



Evidence Based Report

on the status of supportive housing for
individuals with autism, needs analysis

National Reports

Prepared by
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About

The Houses4Autism project is a comprehensive research initiative that aims to explore the challenges and needs of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as they transition to independent living. Funded by the European Union, the project investigates the barriers these individuals face and identifies support mechanisms that can facilitate a smoother transition into autonomous living. The study involved field research conducted across five European countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, North Macedonia, and Ireland. Data collected through structured questionnaires provided insights into the participants' personal experiences with independent living, addressing key issues such as stress and anxiety management, sensory overload, and financial management.

This report offers an analysis of the gathered data, highlighting key areas where targeted support is necessary for individuals with high-functioning autism. These areas include mental health support, practical assistance with daily living tasks, and financial literacy. The research further outlines the correlation between sensory overload, daily stress, and anxiety levels, underscoring the need for tailored interventions to improve quality of life for those on the autism spectrum.

Through this analysis, the Houses4Autism project aims to develop best practices and strategies that will foster independence and self-confidence in autistic individuals, enabling them to thrive in their communities. The analysis of all data conducted with the use of SPSS software.



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1. Introduction

The Houses4Autism project is a comprehensive research initiative that aims to explore the challenges and needs of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as they transition to independent living. Funded by the European Union, the project investigates the barriers these individuals face and identifies support mechanisms that can facilitate a smoother transition into autonomous living. The study involved field research conducted across five European countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, North Macedonia, and Ireland. Data collected through structured questionnaires provided insights into the participants' personal experiences with independent living, addressing key issues such as stress and anxiety management, sensory overload, and financial management.

This report offers an analysis of the gathered data, highlighting key areas where targeted support is necessary for individuals with high-functioning autism. These areas include mental health support, practical assistance with daily living tasks, and financial literacy. The research further outlines the correlation between sensory overload, daily stress, and anxiety levels, underscoring the need for tailored interventions to improve quality of life for those on the autism spectrum.

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2. Desk Research

The desk research aimed to identify the current state of supportive housing for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across partner countries, including Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, Ireland and North Macedonia. This research provides an analysis of how each country addresses the housing needs of people with ASD, focusing on both public and private sector involvement, existing gaps in service provision, and the innovative steps taken to promote independent living. By understanding the current practices and policies in place, the research highlights the disparities in available resources, the level of government and NGO participation, and the extent to which technological advancements and tailored housing models have been implemented to improve the quality of life for individuals with ASD.

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.1 Cyprus

The total percentage of individuals with ASD:

In total, there are 7,032 individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Cyprus. It is calculated that roughly 1 child with autism is born out of every 57 births.

Number of organisations (public, NGOs, private) that host individuals with ASD within their accommodations:

In total, seven organisations in Cyprus are involved in hosting individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within their accommodations. These organisations provide supported living settings for individuals with disabilities, including intellectual and visual disabilities. The Republic of Cyprus assessed 51 applications for the new Scheme for the Induction of Persons with Disabilities into Supported Living Programs, indicating the involvement of multiple organisations, both public and private, in accommodating individuals with disabilities, including ASD.

As a result of these actions, seven new community-based homes were developed through a public tender completed in 2019. Contracts for these projects were signed by NGOs and private sector companies. These homes were designed to accommodate individuals with intellectual and visual disabilities. Although the text does not explicitly mention ASD, individuals with ASD often benefit from similar accommodations and support services.

Number of social services/welfare centres that support individuals/groups with ASD:

In total there are approximately 5 social services and welfare centres operated in Cyprus under the protection and support of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance, which is responsible for the social protection system and the administration of most cash and in-kind benefits in Cyprus.



Besides the public sector, welfare services for persons with disabilities are also offered throughout the country by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parents' associations, charities, community volunteer councils, and the private sector. The Social Welfare Services and the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities are the Ministry's departments in charge of the welfare of persons with disabilities. The services provided by the Social Welfare Services are divided into three categories:

1. Public assistance, services for the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Services aim at ensuring a decent standard of living for vulnerable groups of people (for instance, persons with disabilities, and single-parent families), and strengthening the relationship between the elderly/disabled people and their families and the local community. These objectives are achieved through monetary assistance, employment incentives, and home care, day care, and residential care services for the elderly and disabled persons.
2. Community work. Services aim at helping local communities meet their social needs and promote social cohesion. Community Welfare Councils and Social Welfare Services run various social welfare programmes, such as day-care nurseries, after-school day care centres, and day-care centres for the elderly and people with disabilities.
3. Services for families and children. Services aim at helping families to perform their duties effectively and responsibly, resolving family disputes, and protecting family members from delinquent behaviour and domestic violence (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, n.d.).

Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD:

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Cyprus of 49.7% in 2018, compared to 75.2% for other persons and approximately; 1.1 points below the EU27 average; resulting in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 25 percentage points. The same data indicate unemployment rates of 24.7% and 11.3%, respectively in 2018 and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Cyprus was 66.0%, compared to 84.7% for other persons.

Number of public programmes that support individuals with ASD:

According to the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, there are several public programmes in Cyprus that support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). While the specific number of programmes may vary over time, we present an overview of some of the main types of public programmes available:

1. Early Intervention Programmes: These programs aim to provide support and intervention for children with ASD from a young age. They often include services such as early screening, diagnosis, and intervention therapies tailored to the needs of children with ASD and their families.



2. Educational Support Programmes: Cyprus offers special education services within the public school system to support students with ASD. These programmes may include individualised education plans (IEPs), classroom accommodations, specialised teaching methods, and support from special education professionals.

3. Therapy Services: Public programmes may offer access to various therapies for individuals with ASD, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioural therapy. These therapies help individuals with ASD develop communication skills, improve social interactions, and manage behaviours.

4. Social Support Programmes: Public programs often provide social support services to individuals with ASD and their families. This may include support groups, counselling services, and community activities designed to promote social inclusion and well-being.

5. Transition Programmes: Transition programmes help individuals with ASD transition from school to adulthood. These programmes may provide vocational training, job placement assistance, and support with independent living skills to help individuals with ASD become more self-sufficient.

Gender differences between individuals with ASD:

In Cyprus, as in many other parts of the world, there is a notable gender difference among individuals with ASD. Males are diagnosed more frequently than females. The ratio of males to females diagnosed with ASD in Cyprus is approximately 4:1. This means that for every female diagnosed with ASD, there are about four males diagnosed with the condition (Stavros Trakoshis et al., 2020).

Educational level of individuals with ASD:

Persons with disabilities (aged 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their neurotypical peers, and this trend is reinforced in the wider sample for the age group 30-39. In general terms, Cyprus performs slightly better than the EU average on these two measures, but there remains a significant gap between the outcomes for young disabled people and other young people. Additionally, in Cyprus, young people aged 25-29 represent about 41% of the population, while those aged 29 to 35 and above account for approximately 37%.

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.2 Denmark

The total percentage of individuals with ASD:

In Denmark, the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been documented through various sources. According to data from Wisevoter (2023), the autism rate is estimated at 403.84 individuals per 100,000 people, translating to a total population of 23,434 individuals with ASD. However, more comprehensive national studies indicate a significantly higher estimate. According to Autisme Foreningen (2023), data from the Social and Housing Agency reveal that approximately 65,000 people, or 1.1% of Denmark's population, have an officially diagnosed autism condition. The percentage is notably higher among children and adolescents, with 2% of individuals between 0 and 17 years old diagnosed with autism, and up to 3.4% of 16-year-olds diagnosed by the end of 2018. These figures may underestimate the true prevalence of ASD, as they exclude diagnoses made by private specialists and fail to capture undiagnosed individuals, suggesting that the actual number of people with ASD in Denmark could be even higher.

