services>

**Software and Technology Available**

Individuals with ASD will most likely need some form of support no matter where they fall on the spectrum. Whether it's an abundance of support or very little, it is important to know about all the available forms of tech support to help make the best decision for your level of needed assistance. There are two categories of tech support; assistive and adaptive. Assistive Technology is a type of product or system that is used to improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. Adaptive technology is a subcategory of assistive technology; it is a product or system that is specifically designed for people with disabilities.

The information below was obtained by AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit for Patients and Supporters.

High-tech AAC solutions:



- Dedicated Speech Devices:
  - o Dragon NaturallySpeaking <https://www.nuance.com/dragon.html>
  - o Kurzweil Education <https://www.kurzweiledu.com/products/products.html>

## **Available Resources/ Supports for Autism**

### **Addressing your Overall Health & Wellness:**

Common comorbid conditions that often accompany ASD are;

#### **ADHD/ ADD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)**

ADHD is a disorder that shares many communication and social skill symptoms with autism spectrum disorder. It too is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is most commonly found in children, but can be diagnosed in adulthood as well.

#### **OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)**

OCD on the other hand has similar symptoms when it comes to the repetitive and ritualistic behavior that most ASD individuals experience. OCD is an anxiety disorder that causes people to have recurring thoughts, ideas, or sensations that put them in a repetitive state of doing something.

#### **Anxiety**

Researchers suggest that at least a third of the ASD population have an anxiety disorder. It is important to seek treatment as it can greatly impact your daily life

#### **Depression**

Depression can be very difficult to diagnose in people with ASD. As it can be challenging for ASD individuals to express or even recognize that they have depression

#### **Mental Health supports on PEI include:**

##### ***Mental health walk in clinics:***

- *Charlottetown*
  - o Richmond Centre – 902-368-4430 Tuesday/Thursday – 11am-7pm
  - o McGill Centre – 902-368-4911 Friday/Saturday/Sunday – 1pm-5pm

- *Summerside*
  - o Prince County Hospital – 902-888-8180 Monday/Wednesday – 9am-5pm
- *Montague*
  - o Community Mental Health – 902-838-0960 Thursday – 4pm-8pm
- *O’Leary*
  - o O’Leary Health Centre – 902-853-8670 Wednesday – 9am-3pm

**Telephone Contacts:**

- The Island Helpline
  - o 24/7 access. Confidential. Bilingual. 1-800-218-2885

**Canadian Mental Health PEI:**

- Contact
  - o Drop in: 178 Fitzroy St. Monday-Friday 9am-4pm
  - o Call 902-566-3034
  - o Email [division@cmha.pe.ca](mailto:division@cmha.pe.ca)
- Peer Support
  - o 902-628-3666
  - o One-on-one sessions
  - o Group sessions
  - o Accompanying clients to appointments
  - o Advocacy for youth in the school system
- PEI Helping Tree
  - o Visit [https://savoir-sante.ca/en/content\\_page/download/331/527/21?method=view](https://savoir-sante.ca/en/content_page/download/331/527/21?method=view)

If you need further support with your mental illness please use any of the resources above, contact your doctor, and/or talk to your loved ones if you are comfortable.

A Doctor may prescribe medication to help someone with ASD lessen their symptoms of:

- Irritability
- Aggression
- Repetitive Behavior
- Hyperactivity
- Attention problems
- Anxiety and depression

Studies show that individuals with autism spectrum disorder can have other medical issues such as intestinal disorders or chronic gastrointestinal inflammation. These disorders make it difficult for the body to absorb certain essential nutrients. Maintaining a healthy diet and exercise routine will help you think more clearly and have enough energy to sustain you throughout the day.

Some believe that individuals with ASD also have different immune responses to viruses, toxins or certain foods causing them to have different reactions. It has been shown that dietary change and alternative medicine can improve the body's immune responses. Doctors and caregivers have reported positive changes in those with ASD after making these adjustments.

### Other forms

There are many other forms of nontraditional supports that can aid with improving symptoms. However, only certain forms are available in Prince Edward Island. The following are according to Autism Canada and can be accessed in PEI.

- Art therapy is a good tool to help expand one's imagination, communication, and socialization skills.
- Therapeutic riding for individuals with autism. This program is based on Horse Boy methods which were developed specifically to accommodate the needs of individuals with autism. We are not teaching individuals to ride (unless that is what they want) instead we use the horse as a tool to help individuals to improve communication, academics, perspective taking and many other skills.

