Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a range of conditions that can include impairments in speech, non-verbal communication, and social interactions combined with restricted and repetitive behaviours, interests or activities. Each person with ASD is unique and the term “spectrum” refers to the wide variation in strengths and challenges reflected among those with the disorder. In light of this, support needs vary by individual.

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD)* is a nationally representative survey of Canadians aged 15 years and older whose daily activities are limited due to a long-term condition or health related problem. The 2017 CSD respondents were asked to identify up to two medical conditions that cause them the most difficulty. This infographic profiles individuals for whom ASD was among those conditions.

Close to half (48%) of the respondents’ interviews were completed by the person most knowledgeable about their condition. This was deemed necessary when the selected person was away for the duration of the survey, did not speak English or French, was unable to participate due to health problems, or when a parent chose to respond for their child.

POPULATION PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadians aged 15+ with a disability</td>
<td>about 6.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadians aged 15+ with a disability and diagnosed developmental disorder</td>
<td>about 315,000 or 5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadians aged 15+ with a disability and for whom ASD was among the two medical conditions causing them the most difficulty</td>
<td>about 60,000 or 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OF THIS GROUP...**

- **SEX**
  - about 2/3 are male

- **AGE**
  - 1 in 2 are less than 25 years of age
Of Canadians aged 15+ with a disability and for whom ASD was among the two medical conditions causing them the most difficulty...

**GENERAL HEALTH**

- **31%**
  - Compared to
  - describe their general health as excellent or very good

- **61%**
  - Of the Canadian household population aged 15+ years
  - describe their mental health as excellent or very good

**MENTAL HEALTH**

- **16%**
  - Compared to
  - describe their mental health as excellent or very good

- **70%**
  - Of the Canadian household population aged 15+ years

**SEVERITY**

- **55%**
  - Compared to
  - report having severe or very severe disability

- **43%**
  - Of those with any type of disability

**CO-OCCURRING DISABILITIES**

- **87%**
  - report a co-occurring disability
  - with learning being the most common
  - followed by mental health-related

- **72%**
  - 55%

**SUPPORT**

- **74%**
  - report receiving help with at least one type of everyday activity, the most common being:

  - **61%** help looking after personal finances
  - **61%** getting to appointments/running errands
  - **53%** preparing meals

**AIDS OR ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

- **53%**
  - report using at least one aid or assistive device with cognitive aids being used the most, specifically:

  - **30%** computer with specialized software
  - **21%** speech-to-text/voice recognition software
  - **18%** audio book or e-book device

**EDUCATION (AGED 20+ YEARS)**

- **35%**
  - Compared to
  - report having less than high school education

**EMPLOYMENT (AGED 20–64 YEARS)**

- **12%**
  - Without disability
  - report being employed

- **33%**
  - Compared to
  - without disability

**SOURCES OF INCOME (AGED 20–64 YEARS)**

- **14%** employment only
- **54%** non-employment only
- **29%** both employment and non-employment
- **3%** no income

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To learn more about autism spectrum disorder in Canada, visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) and search “autism” or “ASD”.

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