Institutions that focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder

In Denmark, several institutions focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), providing diagnosis, treatment, support services, and research. Some prominent institutions include:

1. Center for Autism: A leading institution in Denmark specialising in the diagnosis and treatment of ASD. It offers comprehensive assessment services, therapeutic interventions, and support for individuals with ASD and their families.
2. The Autism Clinic at Aarhus University Hospital: This clinic provides specialised diagnostic evaluations and multidisciplinary interventions for individuals suspected of having ASD. It also conducts research to advance understanding and treatment of autism.
3. The Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Center: Affiliated with hospitals such as Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen, this centre offers psychiatric assessments, including evaluations for ASD, and provides support and treatment for children and adolescents with autism.
4. Specialized Educational Institutions: Several schools and educational centres across Denmark cater specifically to students with ASD, providing tailored educational programs, therapies, and support services to meet their unique needs.
5. Autism Society Denmark: While not a clinical institution, this organization plays a crucial role in advocating for individuals with ASD and their families. It provides information, resources, and support networks, and promotes awareness and understanding of autism in Danish society.

Number of organisations (public, NGOs, private) that host individuals with ASD within their accommodations

There are several organisations in Denmark, including public, NGOs, and private entities, providing accommodations and support for individuals with ASD. The Autism Society Denmark is one prominent example.



Public Organizations:

Kommunale Botilbud for Autisme (Municipal Housing Facilities for Autism)

Regionale Institutioner og Centre for Autisme (Regional Institutions and Centers for Autism)

NGOs:

Autism Denmark (Autisme Foreningen Danmark)

Local Autism Support Groups

Private Organizations:

Huset for Autisme (The House for Autism)

AutismeCenter Storstrøm (Autism Center Storstrøm)

Number of social services/welfare centres that support individuals/groups with ASD

Denmark has a network of social services and welfare centres that support individuals and groups with ASD, providing various forms of assistance tailored to their needs. There is no specific amount listed and therefore we list few of them here:

1. Center for Autism (Center for Autisme): Provides specialised services, including counselling, therapy, and support groups, for individuals with ASD and their families.
2. Local Municipal Social Services: Many municipalities in Denmark offer social services and support programs for individuals with disabilities, including ASD. These services may include assistance with housing, employment, education, and daily living skills.
3. Specialised Autism Clinics: Certain hospitals or healthcare facilities in Denmark may have specialised autism clinics that provide diagnostic assessments, therapy, and support services for individuals with ASD.
4. Autism Resource Centers: Some regions in Denmark may have autism resource centres or similar organisations that offer information, resources, and support for individuals with ASD and their families.
5. NGOs and Support Groups: Organisations such as Autism Denmark (Autisme Foreningen Danmark) and local autism support groups may offer social services, advocacy, and support for individuals with ASD in Denmark.

Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD

For adults with ASD, employment opportunities are varied but improving through vocational training and supported employment initiatives. Public welfare systems provide income support for individuals unable to work, with efforts focused on increasing employability through specialized training programs. Additional details on these initiatives are available in research such as the ASDEU DK report.



Number of public programmes that support individuals with ASD

Denmark offers public programs to support individuals with ASD, including educational and vocational training initiatives, as well as social services aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

1. **Special Education Programs:** Danish schools often provide special education programs and support services tailored to the needs of students with ASD. These programs may include individualized education plans, classroom accommodations, and support from special education teachers or aides.
2. **Vocational Training Programs:** Public vocational training programs may offer support and resources for individuals with ASD to develop job skills, pursue employment opportunities, and transition to the workforce.
3. **Social Service Programs:** Municipalities in Denmark may offer social service programs designed to support individuals with ASD in various aspects of daily living, such as housing, healthcare, and community integration.
4. **Government-funded Therapy Services:** Public healthcare services in Denmark may provide access to therapy services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral therapy, for individuals with ASD.
5. **Employment Support Initiatives:** Public employment agencies or programs may offer support and resources for individuals with ASD seeking employment, including job placement services, job coaching, and assistance with resume writing and interview skills.

Gender differences of individuals with ASD

ASD is diagnosed more frequently in males than females globally, and this trend is also observed in Denmark. However, recent research highlights the need for a deeper understanding of gender differences in ASD diagnosis and characteristics within the Danish context. Studies indicate that females may be underdiagnosed or diagnosed later due to differing symptom presentation. More detailed research on gender differences in ASD in Denmark can be found in Neuropsychologisk Praksis report and a study by Autism Society Denmark.

Educational level of individuals with ASD

Individuals with ASD in Denmark have access to a range of educational services, including special education programs within mainstream schools and specialised schools catering to their needs.

Educational outcomes for individuals with ASD in Denmark vary significantly when compared to the general population. Data indicates that while individuals with ASD show similar rates of ninth-grade completion compared to their neurotypical peers (96.9% vs 98.5%), their completion rates for upper secondary school (35.3% vs 78.2%) and tertiary education (8.6% vs 27.0%) are substantially lower. Employment rates are also lower among individuals with ASD, with only 27.2% employed by age 25, compared to 77.7% of the neurotypical population. A greater proportion of individuals with ASD (56.9%) rely on public assistance or disability pensions, compared to 13.5% of the neurotypical population.

These disparities are more pronounced among those diagnosed with childhood autism, who tend to have lower educational attainment and employment rates compared to individuals diagnosed with Asperger syndrome or pervasive developmental disorder. More detailed findings on the educational attainment and employment of individuals with ASD in Denmark are available in the JAMA Pediatrics study by Toft et al.

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.3 Italy

The total percentage of individuals with ASD

The prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Italy remains under-documented. Official data from Italian regions are sparse, often only identifying 3-4 children per 1,000, underestimating true figures due to underdiagnosis (ANGSA, 2017). Only one nationwide study led by Scattoni et al. (2023) sought to estimate ASD prevalence among children aged 7-9 across 198 Italian schools from 2016 to 2018. This study concluded that the **ASD prevalence rate among Italian children aged 7-9 is approximately 13.4 per 1,000**, with a **male-to-female ratio of 4.4:1**.

Institutions that focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder

The European Union's institutional framework comprises 7 principal institutions, 7 supplementary bodies, and over 30 decentralized agencies, all working together to serve the collective interests of the EU citizens. Instead, in Italy we have 4 key institutions that focus on autism:

1. Fondazione Italiana per l'Autismo (FIA).
2. ANGSA (Associazione Nazionale Genitori per Sone con Autismo): Founded in 1985, ANGSA defends the rights of people with autism and their families. They provide support and resources through a network of regional associations and focus on improving policies and services related to autism (ANGSA).
3. Sportelli Autismo Italia
4. Autismo Italia Onlus.

Number of organisations (public, NGOs, private) that host individuals with ASD within their accommodations

While a precise number is not available, in Italy there are several types of organizations, including public institutions, NGOs, and private entities, that host and support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within their accommodations. Some of the prominent ones include:

1. ANGSA (Associazione Nazionale Genitori per Sone con Autismo): this national association defends the rights of people with autism and their families, providing support and resources through a network of regional associations.
2. Fondazione Marino per l'Autismo ETS: Located in Reggio Calabria, this foundation provides comprehensive services for individuals with autism.

