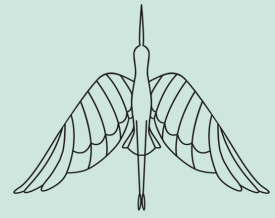


Neuroaffirming Autism / ADHD Assessment Process



BALANCED
MIND • BODY • LIFE

Getting Started

Hi and welcome!

First thing's first. This is an information sheet about neurodivergence assessment, so let's be clear about what that means!

What is Neurodivergence?

At Balanced, we understand that everyone's brain is unique. Your brain style can shape the way you think, feel, and experience the world. We are pleased to offer neuroaffirming Autism and ADHD assessments for children, adolescents, and adults.

Assessments help us uncover the way your brain works to understand your strengths and challenges, and identify ways that your life can become easier and more fulfilling. An assessment can also bring clarity, self-awareness, and compassion. It is a chance to know yourself better.

Autism Spectrum Disorder affects how a person experiences and interacts with the world. People with Autism have differences in how they communicate and interact with other people, as well as some unique patterns in how they behave, what they are interested in, and how they process sensory information like touch or taste. Autism is said to be on a spectrum because those who have it can be very different in terms of how it affects them, how well they function in their lives, and what support they need. It is a lifelong condition, not an illness.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a condition that affects attention, impulse control, and activity levels. People with ADHD can find it hard to focus on one thing at a time, feel really overactive and act without thinking at times, or both. These problems interfere with their ability to stay on top of things from day-to-day. It may involve difficulties with executive functioning, which is a term used to refer to skills such as planning, organisation, and emotional regulation. It, too, is a lifelong difference in brain development.

At Balanced: Mind Body Life, we offer assessments for Autism and/or ADHD. That means we can talk to you about your history and your symptoms, and tell you whether you have these conditions.

Since you've opened this information sheet, we're guessing that you are wondering whether you might be neurodivergent. Or, perhaps, whether someone you know or love might be.

If you, or they, would like our help to answer this question, we're here to do just that!

This information sheet covers each step of the process in detail for those who like to know exactly what to expect.

If you are someone who prefers the short version, there is also a 'Too Long, Didn't Read' summary at the end!

The Assessment Process

There are four steps to getting your neurodivergence assessment at Balanced: Mind Body Life. The image below gives you an overview, each step is then explained in more detail below.



Step 1: Referral

There are three ways that you can be referred for an assessment at Balanced: Mind Body Life:

- **Internal Referral**

If you already see a Clinician at Balanced for another reason, the subject of Neurodivergence might arise within these sessions. In this case, your Clinician can write a brief referral letter to Sarah to introduce you and explain a little bit about why you both think an assessment could be helpful. Sarah will have a look at the referral letter and advise about whether she thinks an assessment is a good idea.

- **Self Referral**

If you come across our service yourself, you might decide that you would like to email, text, or call us yourself to find out more.

In this case, feel free to get in touch and our reception staff will be there to help.

- **External Referral**

If you are seeing a Clinician (for example, another Psychologist, a GP, an Occupational Therapist, etc) who does not work at Balanced, they may suggest that you seek an assessment at our practice. In this case, usually the Clinician would write us a letter to explain a bit about you and why they think an assessment is a good idea.

Step 2: Intake

We understand that getting an assessment is a big commitment in energy, time, and finances as well. We want to make sure that the assessment is necessary, and that we offer you the right ones!

The intake session is a 50 minute interview with our Clinical Psychologist Dr Sarah Wells. She will aim to get to know you a little in order to understand why you (and/or others) think you might be neurodivergent.

If she hears your story and (a) agrees that your experiences sound like neurodivergence, and (b) you still want to proceed, she will advise you about which assessments she thinks would be best.

The next step is to decide whether you would like Sarah to write you a long report or a brief report following your assessment. A brief report contains a summary of the most important points and whether or not Sarah thinks you meet diagnostic criteria for Autism and/or ADHD. A long report contains a lot more detail and may be beneficial if you wish to apply for support funding with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) should you receive a diagnosis of Autism.

Sarah and our receptionist will work with you to find a time to come back to do the assessment. Sarah will also give you some questionnaires to do at home yourself. She might also give you one to give to someone who knows you really well to fill in too, like a parent, teacher, or friend who has known you for a long time. This helps her understand whether other people have noticed the same things about you that you have noticed about yourself.

Step 3: Assessment

On the day of your assessment, you will come in for a longer appointment with Sarah. You are welcome to bring someone who will be supportive and helpful with you if you would like to.

For Autism, the assessment is usually about three hours. For ADHD, it is usually about two hours if it is the only condition you are being assessed for, or one hour if it's in addition to Autism (Sarah only needs to ask about things like your developmental history and family once!).

If you are doing assessments for both on the same day, there will be a 30-minute break between them.

During the assessment, Sarah will have a standardised series of questions that she will ask about you and your life. It will be like a long conversation rather than a list of 'yes/no' responses. Other than doing the questionnaires she gave you, you don't need to prepare.

For Autism, the main assessment tool Sarah uses is called the MIGDAS-2.

For ADHD, there are two assessment tools used: the Conners (the version depends on how old you are), and the DIVA.

There will likely be some other, shorter assessments as well. These will be chosen based on what Sarah thinks will be most helpful for each individual client.

