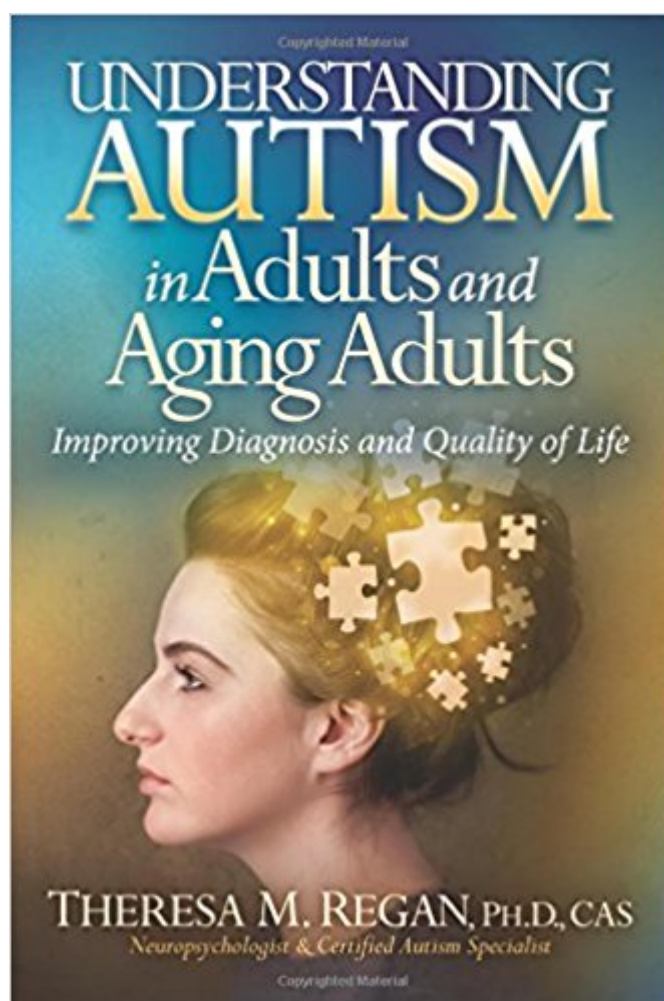


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# Understanding Autism In Adults And Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis And Quality Of Life



## Synopsis

Autism is a childhood condition ... right? Not right. Children with autism grow into adults with autism. The great strides we have made in understanding childhood autistic behaviors and interventions have lagged dramatically behind the needs of aging autistics. What of the young adult trying to build relationships? What of the middle aged autistic adult who has been misdiagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and lacks an effective treatment plan? What of the aging adult who is showing increasingly rigid autistic behaviors and is misdiagnosed as having frontotemporal dementia? Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults is a one-of-a-kind resource designed to improve the correct diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in adults. Filled with clinical stories that bring to life the concepts discussed, the book provides strategy-based interventions to address issues of personal and household management, medical care, communication, sensory processing symptoms, and emotional and behavioral regulation.

## Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: IndieGo Publishing LLC; 1 edition (April 2, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1946824003

ISBN-13: 978-1946824004

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #589,714 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #290 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Aging Parents](#) #611 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Special Needs > Disabilities](#)

## Customer Reviews

James Runyon, Executive VP, Strategic Initiatives at Easterseals Central Illinois--Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults makes a significant contribution to understanding the challenges of adults with autism as they age. The case studies and illustrative scenarios highlight what is both shared and unique to each person with autism as they maneuver a "neurotypical" world. The author doesn't shy away from tough topics including mental health, addictions, and navigating a complex healthcare system. A "must read" for caregivers of children with autism as they assist in the transition into adulthood.

Dr. Regan is that rare combination of adult neuropsychologist (specialist in brain-behavior relationships), parent of a child on the spectrum, and Certified Autism Specialist. She has worked with adolescent through geriatric patients in medical settings for over 25 years. She is a Certified Autism Specialist through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) and the director of the Adult Diagnostic Autism Clinic at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois.

