ASD: reaction to the diagnosis

This is a transcript of the Raising Children Network video available at http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/asd_diagnosis_reaction_video.html. Parents talk about their reaction to their children’s autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis.

Korrine [mother of two, two with an ASD]: I went in really prepared that I wanted that diagnosis and that was one thing that really took them back a little bit was that I wanted that diagnosis because I knew that without it I couldn’t do anything for him, I couldn’t get him into therapy, I couldn’t get him into any sort of support, I couldn’t get support for myself. It was like, I was in limbo.

Carl [father of two, two with an ASD]: It was almost a relief when the paediatrician started explaining all the different traits of autism just to sort of have an insight as to why Bailey was Bailey.

Laudie [mother of three, one with an ASD]: We walked in without a diagnosis and we came out with a diagnosis. And just that word - autism - something with a diagnosis made us feel completely... numb.

Jerry [mother of two, one with an ASD]: I lost everything, I was terribly sad and at night I talk about it to my husband. I couldn’t tell him because I never stop crying, crying. I couldn’t tell him.

Sandra [mother of two, two with an ASD]: I was so distressed I was sobbing and I wasn’t attending to Kingsley properly and he actually fell off the sidewalk because his gross motor was so terrible and ended up getting blood on his nose. And we sort of came home like this apparition, covered in blood and tears. And I told David about it, and he said, you know, just don’t worry about it, we will get a second opinion. That can’t possibly be correct.

David [father of two, two with an ASD]: Initially, it was denial. I just thought, no this can’t be right. And also, I didn’t really have a great understanding of what autism was, so that also makes it difficult to comprehend what you’re being told.

Barbara [grandmother of two, two with an ASD]: My husband was probably the hardest, being a male, being a grandfather to accept that the little boy wasn’t how he thought he was going to be did take awhile.

Alison [mother of three, one with an ASD]: I didn’t take to the diagnosis well at all. Russell did straight away. He was on the ball straight away, he was never ever embarrassed or, you know, he went with it.

Laudie: My husband, Steven, took the diagnosis a lot harder than I did, because I read a lot into it before we actually took Jonathon in. I grabbed as many books as I could so I knew what could be expected. Whereas, Steven, I wasn’t sure if he didn’t want to face
what it was about, he was very, very in denial. It was his first-born son, he really found it difficult.

David: Individuals deal with serious issues in different ways, but when you’re married to someone, when you’re in a partnership with someone, you also need to have a bit of a joint understanding and a joint front. It is important to talk to your partner, and to understand their point of view, because they may be looking to deal with what is a very emotional issue in a very different way to the way you’re looking to deal with it.