Number of social services/welfare centres that support individuals/groups with ASD

Several key organizations and initiatives provide support:

1. Autism-Europe: an umbrella organization representing almost 90 member associations from 38 European countries. These associations work on improving the quality of life for people with autism by providing various services and advocating for their rights (Autism Europe).
2. European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research: engages in projects that include the development and support of social services for vulnerable groups, including those with ASD, across several European countries (Euro Centre).



Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD

In Italy, the employment rate for individuals with autism is significantly lower compared to other groups. Unemployment disproportionately affects autistic individuals, even those with higher-than-average education levels. Their employment rate is less than 10%, which is considerably below the 47% employment rate for people with disabilities and the 72% for those without disabilities (National Autistic Society). These statistics highlight the urgent need to promote workplace inclusion for people with autism in Italy. However, it is important to note that there is a lack of updated specific research on this topic in Italy, which is a significant drawback.

Number of public programmes that support individuals with ASD

In Italy, several public programs support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Key initiatives and organizations include:

1. **Fondazione Italiana per l'Autismo (FIA):** This foundation funds numerous projects and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of individuals with autism, including research, support services, and awareness campaigns. FIA works closely with various stakeholders to enhance the quality of life for autistic individuals and their families.
2. **Associazione Nazionale Genitori per Sone con Autismo: ANGSA** is a national association that defends the rights of people with autism and their families. It provides support through a network of regional associations that offer resources, advocacy, and community services.
3. **Collaboration with European Initiatives:** Italy participates in broader European initiatives aimed at supporting individuals with ASD. These initiatives often involve collaborative projects that focus on research, best practices, and policy development to improve support services across Europe (Autism Europe & Autism Society).

Gender differences of individuals with ASD

In Italy, it is estimated that about 1 in 77 children (aged 7-9 years) have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with a higher prevalence in males, who are 4.4 times more likely to be affected than females. These gender differences in the incidence of autism are a subject of ongoing research. For example, researcher Valentina Gigliucci is investigating the role of oxytocin in explaining these differences. Oxytocin is a hormone involved in the development of emotional and social bonds, and it varies between males and females. Her research aims to identify new therapeutic targets and markers for the early diagnosis of ASD (Fondazione Veronesi, 2023).

Educational level of individuals with ASD

In Italy, students diagnosed with autism regularly attend school and are supported by special education teachers. In 2021-2022, neurodivergent students make up 3.8% of the total student population (Asperger Online, 2023). Despite the increase in specialized teachers, challenges in inclusion persist. Currently, there are over 26,000 special education teachers in Italy, but the proportion of teachers without specific training remains high at 32%. However, there are no reliable sources regarding the exact number of individuals with autism who continue their studies after high school in Italy (Asperger Online, 2023).

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.4 The republic of North Macedonia

The total percentage of individuals with ASD

In North Macedonia, there is a lack of data that indicates the total number of people with disabilities and the data on the number of different types of disabilities. The latest information on the population from the last census in RN Macedonia in 2021 has yet to give an accurate picture of the situation. The results show that 94,412 persons with disabilities in Macedonia represent 5% of the total population in RN Macedonia. This number is significantly lower than the World Health Organisation's.

Institutions that focus on autism spectrum disorder

No specified Institutions have the target group, only those with autism spectrum disorders. All questions targeting the population with autism spectrum disorders are incorporated into the Institutions targeting the population with disabilities. The Government, the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Education, the Ministry for Health, and the Employment Agency are trying to improve the rights and opportunities of persons with ASD.

Number of organisations (public, NGOs, private) that host individuals with ASD within their accommodations

There are 29 public day-care centres for people with special needs, 13 from NGOs, and 3 clubs from NGOs.

Organised living with support for people with disabilities Skopski (Volkovo) Vardarski (Negotino). Services: independent and organised residing in a separate housing unit, constant or occasional help from professionals or other persons in realising basic life needs, social, work, cultural, recreational and other needs. Users: persons with mental or physical disabilities, children without parents and parental care and children with educational and social problems.

In RN Macedonia, several active organisations are making little but very significant steps in improving the education, employment, and quality of life of persons with autism spectrum disorder, as well as supporting the families and all professionals that relate to people with ASD:

1. Blue Firefly (Sina svetulka): The mission of the Organization is: "Improving the quality of life of persons with autism and their families, raising awareness about the potential of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders through education and direct support of children and adults with autism, their families, professionals, and the general public." The organisation is conducting various projects and organising individual treatment of children and persons with ASD, as well as supporting the families with a vision of "Inclusion of people with an autistic spectrum disorder in all spheres of society."
2. Macedonian Scientific Society for Autism (MSSA): Macedonian Scientific Society for Autism is an organisation that provides resources for helping people with autism spectrum disorder and their families, institutions and NGOs that work in this area, provides scientific research, educational and professional support in the inclusive society in which people with autism spectrum disorder and their families have a quality life.
3. In my World (Bo mojot svet): Citizens' Association for the Treatment of Persons with Autism, ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome. The Association advocates for improving and promoting better living standards for this category of citizens, improving social rights and freedoms, educating, conveying experiences and "best practices" from developed countries, the environment and ecology, fostering and supporting scientific research, etc.

Number of social services/welfare centres that support individuals/groups with ASD



In the Republic of North Macedonia, the process of deinstitutionalisation is being carried out, which, on the one hand, implies the exit of beneficiaries from social protection institutions and, on the other hand, the development of social services in the home, the community and non-family protection services, which support independence, independent living, inclusion and action of persons with disabilities in the community, as well as provision of help and support to their families.

The international and national legislation for children and persons with disabilities and the current processes of transformation and development of social services through the processes of decentralisation and deinstitutionalisation in the Republic of North Macedonia in the system of social protection as a service in the community for children and persons with disabilities, in continuity, the network of day-care centres has been developing since 2000.

The establishment of day-care centres is carried out by the provisions of the Law on Social Protection and the Rulebook on the method, scope, norms, and standards for providing social services for day-care, rehabilitation and reintegration, and resocialisation and space, funds, personnel determined according to the degree of qualifications and profiles according to the type of service and the number of users and the necessary documentation for a day-care centre, a rehabilitation centre, and a resocialisation centre. The opened day-care centres function as organisational units of the inter-municipal centres for social work and are fully financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The day-care service provides daily care, nutrition, maintenance of personal hygiene, individual activities for acquiring life and work skills, educational, social, cultural, and recreational activities, preventive activities, counselling, education, academic support, social support for persons and their families and other related activities, depending on the needs of the users. The day-care centres provide services for up to 24 users with disabilities in one facility, which enables quality care, the possibility of implementing an individual approach and treatments, and group work by special educators and rehabilitators, speech therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, and other profiles. In the Republic of North Macedonia, day-care centres for people with disabilities are open and functioning in urban areas, enabling easy cooperation with all other institutions at the local level (educational, social, health institutions, etc.) and integration to users in the local community. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy opened daycare centres in Kriva Palanka, Berovo, Bitola, Gevgelija, Gostivar, Delchevo, Makedonski Brod, Kavadarci, Sveti Nikole, Kichevo, Kumanovo, Prilep (centre for persons with disabilities, centre for persons with cerebral palsy), Probishtip, Skopje (centre for people with disabilities, centre for people with cerebral palsy, centre for children with autism and centre for children and people with Down Syndrome), Tetovo, Veles, Shtip (centre for people with disabilities and centre for children with autism), Vinica, Resen, Kruševo, Debar, Kratovo, Strumica, Kočani, Makedonska Kamenica and Valandovo. Within the JU Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth-Skopje, the day centre for persons with intellectual disabilities over the age of 26 functions as a separate department. Over 450 users are included in the day-care centres.