You can ask to take a break when you need to.

Step 4: Feedback

After your assessment, Sarah will review your responses and use guidelines to determine whether you meet diagnostic criteria for Autism and/or ADHD. She will write up the brief or long report as agreed upon in as timely a fashion as possible. A long report is often in excess of 30 pages, so it can take a few weeks. When the report is almost finished, she will let our receptionist know. They will get in touch with you to book a time for your feedback session.

Payment for this session is included in the price of the assessment package.

The feedback session is 50 minutes long. Sarah will advise you whether she believes you meet diagnostic criteria for the conditions she assessed you for. If she thinks you meet criteria for a mental health condition that has been identified by coincidence during the assessment, she will also explain this to you as well.

Sarah will also talk you through the report she has written for you and make sure you understand what it means. You will also be able to ask any questions you have.

If you do receive a diagnosis of Autism and/or ADHD, reactions can differ a lot from person to person. For some people, it can feel like a formality: confirmation of something they already knew. Others may find they feel very relieved and feel that things make a lot more sense now they know this about themselves. Still others might find it highly confronting and difficult to process. There is no right or wrong way to react, but regardless of what happens, it is good to know what you could do next. Sarah's report will contain some guidance about this.

If Sarah believes that perhaps what you or others thought was neurodivergence might actually be due to something else (for example, maybe she might think you have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder rather than Autism - though we do understand you can have both!) she can guide you to other clinicians or services to make sure that you're headed towards the right sort of support.

No matter what the outcome is, we want to make sure you feel well-informed and cared for.

Too Long, Didn't Read

Our process of assessing for Autism and/or ADHD is divided into four stages.

1. You get in touch with us. Give us a ring, or send us an email, and let us know that you're interested in getting an assessment. Our receptionist can help from there.
2. You come in for an initial appointment with Clinical Psychologist Sarah, who will talk to you and help you decide whether it would be a good investment of your time, energy, and money to do a full assessment. If you decide to go ahead she will give you some questionnaires to do beforehand and make you a time for the assessment.
3. You come in for your assessment. It will be at least a few hours for Autism, and either one or two hours for ADHD. You don't need to prepare, but you might be asked to bring some school reports if you have them. There will be a break if you're doing both assessments. You can bring someone with you if you like as long as they will be helpful (e.g. not interrupt you a lot, distract you, etc.).

- Sarah will write your report and reception will ring you to make a time to come back in for an appointment to discuss it with her. She will explain whether she thinks you have the condition she assessed you for, and why or why not. You can talk about how you feel about it, either way. She can answer any questions you have and help you figure out some next steps if you would like her to.

FAQ

- How much does an assessment cost?*

The price of the intake session is \$275.

The price of the assessment itself depends on which conditions you wish to be assessed for, and how long you wish the report to be. It is paid in two halves: 50% at the end of the intake appointment (once you have decided to proceed), and 50% at the start of the assessment session itself.

Assessment Type	50% deposit after the intake appointment	50% balance at the start of the assessment	(Total cost)
Autism only (long report)	\$1312.50	\$1312.50	(\$2,625)
Autism only (short report)	\$1062.50	\$1062.50	(\$2,125)
Autism + ADHD (long report)	\$1562.50	\$1562.50	(\$3,125)
ADHD only	Usually it is more cost-effective for you to go straight to a GP who can refer you to a Psychiatrist if appropriate. Sometimes, however, there can be a special reason that a person might want to be assessed by a Psychologist. If this is you, please email or call our receptionist and they can check with Sarah.		

- If I pay the deposit for a long report but, after the assessment, Sarah thinks I do not meet criteria for the condition, is it possible to convert the long report to a short report?*

Yes. We won't ask you to pay for a long report under these circumstances. Sarah will write you a short report instead. The price of the deposit will pay for the cost of the assessment, the cost of the test materials, the time

for writing the brief report, and for the feedback session to discuss the outcome with you.

- *Does a diagnosis of Autism mean I will definitely get NDIA funding?*

No. The report can form a part of the evidence that you submit to the NDIA when you request funding, but the final decision rests with them.

- *If I get a diagnosis of ADHD, can Sarah prescribe me medication to treat it?*

No. Medication for ADHD can only be prescribed by a medical doctor: a Psychiatrist, Paediatrician, or a specially-trained GP. Sarah can provide a copy of your report a doctor if you request this, but the doctor will need to make their own decision about whether medication is appropriate.

- *If I do the intake session and Sarah thinks I could be neurodivergent, do I have to go ahead with the assessment?*

No. If you decide you don't want to go ahead with the assessment after the intake session you don't have to. If you don't go ahead straight away but change your mind later and want to come back, that's ok too. Depending on how long it's been you might need to do another initial session, though, to catch up on what's happened since she last saw you. This is so that Sarah can be properly prepared for the assessment.

- *I have questions that haven't been answered here. Is it ok if I ask them?*

It is really important to us that you feel well-informed before making your decision. You can call us and ask your question if that feels comfortable to you, but it's absolutely fine to send an email instead if phones are not your thing.

- *What are your contact details?*

Email: admin@balancedtas.com

Phone: 0407 600 347

Another option is to fill in the contact form on our website www.tasmindbodylife.com

Our receptionist's names are Hayley and Sylvia. One of them will reply to you as soon as possible.