

# Why We Created This

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Since most mental health services weren't designed for autistic people, navigating these systems can be very confusing.

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## What are the issues?

It can be hard to navigate the neurotypical world as an autistic youth. Dealing with strong sensory environments and demanding attitudes of others can be hard when you're built differently than everyone else. Sometimes we may have to mask or act in a different way than we feel or are comfortable.

So many of autistic youth's experiences are devalued, invalidated, and gaslit. We are often told our experiences are 'no big deal' and/or we're 'being dramatic'. These words are hurtful and the impact can build up over time.

Many autistic youth develop depression. Mental health concerns can look different in autistic people compared to non-autistic (allistic) people. Because of this, clinicians often miss (and dismiss!) our concerns.



You deserve to get effective mental health support now and we hope the information in these tip sheets can help you.



## Why we created this package of tip sheets

The way you experience and process the world is valid. This tip sheet was designed by and for autistic youth, with the support of family carers and clinicians, to help autistic youth talk about their experiences and to help them get the support that they need.

We need to educate others about autism and mental health. These tip sheets can be shared with other people, like your friends, family, or clinicians to educate and advocate for neurodiversity and mental health.

Getting help as soon as possible is more helpful than waiting for a crisis. You don't have to wait until things get really, really bad.

## We're all rooting for you!

### Points to consider as you read through:

1. This package is geared towards autistic TAY\* who can articulate for themselves. However, not everyone can express or communicate their feelings and experiences. Therefore, carers may need to be involved and help by communicating what they see.
2. While many autistic youth may experience symptoms of depression, having these symptoms is not the same as having a clinical diagnosis of depression.
3. This package is not meant to provide a resource for making clinical diagnoses or to direct treatment decisions.

\* TAY often refers to youth — 14-25 years of age