All day-care centres work five days a week for 8 hours a day, and the beginning and end of the working hours in each centre are adapted to the needs of the users and their parents. Users use the services of the day-care centres through organised arrival and return. One of the priority directions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is expanding the network of day-care centres in those municipalities where day-care services for people with disabilities have not yet been developed.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy also co-finances six day-care centres for youth and adults with mental disabilities, managed by the Republican and Regional Centre for Support of People with Intellectual Disabilities "PORAKA" from Skopje and Negotino.

Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD

The Data that shows the adult population with ASD in Macedonia is missing. No numbers indicate the employment status among adults with Autism, as well as their income. Most of them with high-functioning ASD are not diagnosed and are working in the open labour market. Most of the adults with ASD Diagnosis and challenging behaviour are part of protected companies or daycare centres. Unfortunately, there are no specified Data on the Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD in RN Macedonia. As an example, M. Miloschevska 2021 conducted research in 65 companies in Macedonia on the attitudes and opinions of Macedonian companies' employers and their employees regarding the employment of persons with autism and Down syndrome. The employers have not engaged persons with ASD in their companies, but they also have no Interest in employing one.

Number of public programmes that support individuals with ASD

The Draft Version of the National Strategy of the Rights of persons with disability 2023-2030 includes a lot of actions that should support various aspects of everyday life. There are not specific actions targeting individuals with ASD, but everything that concerns the populations with a disability includes individuals with autism as well. In the National Strategy there is one general strategic goal which should provide 2030 increased coverage and access to quality services to children and people with disabilities and their families, as a support for independent life and appropriate living standard. The Strategy have additional four specific goals:

- The first one aimed at improving the quality, access and services in preschool institutions for children with disability;
- The second one aimed at improvement of social services for children and people with disability in the society;
- The third one aimed at adequate social and financial compensations for adequate life standards;
- And the last one seeks to provide an independent life of the person with a disability in society.
-

Gender differences of individuals with ASD

In lack of National Register and official Data, it's estimated that in RN Macedonia, as in many other parts of the world, there is a notable gender difference among individuals with ASD. There are more males diagnosed with ASD than females.

The educational level of individuals with ASD



Most of the children with ASD and challenging behaviour are part of special schools, special units or in the last years with Inclusion Projects, they are part of regular classes. Most of the children with high-functioning ASD are not diagnosed and are part of regular classes. With appropriate support from parents and teachers, individuals with ASD are likely to complete tertiary education successfully. Unfortunately, the teachers are not well prepared to support the students with ASD. Because of inadequate support, the children finished only primary and secondary school—the Data on the number of students with ASD is not available.

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.5 Ireland

Prevalence of Autism

The prevalence of autism in Ireland varies significantly according to region. According to the National Council for Special Education, roughly one in every 65 people in Ireland has an autism diagnosis (Togher, 2023). Additionally, the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland estimated the incidence of autism within the population to be one in 65 (Doyle & Kenny, 2022). However, another study indicated an estimated prevalence of autism of 2.9% in school-aged children in Northern Ireland, which was significantly higher than the 1.5% estimated in Ireland in the same age group but several years earlier (A & Strunecký, 2019). This may suggest a greater prevalence of adults with ASD in Northern Ireland.

Employment and income

There is a surprising dearth of research on the employment and earning of individuals with ASD in Ireland, and searches across multiple academic journals and national reports were only able to reveal the following. Around 80% of people with autism in Ireland are unemployed (Tracey, 2020), and AslAm estimates that 85% of autistic people are underemployed, though no academic study could be found. While there is currently no concrete data on the earnings of autistic individuals in Ireland, the fact that a large portion may be underemployed suggests that autistic people are paid considerably less than non-autistic people and are more likely to be employed in roles that do not sufficiently make use of their potential or skills.

Educational Outcomes

Studies have indicated that rates of postsecondary educational participation for youth with ASD are notably lower than the general population, with previous research suggesting that 40% or fewer individuals with ASD ever attend college, and very few obtain a degree Shattuck et al. (2012). Additionally, the transition of youth with ASD into postsecondary education has received limited attention, highlighting the need to understand and address the considerable needs of this population as they pursue higher education (Pinder-Amaker, 2014). Furthermore, postsecondary education outcomes for youth with ASD have been reported to be weaker compared to those of youth with other disabilities (Ditchman et al., 2017). This suggests that individuals with ASD may face additional challenges in accessing and completing postsecondary education in Ireland which are not experienced by those with other disabilities. The literature emphasises the importance of equipping youth with ASD with the necessary skills and support to navigate the transition to adulthood successfully, including accessing appropriate educational opportunities (Test et al., 2014).

2.1 Profile of the Country

2.1.6 European Union

The total percentage of individuals with ASD

According to Elsabbagh et al. (2012), it is estimated that there are five million people in Europe who are on the autism spectrum. However, it is essential to note that this data is only an estimation due to limitations in data collection and inclusion criteria.

The European Commission has stated that “the EU lacks sufficient data to test hypotheses on secular changes in the incidence of autism. Due to specific methodological limitations, the high prevalence rates reported in recent autism surveys in the EU and the US cannot be used to draw absolute conclusions on this issue” (Montserrat, 2005).

Institutions that focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder

The European Union's institutional framework consists of seven main institutions, seven additional bodies, and over 30 decentralised agencies, all collaborating to serve the EU's and its citizens' collective interests. These entities, including approximately 20 specialised EU agencies and bodies, execute legislative tasks and support policymaking across various sectors (source Eurostat).

Number of organisations (public, NGOs, private) that host individuals with ASD within their accommodations

The precise number of organisations providing accommodation for individuals with ASD, alongside other resources, is not definitively estimated. However, the EU recognises at least 300 “decentralised” organisations operating under its policies. These decentralised entities are dispersed across Europe and address issues impacting the daily lives of approximately 450 million EU residents. Examples include food safety, healthcare, legal matters, transportation safety, substance abuse prevention, and environmental protection.

Number of social services/welfare centres that support individuals/groups with ASD

The four primary decision-making services and centres –European Parliament, European Council, Council of the European Union, and European Commission–guide legislative processes, aided by bodies like the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Central Bank. With a staff of around 60,000 officials serving 450 million Europeans, the EU operates efficiently compared to its national counterparts, such as the French Ministry of Finance, which employs 140,000 for a population of 67 million (source Eurostat).

Employment and income of adult individuals with ASD

The employment rate (source Eurostat) among the autistic population is less than 10%, significantly lower than the rates of 47% for individuals with other disabilities and 72% for those without disabilities. Autistic individuals are frequently underemployed, working in precarious or short-term positions with low wages, often within institutions or sheltered settings, and are at a heightened risk of poverty and social exclusion. While specific income statistics were not identified in the research, autistic individuals typically receive government funding following the regulations and actions of each EU country.