- Occupational therapy teaches many skills to help increase the independence and quality of life for people with ASD. Some skills taught in occupational therapy include:
  - o Self-help and coping skills such as dressing, grooming, sleeping, and eating.
  - o Adaptive behavior by helping to reduce unwanted behaviors.
  - o Fine motor skills such as learning to hold a pen, tie shoelaces, fasten clothes while dressing, or use utensils during a meal.
  - o Physical exercise to improve endurance, muscle strength, stamina, or overall health.
  - o Socialization skills.
  - o Appropriate play skills and making friends.
  - o Sensory integration, and emotional arousal and regulation.
  
- Music therapy helps enable communication and expression helping with some of the core symptoms of ASD.
  
- Neurofeedback, Audiometric testing, Sensory integration therapy, Water therapy, and Vision therapy are all additional forms of support but cannot be accessed in PEI.

For further information on available supports in PEI please contact our office.

## **Community Resources**

The PEI Community Resources Handout provides an extensive list of all the available resources and supports available for individuals with ASD. The handout includes the available; advocacy and support organizations, education and training opportunities, employment and day program opportunities, family resource centres, leisure/recreational activities, residential/ respite care services, transportation services. To access this handout refer to the PDF version available below.

file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/2019%20-Community%20Resources%20Handout%20List%20August%202019%20(1).pdf

This community resource guide is thanks to:

Shelley Nelson

Community Access Facilitator

902-620-3746

Student Services – Public Schools Branch

## **Stars for Life Foundation**

The Stars for Life Foundation provides Residential and Day Program services to Adults living with ASD. We provide client centered services, this can include one to one support and/or small group settings. Depending on client goals we provide support in the following areas - job coaching, life and social skills training, educational supports, health and well-being, as well as specific workshops and short programs.

**Healthy Relationships, Sexuality and Autism** offered by the Stars for life Foundation

[http://www.autismnovascotia.ca/program/45#:~:text=Healthy%20Relationships%2C%20Sexuality%20and%20Autism%20Program%20\(HRSA\),positive%2C%20inclusive%20sexuality%20education%20lessons.](http://www.autismnovascotia.ca/program/45#:~:text=Healthy%20Relationships%2C%20Sexuality%20and%20Autism%20Program%20(HRSA),positive%2C%20inclusive%20sexuality%20education%20lessons.)

The Healthy Relationships, Sexuality and Autism (HRSA) Program provides adults ages 19 and up with ASD, support through introducing concepts of sexuality and social skills through interactive, sex positive, inclusive sexuality education lessons. The program was developed through funding by Autism Nova Scotia. This program runs once a week for 13 weeks and discusses topics including; anatomy and function, gender and sexual orientation, sexual health, sexual behaviors, relationships, dating, and emotions.

## **The PEI Association for Community Living**

The Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living (PEIACL) is a family-based association empowering people with intellectual disabilities and their families to lead the way in advancing inclusion in their own lives and in their communities. We do this by sharing information, fostering leadership for inclusion, facilitating networking, connecting people and opportunities, and promoting rights and values in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Our 3 priorities areas are:

- Supporting Families
- Employment

- Social Policy Reform and Systems Change

to find out more visit: [www.peiacl.org](http://www.peiacl.org)

### **Ready Willing & Able**

Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a program designed to increase the labor force inclusion of people with an intellectual disability or with autism spectrum disorder. It is a project with PEI Association for Community Living.

RWA will:

- Connect and support employers, persons with an intellectual disability or ASD and local, provincial and national community agencies
- Promote understanding and awareness among employers and the general public as to the business value of hiring people with an intellectual disability or ASD
- Complement and enhance the capacity of community employment service delivery organizations by connecting them to new employer demand

For further information on Ready, Willing, and Able you can access their website at <http://readywillingable.ca/>, [www.peiacl.org](http://www.peiacl.org) or contact the organization via email [rwa@peiacl.org](mailto:rwa@peiacl.org).

### **PEI Council of People with Disabilities: PEI COD**

PEI Council of People with Disabilities is an organization that aims to promote the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the island community. The organization's principles state that a person with disabilities has the right to economic and social security along with having their disability taken into consideration at any and all stages of economic and social settings. PEI COD prides itself by applying the following objectives to their organization. The following information was obtained from the PEI COD website.

The organization provides supports for adults through the access and employment departments

The PEI Council of People with Disabilities is a wonderful source for adults with autism spectrum disorder. The program offers so many beneficial programs and services towards people with disabilities. Having a resource such as PEI Council of people with Disabilities will aid individuals greatly in reaching their full potential and gaining a better quality of life.

