Adult Neurodevelopmental Services (ANS)

Frequently Asked Questions

What services does ANS provide?

Adult Neurodevelopmental Services (ANS) provides specialized outpatient mental health services for adults with intellectual disability. For autistic adults, services are primarily limited to diagnostic assessment and brief post-diagnostic supports, such as psychoeducation and a small number of time-limited groups; ANS does not provide ongoing autism treatment or support services.

Outpatient mental health services are available for people who:

- Are 16 years of age or older
- Have a confirmed diagnosis of an intellectual disability and/or autism
- Are experiencing a mental health concern or behaviours that challenge (e.g., aggression, self-injury, persistent repetitive behaviours)

Autism diagnostic assessments are available for adults who:

- Are 18 years of age or older
- Meet the current eligibility criteria for assessment

Autism Diagnostic Assessments

Q: How do I get referred for an autism assessment?

A: A referral from a physician, nurse practitioner, or psychiatrist is required.

Following referral, your healthcare provider will be asked to complete additional information through our referral process to help determine whether our service is appropriate for your needs.

Q: What are the current eligibility criteria?

A: Due to the high demand for publicly funded autism assessments, ANS prioritizes assessments for individuals who:

- Have a known or suspected co-occurring mental health condition
- Experience moderate to severe impairment in daily functioning
- Meet our referral requirements

Meeting these criteria does not guarantee an assessment but helps us ensure limited resources are directed to those with the greatest clinical need.

Q: Why have the eligibility criteria changed?

A: Demand for adult autism assessments has grown significantly and continues to exceed available capacity.

As one of the only publicly funded adult autism assessment providers in Ontario, CAMH receives referrals from across the province. Updating our eligibility criteria allows us to prioritize individuals with the greatest clinical need while connecting others to alternative supports where possible.

Q: What happens after my referral is received?

A: After Access CAMH receives your referral, we will first review the information provided. We may contact your referring healthcare provider to obtain additional information to determine whether your referral may be eligible for our service. We will then contact you directly to gather some additional information and ask you to complete a questionnaire. This information helps us determine whether ANS is the right service for your needs.

Q: How long is the wait?

A: The wait for an autism diagnostic assessment is currently several years long. Wait times are estimates and may change based on referral volumes and available capacity.

Q: Can I check where I am on the waitlist?

A: Due to the volume of referrals, ANS is unable to provide individual waitlist updates or estimated assessment dates. If you are currently on the waitlist, we will contact you when action is required or when we are ready to offer an appointment.

Q: I am already on the waitlist. What happens next?

A: ANS is currently reviewing the existing waitlist. You will receive a questionnaire by email asking you to:

- Confirm you are still interested in an assessment
- Update your clinical information
- Answer some questions related to your current status

The information you provide will help determine whether you continue to meet the current eligibility criteria.

Q: Why am I being asked to complete a questionnaire after waiting so long?

A: We recognize that many people have been waiting a long time for an autism assessment. To ensure our records are up to date and that limited assessment capacity is directed to those with the greatest clinical need, we are asking everyone currently on the waitlist to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire confirms that you are still interested in an assessment and helps us understand whether your current circumstances align with our eligibility criteria.

Q: Will I lose my place on the waitlist?

A: Completing the questionnaire does not automatically affect your place on the waitlist. The information you provide will be reviewed using our current eligibility criteria. If you continue to meet the criteria, you will remain on the waitlist. If you no longer meet the criteria, we will explain the decision and provide information about alternative supports and resources.

Q: What happens if I don't complete the questionnaire?

A: If we do not receive a completed questionnaire after multiple attempts to contact you, we may assume you are no longer interested in an assessment and your referral may be closed. If your referral is closed, your referring provider will be notified.

Q: What if I am no longer eligible for an assessment?

A: If you do not meet the current eligibility criteria, we understand this may be disappointing. While we may not be able to offer an assessment through ANS, we will provide information about other services and supports that may meet your needs, including psychoeducation, neuroaffirming programming, community resources, and other assessment options where available.

Q: Can my doctor submit additional information if my circumstances have changed?

A: Yes. If your health or circumstances have changed since your referral was made, your referring physician, nurse practitioner, or psychiatrist may submit updated clinical information for review. This information will be considered alongside your questionnaire when determining eligibility

Q: How many appointments does an autism assessment take?

A: Most autism assessments require between **two and four appointments**, depending on your individual circumstances.

Q: Will I need to bring someone with me?

A: Where possible, we ask you to involve someone who knew you during childhood (for example, a parent, caregiver, sibling, or other family member).

If this isn't possible, we may ask for school records or previous assessments to help understand your developmental history.

Appointments

Q: How do I prepare for my appointment?

A: Please bring:

- Your health card
- A list of your medications
- Any relevant medical reports or assessments
- Any comfort items you may need (headphones, fidgets, sunglasses, etc.)

Please let us know in advance if you require:

- An interpreter
- Accessibility accommodations
- Other supports to make your visit comfortable.

Q: I need to cancel or reschedule my appointment.

A: Please contact ANS at least **three business days** before your appointment whenever possible.

Because many people are waiting for appointments, repeated missed or late cancellations may require a new referral.

Crisis Support

Q: I am in crisis. Can ANS help?

A: ANS does **not** provide emergency or crisis services.

If you are in immediate crisis:

- Go to your nearest emergency department
- Call 911 if you are in immediate danger
- Contact your local crisis service or 988 for immediate support

Contact Information

Q: Where is ANS located?

A: 1025 Queen Street West
3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario

Q: Who can I contact if I have questions?

A: Access CAMH

Phone: 416-535-8501 (press 2)