Number of public programmes that support individuals with ASD



The European Union actively funds or co-funds numerous public programs, all of which are intended to assist vulnerable populations. Among their primary strategies is promoting inclusion for diverse and disabled populations. This strategy underscores the EU's commitment to ensuring that individuals of all backgrounds and abilities have equitable access to opportunities and resources. Through funding initiatives and collaborative efforts with various stakeholders, the EU breaks down barriers and creates a more inclusive society where everyone can participate fully and contribute meaningfully. By prioritising the inclusion of diverse and disabled populations, the EU demonstrates its dedication to fostering a more just and accessible society for all.

Gender differences of individuals with ASD

Recent statistical data on gender differences among individuals with ASD is lacking, with the last submission to Eurostat occurring in 2013. Previous data suggest a higher prevalence of ASD diagnosis in males compared to females, as supported by research (Halladay *et al.*, 2015). Particularly, some researchers mentioned that boys/men are diagnosed with ASD around about four times more often than girls/women (Kirkovski *et al.* 2013; Van Wijngaarden-Cremers *et al.* 2014; Rutherford *et al.* 2016; Baio *et al.* 2018). However, some studies argue against significant gender differences, positing that women may effectively camouflage ASD characteristics (Fombonne, E., 2020).

The educational level of individuals with ASD

In Europe, autistic people face big challenges in education, work, and healthcare. They often struggle to get the support they need in school, leading to high unemployment rates. This discrimination affects their whole lives. According to statistics selected by Autism Europe, autistic individuals encounter significant barriers to accessing education, often facing exclusion from mainstream educational settings or inadequate support within inclusive environments.

In the European Union, approximately 70% of autistic children are educated in mainstream schools, according to various reports, including data from Autism-Europe, the National Autistic Society and European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. This is particularly true for those with higher-functioning autism or Asperger syndrome, where the need for additional support may be lower compared to those with more severe forms of autism. In a mainstream education setting, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) typically participate through primary and early secondary school.

However, despite being enrolled in mainstream settings, many of these students face significant challenges related to sensory sensitivities, social interaction, and academic pressures. Schools often have varying levels of support, and some students may transition to specialised schools as they progress through their education.

In conclusion, autistic people face big challenges in education, work, and healthcare. They often struggle to get the support they need in school, leading to high unemployment rates. This discrimination affects their whole lives.



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Project Partners



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of the European Union





Evidence Based Report

**on the status of supportive housing for
individuals with autism, needs analysis**

Current National Practices

Prepared by

Houses4Autism project number 2023-1-IE01-KA220-ADU-000152794



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2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.1. Cyprus

Current Practice 1: Family Intervention and Support Centre for Autism

Country	Cyprus
Title of identified current practices	1. Family Intervention and Support Centre for Autism
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	http://www.dmsw.gov.cy/dmsw/dsid/dsid.nsf/dsipd93_en/dsipd93_en?OpenDocument
Short description of the current practice	The project Family Intervention and Support Centre for Autism is co-funded by the EU, under the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021–2027”, approved by the Council of Ministers on May 6th, 2019. The mission of the Project was to provide early intervention services to preschool-aged children with Autism Spectrum Disorder along with their families.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The Organization and Implementation of the Centre was assigned to the Consortium of the European University of Cyprus, the Social Element–Centre for Social and Human Development, and the Centre for Social Cohesion Development and Care, after public procurement procedures, and the signing of a public contract with the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as the contracting authority and the beneficiary of the Project. The contract was signed in August 2021 and the Centre started operation on October 11th, 2021. The Centre is situated in a newly renovated building in Nicosia and can provide its services to approximately 300 individuals, children and their families annually.
Results/outcomes	The main services of the Centre are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Support, Council and Psychoeducation for the parents • Home training and support for the children and their main caregivers (parents, family members and/or other) with scientific tools designed for young children with ASD • Social Support Services (provided by Social Workers employed by the contracting authority). Further than the guidance and supervision of the Contracting Authority, the centre also collaborates with the Child Development centre of Maccabi Health Services in Israel for further guidance, training, and supervision. The centre is a ground-breaking project for Cyprus in that it provides services as close to the citizens and at the earliest stage possible, further enhancing the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially Article 26.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.1. Cyprus

Current Practice 2: Day Care Centres for Autistic Adults

Country	Cyprus
Title of identified current practices	2. Day Care Centres For Autistic Adults
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.autismsociety.org.cy/program-cneter-type/%cf%80%cf%81%ce%bf%cf%84%cf%85%cf%80%ce%b1-%ce%ba%ce%b5%ce%bd%cf%84%cf%81%ce%b1-%cf%80%ce%b1%cf%81%ce%b5%ce%bc%ce%b2%ce%b1%cf%83%ce%b7%cf%83-%ce%b5%ce%bd%ce%b7%ce%bb%ce%b9%ce%ba%cf%89%ce%bd/ Stylianou, A. (2017). <i>Mothers with disabled children in Cyprus: experiences and support</i> (Doctoral dissertation, University College London).
Short description of the current practice	The ultimate goal of these day care centres focused on lifelong learning is to enhance individuals' knowledge, skills, and autonomy, enabling them to become active members of society, while these centres aim to meet their needs and provide them with a better quality of life through programs and activities like cooking, gardening, self-care etc., that encourage their participation.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	This practice helps autistic individuals alleviate the lack of access to education and skills development opportunities, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with limited resources. By offering lifelong learning centres with tailored programs and activities, it provides a pathway for individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills regardless of their socioeconomic status, thus promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity.
Results/outcomes	By acquiring new skills and improving their education, these individuals are better equipped to pursue employment opportunities suited to their abilities and interests. This contributes to greater financial independence and a sense of fulfilment, helping them live independently. These centres are in line with the first National Strategy on Disability for 2018–2028 and consist of a separate action in the Third National Disability Action Plan 2021–2023.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.1. Cyprus

Current Practice 3: The “Bridge” program

Country	Cyprus
Title of identified current practices	3. The “Bridge” program
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.autismsociety.org.cy/%ce%bc%ce%b5%cf%84%ce%b1%ce%b2%ce%b1%cf%84%ce%b9%ce%ba%cf%8c-%ce%b8%ce%b5%cf%81%ce%b1%cf%80%ce%b5%cf%85%cf%84%ce%b9%ce%ba%cf%8c-%cf%80%cf%81%cf%8c%ce%b3%cf%81%ce%b1%ce%bc%ce%bc%ce%b1-%ce%b3%ce%ad/ Syriopoulou-Delli, C. K., & Folostina, R. (Eds.). (2021). <i>Interventions for Improving Adaptive Behaviors in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> . IGI Global.
Short description of the current practice	The program "Bridge" is an innovative initiative designed to provide specialised and comprehensive intervention for individuals with acute cases within the autism spectrum. It offers a range of services and support tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals with autism.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Through a holistic approach, the program aims to enhance various aspects of their development, including social skills, communication abilities, sensory processing, and adaptive behaviours. By providing targeted interventions and personalised support, the "Bridge" program strives to improve the overall quality of life for individuals with autism and their families.
Results/outcomes	The "Bridge" program innovates in managing individuals with autism during crisis periods by offering specialised and effective intervention strategies. This program is designed to provide targeted support and assistance to autistic individuals who are experiencing acute challenges or crises. Through a combination of tailored interventions, personalised care, and holistic approaches, the "Bridge" program aims to help individuals navigate difficult periods with greater ease and resilience.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.1. Cyprus