## **Access 2 Card**

The Access 2 Card is a product of the Easter Seals Organization. This card allows individuals with a permanent disability, such as ASD to have free admission for their required support person in over 500 facilities . Easter Seals is in collaboration with movie theaters, cultural attractions, entertainment venues, and recreation facilities across Canada. This card serves as a way to allow individuals with disabilities no financial burden of having to pay for two people's admission. All you have to do is simply present your valid Access 2 Card at any of the participating locations and your support person will receive free admission, while you pay full price.

### **How to get an Access 2 Card:**

In order to apply for an Access 2 Card you will need to have a permanent disability that requires you to have a support person with you for assistance. For proof you will need to supply an authorization from a healthcare professional stating that you do indeed have a permanent disability that requires a support person. On PEI, in conjunction with health care professionals both executive directors of the Associated of Community Living and Stars for Life can provide authorization, along with other NGO EDs. Once you have all the necessary pieces of information needed to apply you can access the Easter Seals website and click on the Access 2 Card tab. Next you will scroll down to the area that is titled "Applying for an Access 2 Card". You will see a box that reads "Get an Access 2 Card"; click on that and another tab will be brought up. There are three steps to the application process. Step one: Fill out the application form, Step two: Payment, and step three: submitting your application. The Access 2 Cards cost \$20 for a new 3-year card or \$30 for a new 5-year card. The application process is very simple and the website is extremely helpful throughout the process.

PEI locations that accept Access 2 cards can be found through this link:

<http://access2card.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PE-Venues.pdf>

## **Financial supports**

### **AccessAbility (DSP) Supports**

AccessAbility Support formerly known as The Disability Support Program offers islanders living with disabilities assistance in certain areas. The program supports disabilities such as physical, intellectual, neurological, sensory, and mental disabilities. AccessAbility now offers new and improved supports that are intended to help individuals with disabilities on the island to reach their full potential. Some of these new supports include:

- Support for all disabilities including physical, intellectual, neurological, sensory and mental. Based on an assessment.
- A new assessment tool to help better understand how the disability affects activities of daily living to ensure appropriate support is provided.
- New supports coordinator to navigate all the available support services and develop a personalized plan to meet individual needs.
- Increased support for finding or keeping a job including coaching and skills training.
- Increased financial help for home and vehicle modifications required because of a disability -\$10,000 every 10 years for home (was \$2,000 in a lifetime) and \$6,000 every 8 years for a vehicle (was \$2,000 in a lifetime).
- A single point of contact by calling a toll-free number for easier access to support.

To be eligible for AccessAbility Supports you need to be all of the following:

- A person with a disability, defined as a person who has a substantial physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, or mental impairment that
  - o Is continuous or recurrent,
  - o Is expected to last for at least one year,
  - o Has a direct and cumulative effect on, and results in a substantial restriction in, the person's ability to function in his or her home, the community or a workplace.
- A permanent resident or citizen of Canada;
- A resident of PEI;
- Under 65 years of age on the day an application for supports for the person is submitted
- Meet any other requirements or conditions set out in the regulations.

To access the AccessAbility Support services you will first meet with a staff person who will conduct an assessment to determine how your disability affects your daily living. The assessment results will determine the level of funding you will receive. The Assessment will address the abilities and challenges of the applicant, their degree of restriction in the home, workplace and Community.

Depending on your assessment outcomes you may be able to receive anywhere from \$400-\$3,1000 monthly.

**AccessAbility Support Funding can be used to address the following**



Personal Support is designed to help individuals improve their daily living. It can include Life skills training such as;meal preparation,budgeting,grocery shopping, and recreational activities. It can also provide technical support and assistive devices. These supports can enable an individual to be self-sufficient and live as independently as possible.

Housing Supports will assist in independent living through financial assistance for caregivers who will provide assistance and daily guidance.It can also provide funding to address home and vehicle modifications which may be needed( \$10,000 every 10 years for home modification and \$6000 every 8 years for vehicle modification.

Community Supports enable active participation in the community such as day programming, personal aid or specialized transportation.Also provide assistance with job coaching, skills training, and supports for youth transitioning from the education system to the workforce

Caregiver Support provides respite for caregivers,as well as supervision for adults who are unable to stay home alone.

Financial Support provides assistance for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, household and personal supplies through what is called Assured Income.

If you have any questions or want to set up a meeting with an AccessAbility staff personal call their toll-free number at 1-877-569-0546.

