Mental health and autism spectrum conditions

What is autism?

- Autism is a life long neurodevelopmental condition, meaning the brain develops differently.
- The autism spectrum is made up of lots of different people who show the key characteristics of autism in different ways.

Mental health in autism: Facts and figures

- 77% of young autistic adults followed up from childhood had mental health difficulties
- Mood disorders are the most common mental health difficulty
- Incidence of depression in autism could be as high as 34%
- Rates of anxiety much higher in those with autism compared to those without autism
- Intolerance of uncertainty could contribute to anxiety in autism
- Other co-occurring conditions include Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, panic disorder and agrophobia

Autistic adolescents and mental health

- Adolescence is from the start of puberty to when an individual has a stable adult role
- Adolescents with autism have to contend with the pressures of being a teenager, like their non-autistic peers
- One study found that autistic adolescents were as affected by ostracism as their non-autistic peers
- Social anxiety appears to be higher in autistic adolescents

Take part in research looking at mental health and autism acceptance: email eilidh.cage@rhul.ac.uk

References