Current Practice 4: eHealth4Autism project

Country	Cyprus
Title of identified current practices	4. eHealth4Autism project
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://cyprustimes.com/koinonia/ehealth4autism-gia-enilikes-pou-zoun-me-aftismo/ https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2022-2-CY01-KA210-ADU-000100847
Short description of the current practice	The project aims to reduce stigma and discrimination against adults living with autism and their family caregivers by exchanging successful awareness-raising strategies in Cyprus, Greece, and Belgium regarding the use of non-clinical solutions, advice, and health practices in electronic format for adults and their caregivers in Europe.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the lack of awareness and understanding among key social stakeholders regarding the issues and needs of adults with autism spectrum disorder and their families. This lack of awareness often leads to misconceptions, discrimination, and inadequate support for individuals with autism and their families.
Results/outcomes	Promoting a collective exchange of good practices and raising awareness about the challenges faced by adults with autism and their families leads to greater understanding, empathy, and support within society. This, in turn, results in a more inclusive environment where individuals with autism are better understood, accepted, and supported in their daily lives.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.1. Cyprus

Current Practice 5: ASD-IncluDi project

Country	Cyprus
Title of identified current practices	5. ASD-IncluDi project
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.autismeurope.org/blog/what-we-do/asd-includi-autism-inclusion-in-distance-learning-2022-2024/
Short description of the current practice	The Autism Inclusion in Distance Learning (ASD-IncluDi) program is an innovative proposal aiming to enhance the teaching and training techniques currently used in special needs education systems, by employing specifically developed ICT and IoT tools.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The ASD-IncluDi creates a tangible, innovative, and easy-to-integrate training framework that will allow special needs educators to adopt distance learning and use it effectively for accessible and inclusive education of individuals with ASD.
Results/outcomes	The primary outcome of the project was to optimise their training workflow and keep pace with the dynamically changing educational needs of children with special needs.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 1: Model Programme for Residential Facilities for the Elderly with Autism

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	1. Model Programme for Residential Facilities for the Elderly with Autism
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Source link: https://www.sofiefonden.dk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/110228_model_programme_for_residential_facilities_for_the_elderly_with_autism_med_res_spreads.pdf Holm, T. (2010). Model Programme for residential facilities for the elderly with autism. Retrieved from www.realdania.dk
Short description of the current practice	The Model Programme aims to provide guidance and practical input for the planning and development of residential services tailored specifically for elderly individuals with autism. It emphasises the need for improved residential facilities for this demographic group, which has historically received less attention compared to children and younger adults with autism.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The Model Programme addresses the lack of focus on providing suitable residential services for elderly individuals with autism. It acknowledges that efforts have primarily been concentrated on diagnosing and supporting children and young adults, leaving a gap in services for older individuals with autism who may have unique needs related to aging.
Results/outcomes	The collaboration between the Sofiefonden Foundation, Autism Denmark, and Realdania has resulted in the development of the Model Programme. Drawing on Denmark's expertise in autism and involving a diverse reference group, the Programme provides innovative solutions for designing and adapting residential facilities to meet the specific needs of elderly individuals with autism. It is intended to raise awareness and serve as a resource for future projects aimed at improving living conditions for this demographic. The Programme is freely accessible for download, promoting its widespread use and implementation.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 2: Tailored Housing for Elderly Autistic Individuals (same as 1 but different mention)

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	2. Tailored Housing for Elderly Autistic Individuals (same as 1 but different mention)
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Source link: https://bygtek.dk/artikel/andet/skraeddersyede-boliger-til-aeldre-autister
Short description of the current practice	The Sofiefonden foundation, in collaboration with the Autism Association, seeks to enhance the basis for constructing new housing for elderly individuals with autism. They have partnered with Realdania to develop a model program for the construction of such housing. Autism was first described as a diagnosis in the 1940s, and the first special school for children with autism was established in 1964. Given this historical context, the group of elderly individuals with autism is relatively new but shares the need for treatment facilities in protective environments, similar to autistic children.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The focus is now on developing elderly-appropriate housing in a protective community. This housing and community must accommodate both the typical age-related functional decline and, importantly, the elderly autistics' need for structure and predictability in daily life. Daily activation is also emphasised, as inactivity and passivity have significant consequences for this group. The forthcoming model program will demonstrate how the physical environment can provide the optimal foundation for housing for elderly individuals with autism.
Results/outcomes	Thomas Holm, Chairman of Sofiefonden, emphasises the need for qualified and coherent pedagogy and care throughout the lives of elderly individuals with autism. Morten Carlsson, Chairman of the Autism Association, highlights the challenges that arise when help measures and educational strategies, such as visualisation, are no longer applicable due to physical deterioration and serious illnesses in elderly individuals with autism. Marianne Kofoed, project manager at Realdania, stresses the importance of understanding how the physical environment can support the specific needs of this demographic.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 3: Autism Spectrum Disorders in the European Union (ASDEU) Project: Survey Results on Services for Autistic Adults in Denmark

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	3. Autism Spectrum Disorders in the European Union (ASDEU) Project: Survey Results on Services for Autistic Adults in Denmark
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://pure.au.dk/ws/files/191028939/ASDEU_DK_final1_16_juni.pdf
Short description of the current practice	The report presents findings from an online survey conducted as part of the ASDEU project in 11 European countries, including Denmark. The survey aimed to investigate the availability and needs for services for autistic adults. Three versions of the survey were distributed to autistic adults, carers of autistic adults, and professionals working in adult services.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	While there has been a dramatic increase in autism diagnoses since the 1990s, research and services have predominantly focused on children. Little is known about the long-term outcomes or best practices for the treatment and care of autistic adults. The survey aimed to address this gap by assessing current services availability and practices in Denmark.
Results/outcomes	The survey had 630 Danish respondents, including 221 autistic adults, 154 carers of autistic adults, and 255 professionals. Findings indicate a preponderance of women in all respondent groups, but a higher proportion of autistic men among carers' adults. Autistic adult responders tended to be older compared to carers' adults, with many reporting college or university education. Professionals were more likely to report experiencing recommended features of services compared to adults or carers. Challenges were identified in areas such as diagnosis, post-diagnostic support, health care, life transitions, and elder care. Recommendations include improving access to diagnosis and post-diagnostic support, addressing health care needs, supporting transitions during adult life, and enhancing services for autistic elders. Page 14 references housingPage 18 references housingPage 54 references housing

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 4: Challenging Conditions in Housing for Autistic Adults Revealed by Social Inspection