### **Assured Income**

Assured income is a financial aid for individuals and families with disabilities that may not be able to access basic needs such as food, shelter, and other essentials. To be eligible for assured income you will need to have applied for and received AccessAbility Supports. The AAS Coordinator will work with you to assess basic and special needs funding requirements. You and/or your families must provide verification of eligible expenses and eligible income. Eligibility will be established based on a budget deficit calculation. Your funding requirements will be reviewed yearly with the AAS Coordinator. If you have an increase in needs or a change to your personal income you will have additional reviews on top of the yearly review. If you receive approval for Assured Income you have the ability to access funding for any of the following.

- Essentials such as clothing, household supplies, personal requirements, and local transportation.
- Food allowance.
- Shelter Supports.

- Communication Supports (telephone and/or internet).
- Special Needs such as optical, dental, furniture.
- Medical Supports.
- Transportation.
- Community Living Expense.

[https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/3.1\\_description.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/3.1_description.pdf)

Assured Income takes into account the state of the individual or individual's family income along with the required expenses for basic living and disability related support, to pay a suitable monthly amount.

### **Disability Tax Credit**

As an adult with autism you have the ability to apply for disability tax credit (DTC), which is a non-refundable tax credit that will provide an individual a reduction in the amount of income tax they are required to pay. The disability tax credit allows for individuals with prolonged disabilities to have some relief when evaluating their required costs to help support their disability.

As of 2019 the maximum disability amount that you can receive as an adult that has qualified for the disability tax credit is \$8,235. The annual amount that individuals can receive has increased each year by approximately \$100. If you are eligible for DTC and have been eligible for previous years but have not claimed the disability amount on previous tax returns, you may be able to request adjustments for up to 10 years under the CRA's Taxpayer Relief Provision. If the adjustment is approved you could receive a back payment based on the adjustment.

To be eligible for the disability tax credit you will need to have a critical mental or physical impairment that impacts your daily living and basic functioning, or required you to take part in life saving therapies. The impairment is classified as critical if it has lasted you 12 months or is expected to do so.

#### **How to apply?**

To apply for disability tax credit you will need to file a T2201 form, which you can access by printing one off from the internet. Once you have obtained the T2201 form you can begin the process of filing out the required sections. You are only required to fill out the first page on the form. Part A of the form is for the taxpayer to fill out, this could include the individual with the disability, and if they're unable to then it can be a caregiver or guardian. Part B of the form must be filled out by a medical practitioner, below is the list of which medical practitioners have authority to complete this section if you have ASD

- Medical doctor of all impairments
- Psychologist

You can **view** this form in:

- PDF [t2201-18e.pdf](#)
- PDF fillable/savable [t2201-fill-18e.pdf](#)

Part A:

Section 1 consists of general information about the individual with the disability. This information includes; name, birth date, social insurance number, address, and postal code.

Section 2 only needs to be filled out if the person filling out the form isn't the one who has the disability. If there is a spouse or guardian filling out the form they will be required to complete this section which consists of the living arrangements of the disabled individual.

Section 3 is very important when it comes to how much money you will receive from DTC. This section consists of one question asking if you would want to adjust your income tax and benefit return. It is highly advised that you answer yes to this question if this is the first time you have applied as this allows CRA to review and make adjustments to previous years.

Section 4 is the final section that needs to be completed by the individual or their dependent. This section is simply providing your signature to approve CRA to have access to your medical records and the ability to adjust your income tax and benefit returns if applicable.

Part B:

For the completion of Part B you must give your form to any of the medical practitioners listed above to fill out.

Once the medical practitioner has filled out their required sections they will give the form back to you. At this point it is very important that you read over the form thoroughly and make sure nothing is missed. On the second last page of the T2201 form there is a very important section that will impact whether or not you will qualify for DTC. Under the heading Duration there are two questions provided. The first question asks if the patient's impairment lasted or is expected to last for a period of 12 months. If the medical practitioner that completed this section checked no for this question then you will automatically be denied the DTC. Once passed this question the second one will ask if the medical practitioner has seen or could see any drastic improvements in the patient's condition. For this question the answer must be no, if the medical practitioner has checked yes, then you will be automatically denied the DTC.

After reviewing your T2201 form you can send it off to Sudbury Tax Centre in Ontario. The center will review your application and be in contact via mail in 6-8 weeks with one of two

letters. One being an acceptance of your application and the other being a letter stating your denial of your application with the reason why included.

For local support and additional information feel free to contact Daniel Martens at Martens Financial

13 Myrtle Street A, Stratford, PE C1B 1P4

(902)-394-0502, Email: [daniel@martensfinancial.ca](mailto:daniel@martensfinancial.ca)

## **Registered Disability Savings Plan**

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) started back in 2008 and is directly involved with the disability tax credit. This savings plan is funded by the federal government and is a long term savings account designed for financial security.

