

What to Expect in an Assessment

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Assessments are usually a structured conversation, not a test you can pass or fail.
- Expect questions about childhood, daily life, work, relationships and sensory experiences.
- Most assessments take 1–3 hours, sometimes across more than one appointment.
- You'll typically get a written report afterwards, whatever the outcome.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

Not knowing what to expect can make an already nerve-racking appointment feel worse. A rough idea of the format helps you prepare and feel more in control.

What This Might Look Like

- A clinician asking about your childhood, school experience, work and relationships.
- Being asked to complete questionnaires before or during the appointment.
- Sometimes a request to bring someone who's known you a long time, or evidence like old school reports.

Typical Structure

- Initial questions about why you're seeking assessment and what prompted it.
- A detailed developmental history: childhood, school, friendships, early behaviours.
- Questions about current daily life: work, routines, relationships, sensory experiences.
- Standardised tools or questionnaires specific to the condition being assessed.
- A summary conversation and next steps, followed by a written report.

How to Prepare

- Gather any useful evidence in advance (see our companion guide on gathering evidence).
- Write down specific, real examples rather than general impressions; specifics are more useful to a clinician.
- Plan practical comforts: water, headphones, a fidget item, or breaks if you need them.
- It's fine to say "I need a moment" or ask for a question to be repeated or reworded.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

You don't have to use these exact words. Take what fits and leave the rest.

"Would it be okay if I take a short break partway through if I need one?"

"I find it easier to answer if you can ask me for a specific example rather than a general question. Is that okay?"

Quick Tips

- There's no "right" way to answer. Be as honest and specific as you can.
- It's okay to say "I don't know" or "I'd need to think about that."
- Bring notes; it's easy to blank on specifics in the moment.
- Ask in advance roughly how long the appointment will be.
- A written report typically follows, even if there isn't a diagnosis.
- It's normal to feel emotional during or after. Give yourself time afterward.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guides: “Gathering Evidence” and “Writing Your Life Narrative.”
- Ask your provider in advance for a rough outline of the appointment, so you know what to expect.

Before You Go

This is a conversation about understanding you better, not a performance to get right.

However it goes, you've done something brave just by showing up for yourself.