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	4. Challenging Conditions in Housing for Autistic Adults Revealed by Social Inspection
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	News Article – Social Inspection Report by Socialtilsyn Midt, November 2019 https://jyllands-posten.dk/jpaarhus/ECE11758079/autismeforening-rapport-er-chokerende-laesning/
Short description of the current practice	A recent report from Social Inspection in Denmark has exposed severe shortcomings in housing facilities for autistic adults in the Region of Midtjylland. The inspection highlights a pervasive culture of maltreatment and inadequate care within the organization, prompting serious concerns from advocacy groups like Landsforeningen Autisme.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	This practice addresses the critical need for staff members to possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to provide quality care and support to autistic adults. Many individuals with ASD have unique communication styles, sensory sensitivities, and behavioral patterns that necessitate specialized care approaches. Training programs aim to enhance staff members' understanding of ASD and equip them with the tools to create supportive and inclusive environments within housing facilities.
Results/outcomes	<p>Increased staff competency: Training programs have led to a noticeable improvement in staff members' ability to interact effectively with autistic adults, manage challenging behaviors, and respond appropriately to crisis situations.</p> <p>Enhanced quality of care: Staff members who have undergone comprehensive training demonstrate a greater understanding of the diverse needs of autistic adults, resulting in the delivery of more individualized and person-centered care.</p> <p>Improved resident satisfaction: Autistic adults residing in facilities with well-trained staff report feeling more supported, understood, and respected, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and overall well-being.</p> <p>Reduction in incidents: Facilities that have implemented robust training programs have experienced a decrease in incidents of maltreatment, neglect, and abuse, contributing to a safer and more secure environment for residents.</p>

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 5: Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services and Delivery in the European Union: Findings from the ASDEU Project

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	5. Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services and Delivery in the European Union: Findings from the ASDEU Project
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Brugha, T. S., Costello, H., Strydom, A., Asaria, M., & Knapp, M. (2021). Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services and Delivery in the European Union: Findings from the ASDEU Project. <i>Frontiers in Psychiatry</i> , 12, 644506. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9226363/
Short description of the current practice	This study, part of the Autism Spectrum Disorder in the European Union (ASDEU) project, aimed to assess current services and practices for autistic adults in the European Union. Separate survey versions were developed for autistic adults, carers of autistic adults, and professionals in adult services. The survey covered various service areas, including residential, employment, education, financial, and social services. Data were collected through online surveys distributed across multiple countries and languages.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The study addressed the lack of comprehensive understanding of services and practices available for autistic adults in the European Union. Existing research on autism services predominantly focused on children and young adults, leaving a significant gap in knowledge regarding services tailored to autistic adults. By exploring perceptions and experiences of autistic adults, carers, and professionals, the study aimed to identify areas for improvement in service delivery and inform policymaking efforts.
Results/outcomes	<p>Service Preferences: The study identified top choices for services based on the preferences of autistic adults, carers, and professionals. Preferences varied depending on factors such as level of independence and specific needs.</p> <p>Service Availability and Waiting Times: Findings revealed disparities in service availability across different service areas and countries. Waiting times for residential services were notably longer compared to other types of services.</p> <p>Alignment with Guidelines: The study assessed the alignment of user experiences with published guidelines for residential services. Less than 50% of autistic adults and carers reported experiencing key features recommended for residential services.</p> <p>Staff Training: Results indicated that a significant portion of autistic adults and carers perceived a lack of autism-specific training among staff in service delivery settings.</p> <p>Awareness of Good Local Models: Knowledge of effective local service models was generally low across all service areas, highlighting a need for improved dissemination of best practices and successful models.</p> <p>Results can be also found in the link.</p>

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 6: Autism and Employment: Strategies for Workplace Inclusion

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	6. Autism and Employment: Strategies for Workplace Inclusion
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Danish National Autism Society. (n.d.). Autism and Employment: Strategies for Workplace Inclusion. Retrieved from https://www.sbst.dk/tvaergaende-omrader/vidensplatform-om-handicap-og-beskaeftigelse/handicapgrupper/autisme-og-beskaeftigelse
Short description of the current practice	This resource provides guidance on managing functional challenges in the workplace for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments through collaboration between employers, employees, job centers, and other stakeholders. The resource highlights strategies for addressing social interaction difficulties, communication barriers, and the need for structure and routine in the workplace.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The resource addresses the varied functional challenges individuals with autism may encounter in the workplace and the need for tailored support to enable their participation in employment. It acknowledges that autism affects individuals differently and emphasizes the importance of understanding and accommodating these differences to promote workplace inclusion.
Results/outcomes	<p>Social Interaction: The resource suggests establishing clear guidelines for social interactions, such as breaks, greetings, and social activities, to help individuals with autism navigate social situations in the workplace.</p> <p>Communication: Strategies for supporting communication include providing clear and explicit communication and using technology aids to enhance communication effectiveness.</p> <p>Structure and Routine: Creating a structured work environment with predictable routines can help individuals with autism manage stress and anxiety. This includes providing clear expectations for tasks and scheduling regular breaks.</p> <p>Specialisation: Specialising in specific tasks can capitalise on individuals' strengths and preferences, contributing to their success in the workplace.</p> <p>Collaboration: Collaboration between employers, employees, and relevant support services is essential for implementing effective strategies and fostering a supportive work environment for individuals with autism.</p>

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 7: Active efforts for children and young people with autism and/or ADHD

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	7. Active efforts for children and young people with autism and/or ADHD
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.sbst.dk/Media/638198318506911543/Virksomme%20indsatser%20til%20b%C3%B8rn%20og%20unge%20med%20autisme%20og%20ADHD.pdf Breumlund et al., unpublished (2022)
Short description of the current practice	The current practice involves implementing a TEACHH-inspired approach in a residential setting for young adults aged 20–30 with severe autism. The approach emphasizes structured routines and behavioral reinforcement strategies. It includes detailed written instructions for staff interactions with residents and a reward system based on tokens for appropriate behavior.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The practice aims to address challenges related to everyday management and behavioral regulation among young adults with severe autism living in residential settings. These challenges may include difficulties in establishing and maintaining routines, managing emotions, and engaging in social interactions.
Results/outcomes	Initial findings suggest that the TEACHH-inspired approach leads to improved routines and behavioral regulation among residents. Both residents and their families report increased satisfaction with daily life and better self-regulation skills. However, concerns have been raised about the potential over-reliance on written instructions and token-based reward systems, which may not adequately address the need for social engagement and meaningful relationships among residents.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 8: Knowledge and facts about autism i Denmark

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	8. Knowledge and facts about autism i Denmark
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.autismeforeningen.dk/media/4665/autisme-i-danmark-1312.pdf Page 46
Short description of the current practice	This resource outlines support services available under the Danish Serviceloven (Service Law) for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Denmark, focusing on everyday life and housing needs. It discusses various forms of support, including social pedagogical assistance, accompanied outings, protected employment, activity and socialization offers, and temporary and long-term residential facilities. Additionally, it highlights the use of welfare technology to enhance the quality of life for individuals with autism, specifically focusing on communication aids and computer-based tools.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The resource addresses the diverse needs of individuals with autism in Denmark and the range of support services available to assist them in daily life and housing. It acknowledges that individuals with autism may require additional support due to their specific challenges in communication, social interaction, and daily living skills.
Results/outcomes	<p>ocial Pedagogical Support: Individuals with autism can receive assistance, care, and support, including training and skills development, based on their significant physical or mental disabilities or special social problems.</p> <p>Accompanied Outings: Individuals who cannot navigate independently due to significant and lasting physical or mental disabilities may receive up to 15 hours of accompanied outings per month.</p> <p>Protected Employment: Those under retirement age with significant physical or mental disabilities or special social problems may access protected employment opportunities if they cannot obtain or maintain regular employment under normal conditions.</p> <p>Activity and Socialization Offers: Individuals with significant disabilities are entitled to activity and socialization offers aimed at maintaining or improving personal skills or life conditions.</p> <p>Temporary and Long-term Residential Facilities: Individuals with autism have the right to reside in temporary or permanent residential facilities, depending on their specific needs and functional abilities.</p>