To be eligible for RDSP you have to be a Canadian resident with a social insurance number, be 59 years of age or younger, and have to have been qualified for disability tax credit. Only one recipient can be named to an RDSP and you can only have one RDSP as a recipient. If you do not have the capabilities to manage your finances as the individual requiring the savings plan then the holder of the plan must be a qualified family member. Like the DTC, you can go back up to 10 years' worth of benefits. The amount of years will be determined by how many years back you were able to go with your disability tax credit.

### How the Savings Plan Works:

A Registered Disability Savings Plan is able to be opened without any contributions. Once the plan holder deposits money into the account, the beneficiary will have immediate profit. At the age of 18 for the RDSP to be based on your income(not your guardian) it is necessary to have filed an income tax return for the two previous years. However, if this is not the case then the RDSP will be based on your parents income until you turn 20. Once opening a RDSP you will have to file income tax yearly to keep your plan. You will then qualify for a Bond and a Grant for your account.

### Bonds:

A bond is solely associated with your income and requires no contributions to generate funds. The amount that you receive in your bond is based off of the amount of income you receive.

| Annual Family Net Income | Canada Disability Savings Bond (Annually) |
|--------------------------|---|
| \$30,000* or less        | \$1,000                                   |

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Between \$30,000* and \$45,916* | Prorated amount of \$1,000 |
| More than \$45,916*             | \$0                        |

The bond has a maximum profit of \$20,000, however if you invest those savings you could have up to \$69,830 after 30 years, this is assuming a 6% return rate. If you are opening a bond with an annual family net income of \$45,916\*, you have the ability to go back ten years from the opening year and receive payments off of each year. This could result in receiving up to \$10,000 if you have qualified for the payments in the past years.

Grants:

Grants work differently than bonds by not only basing the earnings on your income but by also basing it on your investments towards the account. You are eligible to receive a grant until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which the beneficiary turns 49 years old.

| Annual Family Net Income        | Matching Grant on Annual RDSP Contributions                                  | Maximum Annual Grant |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Less than or equal to \$91,831* | On the first \$500 in annual contributions (\$3 for every \$1 contributed)   | \$1,500              |
|                                 | On the next \$1,000 in annual contributions (\$2 for every \$1 contributed)  | \$2,000              |
| Greater than \$91,831*          | On the first \$1,000 in annual contributions (\$1 for every \$1 contributed) | \$1,000              |

If you are able to accomplish a maximized RDSP it would result in \$395,265 total plan value In 30 years assuming a 6% return rate. As stated before a Registered Disability Savings Plan is a long term investment and this is due to the fact that you cannot withdraw any money from a bond or a grant until at least ten years after starting the plan. Any withdrawal from the account before that time will result in paying back all grants and bonds that are not matured to the

government. The only time you would be able to withdraw money without a full maturity, is under the circumstances of a medical crisis, or a housing crisis. The RDSP has zero impact on the other government funding programs listed below.

- Old Age Security (OAS)
- Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- HST/GST Benefit
- Most Provincial Disability Support Programs

To open a Registered Disability Savings Plan you will need to visit your financial organization, or access a financial advisor who specializes in RDSP's. If your financial organization does not offer the RDSP, Grants, and Bonds then you will need to access a financial organization, or advisor, that does. If you have a RDSP with one financial organization you have the ability to transfer it to another. You will need to go through the process of completing a Registered Disability Savings Plan Transfer and the Revocation of Request for Canada Disability Savings Grants and/or Canada Disability Savings Bonds. Both financial organizations must sign off for the transfer to be approved.

For more information on the Registered Disability Savings Plan you can visit <https://www.rdsp.com/>. This website is a non-profit, third party organization that will be helpful with providing more in depth details along with stories about the RDSP, a RDSP calculator, a step by step guide for applying, and more.

For local support and additional information feel free to contact Daniel Martens at Martens Financial

13 Myrtle Street A, Stratford, PE C1B 1P4

(902)-394-0502, Email: [daniel@martensfinancial.ca](mailto:daniel@martensfinancial.ca)

### **Navigating the Law/ Justice System and Legal Information**

When receiving a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder depending on your capabilities you may have to make some legal adjustments. If you as an individual with ASD do not have the capacity to make a will, legal decisions, handle your estates, etc., then an option may be to have an adult you trust to apply to the court to be your guardian and committee. Similarly, if the individual would like to appoint a substitute decision maker they can do so. If the individual does have the capabilities then they can make a power of attorney and health care directive. However if they do not then another adult must apply to the court to be appointed.

