

Individuals

Learning that you have autism as a teenager or adult can be a lot to take in. It is important that you find others to talk to about your diagnosis and what it might mean for you. It does not mean that you are all of the sudden limited by your new label. Hopefully it will instead give you tools to better understand what “makes you tick” and will help you thrive. You are still the same person with the same potential. Understanding what works well for you, and seeking out help for things that are hard for you, will be important. Don’t be afraid to work with a therapist or mental health professional to help you come up with specific strategies that work for you.

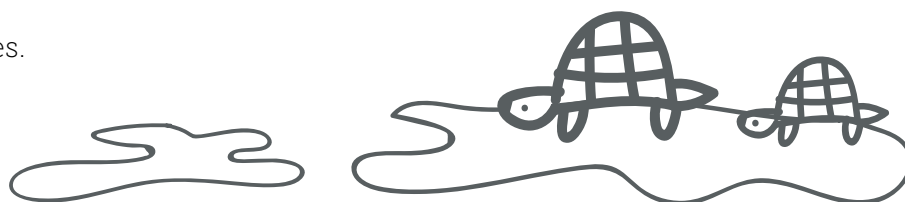
Siblings

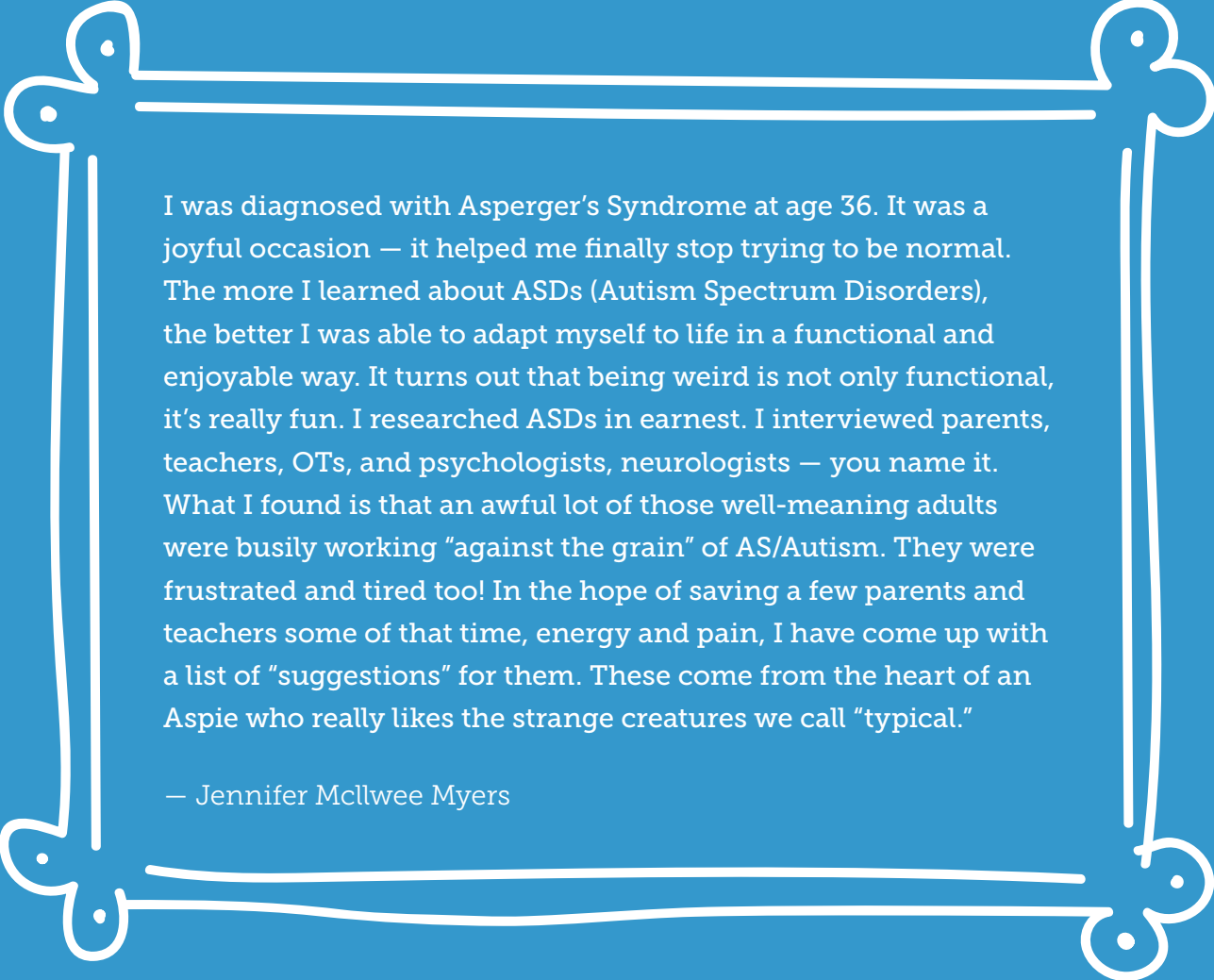
Siblings of a child with ASD often have their own set of questions, stressors and challenges. It is important that you attend to their needs too, and take time alone with them. They can easily be overshadowed by the demands of their sibling with ASD and may benefit from their own therapies or special times with you. It can be helpful to find activities that siblings can enjoy together. Autism Speaks had a booklet that you can download that is specifically for siblings (www.autismspeaks.org).

Family members

Others in your family will respond to a new diagnosis in different ways, just like every individual deals with ASD differently. They may not have received all of the information that you have. Sometimes parents choose to wait until they are more comfortable with ASD before talking about it with friends or family. Other people who love you and your child may also feel overwhelmed, angry or confused. Encourage them to:

- Be respectful and supportive of the decisions you are making for your child.
- Learn more about ASD.
- Follow the routines and systems that your child is used to.
- Find a support group for themselves.





I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at age 36. It was a joyful occasion — it helped me finally stop trying to be normal. The more I learned about ASDs (Autism Spectrum Disorders), the better I was able to adapt myself to life in a functional and enjoyable way. It turns out that being weird is not only functional, it's really fun. I researched ASDs in earnest. I interviewed parents, teachers, OTs, and psychologists, neurologists — you name it. What I found is that an awful lot of those well-meaning adults were busily working "against the grain" of AS/Autism. They were frustrated and tired too! In the hope of saving a few parents and teachers some of that time, energy and pain, I have come up with a list of "suggestions" for them. These come from the heart of an Aspie who really likes the strange creatures we call "typical."

— Jennifer McIlwee Myers