I received an advanced copy of this book for review as a Beta Reader. I am not a trained psychologist, though I have some training in this area related to adult education and personnel management. I found this book fascinating, easy to read and very informative. It is informative, the case studies provide good examples to illustrate the points made in the preceding texts which make the behavioural problems and the manner in which it can be addressed plain, even to a non-medic. The book is structured in a logical manner, which takes the reader from the outlines of the problems faced by individuals suffering from Adult Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and those who care for them. The key to success for both is to provide the right kind of routines and structure within which the ASD sufferer can find a way to deal with the daily challenges, and those who live with them, can find ways to assist. I think this book will be of enormous assistance to doctors and case workers in dealing with those who fall into the Spectrum that defines Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

I received a free copy of this book for review. As a pediatric neuropsychologist who frequently diagnoses children and adolescents who fall on the autism spectrum, one of the main concerns that my patients' families express is uncertainty over their future. Parents and caregivers do not know what life will look like for their child with ASD once he or she reaches adulthood. They are worried about whether their child will be able to live independently, manage finances, learn to drive a vehicle, complete higher education, etc. I am happy to report that I will now be referring families to this book, an excellent guide for both professionals and lay-people. It is particularly helpful that Dr. Regan offers both her professional experience working with the adult and geriatric ASD population, as well as her personal experience as the mother of a child on the spectrum. This book outlines the more complex issues that adults on the spectrum face, such as navigating interpersonal and romantic relationships, managing activities of daily living (i.e. independent living skills), and maintaining employment. In my opinion, it is never too early for families of an ASD child to start preparing for their child's future, so I would encourage families to read this book before their loved

one reaches adulthood. I also strongly encourage everyone in the mental health field, from psychiatrists to social workers, to read this book. Individuals on the higher end of the autism spectrum frequently "fall through the cracks" of the medical and education systems. I often see patients who have been in therapy or undergoing medication management who are misdiagnosed. This book does an excellent job of providing real-world examples, though case studies, which help highlight some of the common clinical signs providers can look for when interacting with their patients. As Dr. Regan illustrates, by properly identifying and diagnosing ASD, clinicians can greatly improve the treatment and quality of life of individuals on the spectrum.

This is such an informative book, well written and very readable. I've now read it three times and have learned something new each time about how autism affects adults of all ages. I gained a new understanding of how their unique brains approach daily life, sensory input, social situations, medical and nutritional care, planning and prioritizing of tasks and life goals, and so much more. When we understand the complexities of those who've been gifted with an autistic brain, we are better able to find practical solutions to their unique dilemmas instead of judging or dismissing them. I highly recommend this book for anyone who is in the autism spectrum, who works with those who are, or who has a family member or friend with autism spectrum disorder.

Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life is a must read for anyone who crosses paths with autism spectrum disorders, either personally or professionally. This book fills a huge void in our understanding of autism across the life span. Over time, society has gained a greater understanding of autism, Aspergers and the autistic spectrum disorders, but the push, in both public and professional education, has been towards kids and teens. Autism, as with many psychiatric and neurologic disorders, is a lifespan disorder, and to provide proper care for patients and families dealing with autism, a lifespan approach is essential. Unfortunately, our understanding of autism has come about relatively recently, within the past few decades. As a result, many now adults and older adults with autism spectrum disorders, were either never diagnosed, or misdiagnosed, when they were younger. The main thrust of Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life is that Autism is a lifespan disorder, and that all medical and mental health providers need to appreciate how this disorder affects patients and their families throughout the lifespan. This is true both in middle aged and older adults. Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life is an exceptionally well written and well organized book for both

professionals and families. Dr. Regan, as an adult neuropsychologist and mother of an autistic child, is able to provide a unique perspective, at both the personal and professional level. The book provides an excellent historical context of autism, and how the diagnosis and our understanding of the disorder, has evolved over time. One of the main strengths of the book is clear examples of actual patients, that we can all relate to. *Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life* provides a detailed discussion of the core features of autism, including a very nice breakdown within the cognitive domains, focused on the communication, social skills, and sensory deficits that are at the core of the disorder. With its focus on the adult and older adult aspects of autism, there is timely coverage of issues including relationships, living arrangements, employment, and personal hygiene. This helps to capture many of the unique features of living with autism spectrum disorders on a daily basis. Intervention and management strategies, focused on adults/older adults are woven throughout the book, with an emphasis on practical suggestions that providers, patients and families can use in their daily work and life. The treatment strategies emphasize where medication management can be helpful and where and social and psychosocial interventions play a more prominent role. One of *Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life's* strengths is its focus on the specific symptoms and related questions that patients with autism and their families face across the lifespan, with detailed recommendations for daily management. As a provider trained in the 90s, I wish that a book such as *Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life* was available earlier in my career. It truly fills a void in appreciating autism disorders in adults and older adults and provides an excellent starting point in helping patients and families to manage the disorder. *Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults: Improving Diagnosis and Quality of Life* is an essential read for anyone dealing with or helping to manage these patients. -Aaron Malina, Ph.D., ABPP, adult clinical neuropsychologist. (An advance copy of the book was provided in exchange for a review)

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