For further legal assistance feel free to contact Robin Aitken from Cox and Palmer at 902-629-3910, raitken@coxandpalmer.com or visit their Prince Edward Island location at 97 Queen Street, Suite 600.

Community Legal Information is a registered charity that helps residents of Prince Edward Island understand the law and navigate the justice system. They provide confidential, independent, and objective legal information. They pride themselves in making sure clients feel like they are in a safe environment where you can ask questions and get the most current legal information possible, in a language you understand. For more information on the Community Legal Information organization please refer to their website:

<https://www.legalinfopei.ca/en/home>.

The province of Prince Edward Island has set up an organization called Public trustee, Public and Official Guardian. The office was established to help protect the interest of the most vulnerable people in Prince Edward Island. Their goal is to provide adults with assistance in decision making regarding personal care, legal, and financial obligations.

The office of the Public Trustee, Public and Official Guardian can provide the following services if you do not have capacity or a support team around you to decision make:

- Manage property and financial matters
- Make personal care decisions
- Administer or Execute Estates
- Act as a Litigation Guardian
- Review insurance settlement for minors or persons under disability
- Protect the Legal and Financial Interest of Children under the age of 18 years
- Establish and maintain infant Trust
- Protect the legal, financial and personal and health care interest of vulnerable adults who require assistance in decision making
- Act as an independent interest for minors or persons with disabilities on insurance settlements or in court matters with financial implications to the person
- Administer the estates of missing or deceased persons

For more information on the Office of the Public Trustee, Public and Official Guardian you can contact them at Phone: (902) 368-6281 Fax: (902) 368-5335 or visit at 1 Harbourside Access Road PO Box 2000, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, C1A 7N8.

## **Supported Decision Making**

Supported decision making is a way that an individual with a disability can arrange for another person to be in charge of decisions involving banking, medical, insurance, and financial decisions. The individual with the disability has the ability to assign a person for each important sector. In PEI this system is not quite fully recognized but we are moving towards that direction.

## **Private Psychologists**

### **That Do Diagnostic Assessments:**

Dr. Brent MacDonald:

Phone: 403-229-3455

Email: [brent@complexlearners.com](mailto:brent@complexlearners.com)

Price: For a diagnostic assessment \$3,600, for any additional services such as post diagnosis supports \$230 hourly.

Dr. McDonald's services are billable through insurance plans from all major providers. If you are drawing Disability Tax Credit you have the ability to use DTC as a claim for your assessment. Discuss with your provider for more assistance and details.

Dr. MacDonald practices outside of the province but travels to PEI for two week periods every 2-3 months to screen adults for autism. You do not need a referral to see Dr. MacDonald. When being assessed Dr. MacDonald creates a detailed developmental history, along with an intellectual and an academic screening process using programs such as the KTEA ( Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement), ASRS (Adult ADHD Self Report Scale), and ADIR ( Autism Diagnostic Interview Revised). After your assessment Dr. MacDonald will provide you with a final report highlighting your diagnosis along with all test data, detailed history, your occupational functioning, and most importantly your recommended strategies for moving forward. Dr. Macdonald offers services after a diagnosis including supportive counselling, occupational counselling, career path assistance, and social functioning in the work environment counselling.

Dr. April Sullivan:

Phone number: 902-445-3851

Email: [admin@ericabaker.ca](mailto:admin@ericabaker.ca)



Price: Assessment for ASD is between \$2350 and \$3850 depending on whether a psychoeducational assessment is required to inform recommendations for university

Dr. Sullivan assesses people using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS2) and the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R). Following the assessment Dr. Sullivan will provide individuals with a final report that provides you with a summary of your assessment and recommendations on what your next steps should be. To see Dr. Sullivan you do not need a referral. Families can pay and submit to their insurance companies for reimbursement of Dr.Sullivan's services.

Dr. George Mallia & Dr. Christine Beck:

Phone: 902-367-4446

Email: [drgeorgemallia@gmail.com](mailto:drgeorgemallia@gmail.com), [drchristinebeck@gmail.com](mailto:drchristinebeck@gmail.com)

Price: The price for assessments can range from \$1,800 to \$3,000 with a 12-18 month waiting list.

For their assessments both doctors use a mix of different assessments as most of the available forms are designed for children. You will not need a referral to see either one of the two doctors. For payment purposes they will provide you with an invoice for their services and it will be your job to present it to your insurance company. The process takes approximately 4-6 weeks.

Dr. Neil McLure

Phone: 902-432-3910

Email: [mclure@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:mclure@pei.sympatico.ca)

Price: contact for pricing

Dr. McLure provides individuals with autism diagnostic assessments using assessment tools such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Scale, and more that address executive functioning, organization, planning, attention, personality, and trauma. For Dr. McLure's services you will need a referral depending on your insurance company. Check with your insurance company prior to booking an appointment. Dr. McLure does not offer post diagnosis services but does aid you in finding some that will suit you.

**That Do Not Do Diagnostic Assessments But Provides Services After Diagnosis:**

Dr. Ken Pierce

Phone: 1-877-569-3710

Email: [ken@clarendonconsulting.com](mailto:ken@clarendonconsulting.com)

Price: 1 (1 hour) session: \$500

5 (1 hour) sessions package: \$475 each

10 (1 hour) sessions package: \$450 each

Dr.Pierce provides individuals with autism spectrum disorder sessions that serve people in coping with their diagnosis. He takes a think not feel approach as he believes that if you change the way you think about something then you will change the way you feel about it. There is no needed referral to see Dr.Pierce. You can pay and submit to your insurance company for reimbursement of Dr.Pierce's services.

Dr.Parise Nadeau

Phone: 902-438-1109

Email: [parisenadeau@gmail.com](mailto:parisenadeau@gmail.com)

Price: contact for pricing.

Dr. Nadeau does not provide an autism diagnostic assessment but does provide services that help support ASD symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

## **Potential Funding Source for Accessing a Diagnosis**

### **Ceridian cares**

Ceridian Cares is a charitable organization that prides themselves in their contribution of providing needed financial assistance to families, and improving the communities. The organization offers grants to Canadian citizens over the age of 18 that are in need of financial support. The grants being offered are of a price range of \$200-\$4,000, with a maximum grant of \$5,000. These grants will help supply people with clothing, footwear, food, basic household needs, medical, and personal development and recreation.

To apply for a Ceridian Cares grant you will need to go through three steps.

- 1) Review the Ceridian Cares application requirements and make sure that you have all the proper qualifications.
- 2) Gather all the required documents for the application which include:
  - Your Canadian birth certificate or permanent residence card.

- Your most recent year's Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment, along with all other income earners in the household.
- Two quotes from vendors or service providers for the cost of the item or items which the financial assistance is being requested for.
- Optional: a letter from a third party such as your doctor or therapist.

<https://www.ceridiancares.ca/application>

3) Apply for the grant. Open up Ceridian Cares website and under About the Application Process tab, click on apply. This will open up to a page stating the three steps for the application process. Click the Apply Now button and fill out the informational questions. Once that's completed scan and upload all of the required documents you've obtained and then click submit. After submitting an application the normal response time is within 90 days.

## **Other Important Information**

### **211 PEI**

The United Way of PEI, in partnership with the Province of Prince Edward Island, is pleased to announce that "211 PEI" is now accessible by phone and website as a valuable resource to help Islanders navigate the network of community, social, non-clinical health and government services available across the Island.

211 PEI will help those in need "find the right door the first time" by connecting them to human services quickly and easily. The 211 PEI service is now fully active, providing Islanders and service providers with access 24/7/365 by calling 2-1-1 or searching the website at [www.pe.211.ca](http://www.pe.211.ca).

The 211 PEI helps connect users with human services for both everyday needs and times of crisis. 211 PEI is a signature service of the United Way of PEI with funding and support from the Government of Prince Edward Island.

Islanders can call 2-1-1, and receive service in English, French, and through an interpretation service to more than 100 other languages. The 211 PEI website can be accessed by visiting [www.pe.211.ca](http://www.pe.211.ca).

### **The Helping Tree PEI**

The PEI Helping Tree is designed to inform Islanders of the many helping resources available on Prince Edward Island. If you or someone you care about is experiencing a problem in any of

the areas listed, follow the arrows on the flowchart to find resources that may help. There are times in everyone's lives when we need to reach out to others - sometimes it's just a matter of knowing how to contact them. Note: unless indicated, you need to dial 902 for all local calls.

[https://savoir-sante.ca/en/content\\_page/download/331/527/21?method=view](https://savoir-sante.ca/en/content_page/download/331/527/21?method=view)

## **Helpful Apps**

Autism Apps is an app that provides individuals with a categorized list of all apps that help people with autism spectrum disorder. Some of the categories include art, books, music, puzzles, self-care, and vocabulary. Along with categories for apps that help with ABA, behavior and social skills, fine motor and writing skills, and more. Visit Touch Autisms website at [Autism Apps](#) to download and gather more information for autism Apps.

Apps that can aid with anxiety:

- Headspace
- Rootd
- Acupressure
- Calm
- Stop Panic & Anxiety Self Help

Apps for relaxation, meditation, and sleep:

- Headspace
- Noisli
- Pzizz
- Slumber
- Calm
- 10% Happier

Apps for Yoga:

- Pocket Yoga
- Yoga Studio
- Simply Yoga
- 5 Minute Yoga
- Down Dog
- Asana Rebel

## **List of Recommended Reading and Resources**

### **Books**

- Asperger's and Adulthood: A Guide to Working by Blythe Grossberg
- Autism Adulthood: Insights and Creative Strategies for a Fulfilling Life by Susan Senator
- The Autism Spectrum Guide to Sexuality and Relationships: Understand Yourself and Make Choices that are Right for You by Emma Goodall
- Asperger's in Love: Couples, Relationships, and Family Affairs by Maxine Aston
- Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults by Zosia Zaks.
- Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism by Temple Grandin
- Born on a Blue Day by Daniel Tammet
- The Jumbled Jigsaw: An Insider's Approach to the Treatment of Autistic Spectrum 'Fruit Salads' by Donna Williams
- Adult Life with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Self-Help Guide by Maureen Bennie, Collen Eggerston, Andy Kubrin, and Sandra Werle
- Preparing for Life: The Complete Handbook of the Transition to Adulthood for Students with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome by Jed Baker, Ph.D.

## **Websites**

- Autism Speaks <https://www.autismspeaks.ca/>
- Autism Canada <https://autismcanada.org/>
- Synapse <http://www.autism-help.org/adults-autism-aspergers.htm>
- Autism Canada ASD Central Facebook group, Canada's Forum for Adults on the Spectrum <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1710172265882835/>
- Healthcare toolkit for Patients and Supporter [https://www.autismandhealth.org/?a=pt&p=detail&t=pt\\_aut&s=aut\\_asd&theme=ltlc&size=small](https://www.autismandhealth.org/?a=pt&p=detail&t=pt_aut&s=aut_asd&theme=ltlc&size=small)
- Autism Online Discussion and Mailing List <http://www.autism-resources.com/links/forums.html>
- Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network <https://awnnetwork.org/>

## **Articles**

- Articles by Marina Sarris at the Interactive Autism Network at Kennedy Krieger Institute:

- o Daily Living Skills: A Key to Independence for People with Autism  
<https://iancommunity.org/ssc/autism-adaptive-skills>
- o Autism and College Experience  
<https://iancommunity.org/ssc/autism-college-experience>
- o Finding a College Program  
<https://iancommunity.org/ssc/college-resources-autism>
- Living with Asperger Profile for Adults  
<https://www.aane.org/living-asperger-syndrome-adults/>
- Adults with Asperger Syndrome: Is Occupation Therapy Right for You?  
<https://www.aane.org/adults-asperger-syndrome-occupational-therapy-right/>
- Asperger and Autism Spectrum: Women and Girls  
<https://www.aane.org/women-asperger-profiles/>
- The Autism Dilemma for Women Diagnosis  
<https://researchautism.org/the-autism-dilemma-for-women-diagnosis/>

## **Videos**

- Temple Grandin Ted Talks and videos on autism
- Mental Health Challenges in ASD Panel  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/education/videos/mental-health-challenges-in-asd-perspectives-of-adults-with-asd-and-professionals-who-work-with-adults>
- The Role of Medication in the Management of ASD  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/education/videos/the-role-of-medication-in-the-management-of-asd>
- Perspectives on Adult Life: Adult Panel Discusses Living with AS/ASD (part 1 of 4)  
<https://www.aane.org/perspectives-adult-life-adult-panel-discusses-living-asasd-part-1-4/>
- Perspectives on Adult Life: Adult Panel Discusses Living with AS/ASD (part 2 of 4)  
<https://www.aane.org/perspectives-adult-life-adult-panel-discusses-living-asasd-part-2-4/>
- Perspectives on Adult Life: Adult Panel Discusses Living with AS/ASD (part 3 of 4)  
<https://www.aane.org/perspectives-adult-life-adult-panel-discusses-living-asasd-part-2-4/>
- Perspectives on Adult Life: Adult Panel Discusses Living with AS/ASD (part 4 of 4)  
<https://www.aane.org/perspectives-adult-life-adult-panel-discusses-living-asasd-part-2-4/>

## **Other Forms**

- Eric Chessen certified autism fitness trainer has a \$12.99 per month subscription to a toolbox training package that includes concepts and methods, profile assessments, exercises and templates, and videos and flow charts. <https://autismfitness.com/about>.

## **IRP Guidelines**

This project is part of the Investment Readiness Program funded by the Government of Canada's SI/SF Strategy.



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA



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