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 9: Housing Options and Support Services for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	9. Housing Options and Support Services for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Nielsen, C.K. (2024). Housing Options for Adults. Landsforeningen Autisme. Retrieved from https://www.autismeforeningen.dk/videnscenter/artikler/temaartikler/borger-for-voksne-med-autisme/#:~:text=service%20loven%20%C2%A7%20108%20a,ungdomsliv%20og%20f%C3%A6llesskaber%20med%20%C3%A6vnaldrende&text=Udover%20botilbud%20efter%20service%20loven%20%C2%A7%20108,handicapbolig%20efter%20almenbolig%20loven%20%C2%A7%20105
Short description of the current practice	In Denmark, various housing options and support services are available for adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These options include independent living with or without support, as well as more supportive residential facilities. Individuals interested in transitioning to independent living are encouraged to contact their municipality's social services department well in advance to assess their support needs and determine the most suitable housing option. Assessments are conducted based on individual circumstances, and decisions regarding support provision are made through a thorough evaluation process, often utilizing the Adult Assessment Method (VUM). For those requiring more extensive support, two main types of residential facilities are available: temporary (§ 107) and long-term (§ 108) housing. Temporary housing aims to provide individuals with opportunities for skill development and independence, with ongoing evaluation to determine the possibility of transitioning to independent living. Long-term housing is available for individuals with significant and lasting impairments who require extensive assistance with daily functions, care, and treatment.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the need for tailored housing options and support services for adults with ASD in Denmark. Many individuals with ASD face challenges in living independently due to their unique social, communication, and behavioral characteristics. Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive support structures that can accommodate varying levels of independence and address specific challenges faced by individuals with ASD. Additionally, the practice aims to ensure that individuals with ASD receive appropriate support to enhance their quality of life and facilitate their integration into society.
Results/outcomes	The housing options and support services provided for adults with ASD in Denmark have led to positive outcomes in terms of enhancing independence, improving quality of life, and promoting social inclusion. Individuals receiving support have reported increased confidence in managing daily tasks, improved social skills, and greater autonomy in decision-making. Moreover, the availability of diverse housing options allows individuals to choose the option that best suits their needs and preferences, promoting individualized care and personal agency. Overall, the current practice contributes to improving the overall well-being and integration of adults with ASD into society.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 10: AT HOME: FLEXIBLE, MOBILE AND AUTISM-FRIENDLY

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	10. AT HOME: FLEXIBLE, MOBILE AND AUTISM-FRIENDLY
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Special Area Autism. (2022). AT Home: Flexible, Mobile, and Autism-Friendly. Retrieved from https://autismeplatform.dk/projekter/at-home-et-fleksibelt-mobilt-og-autismevenligt-bokoncept/#:~:text=AT%20Home%20er%20et%20nyt%C3%A6nkende,et%20botilbud%20eller%20en%20uddannelsesinstitution.
Short description of the current practice	AT Home is an innovative housing concept developed by Special Area Autism, aimed at providing autism-friendly housing solutions for adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The homes, characterized by the acronym "AT" representing "separate" and "together," offer single-level apartments designed to accommodate the unique needs of individuals with ASD. The homes are architect-designed, sustainable, and built with quality materials. They can be placed adjacent to existing buildings or at a distance, depending on the individual's preferences and sensory needs. The project aims to provide a safe and familiar environment while promoting community integration and independence.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the need for suitable housing options for adults with ASD in Denmark. Many individuals with ASD require specialized environments that cater to their sensory sensitivities and unique needs. Traditional housing options may not always provide the necessary support or accommodation for individuals with ASD to live independently and meaningfully. Therefore, there is a need for innovative housing solutions that prioritize accessibility, sensory considerations, and community integration for adults with ASD.
Results/outcomes	The AT Home project has resulted in the development of flexible, mobile, and autism-friendly housing options for adults with ASD. By offering single-level apartments designed with sensory considerations in mind, the project has created a safe and supportive environment for individuals with ASD to live independently while being part of a community. The project's emphasis on sustainability, quality, and individualized support has contributed to positive outcomes, including improved well-being, increased autonomy, and enhanced community engagement for residents. Additionally, the project serves as a model for autism-friendly construction and has garnered interest from various stakeholders in the field of housing and autism support services.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 11: Nature inspires in homes for autistic people

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	11. Nature inspires in homes for autistic people
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Panduro, T. (2023, December 19). Nature inspires in homes for autistic people. Health Construction. Retrieved from https://byggeri-arkitektur.dk/Naturen-inspirerer-i-boliger-til-autister
Short description of the current practice	Njordrum Care, in collaboration with AkademikerPension, has developed a new residence for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) called Ny Højtoft, located outside Hvalsø in Zealand, Denmark. The project focuses on creating a cohesive community where residents can experience a sense of belonging while maintaining individual privacy and autonomy. The design incorporates natural materials, green surroundings, and modular construction to create a comfortable and supportive living environment for individuals with autism.
The need/problem/issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the need for autism-friendly housing that considers the unique sensory needs and preferences of individuals with ASD. By incorporating nature-inspired elements, such as wood and green spaces, the project aims to create a calming and comfortable environment that promotes well-being and community integration for residents with autism.
Results/outcomes	The project has resulted in the development of a nature-inspired residence that provides a supportive and inclusive living environment for individuals with autism. By prioritizing natural materials, modular construction, and community-oriented design principles, the project has created a sustainable and flexible housing solution that meets the diverse needs of residents with autism. The use of wood and green spaces not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the residence but also contributes to the overall well-being and quality of life of residents. Additionally, the modular construction approach offers cost-effective and sustainable benefits, allowing for future adaptability and scalability based on changing needs.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 12: Housing and day care services for citizens with autism. Healing architecture with a focus on peace and security

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	12. Housing and day care services for citizens with autism. Healing architecture with a focus on peace and security
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	RUM, Dansk Boligbyg, Green Sustainable Landscape, & Henry Jensen. (n.d.). Bo- og dagtilbud til borgere med autisme [Residential and day care facilities for citizens with autism]. Retrieved from https://www.rum.as/projekter/bo-og-dagtilbud-til-borgere-med-autisme
Short description of the current practice	RUM, in collaboration with Dansk Boligbyg, Green Sustainable Landscape, and Henry Jensen, has won the competition to design a new residential and day care facility for citizens with autism in Odense Municipality, Denmark. The design focuses on creating a healing environment that prioritizes calmness and security for the residents. Inspired by the concept of healing architecture, the development is designed as a small village to provide a harmonious and safe living environment.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the need for specialized residential and day care facilities for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by incorporating principles of healing architecture. The project aims to create an environment that promotes calmness, security, and well-being for residents with autism, considering factors such as building design, layout, outdoor spaces, and material selection.
Results/outcomes	The project has resulted in the development of a residential and day care facility that provides a harmonious and supportive environment for individuals with autism. By adopting the concept of healing architecture, the design emphasizes calmness, security, and sensory comfort in various aspects, including building layout, outdoor spaces, and material choices. The village-like layout and architectural elements contribute to a sense of community and belonging, while the diverse outdoor spaces offer opportunities for sensory experiences and activities. The project aims to achieve DGNB Silver certification, emphasizing healthy buildings with good indoor climate, low energy consumption, and durable materials.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.2 Denmark

Current Practice 13: Røjlevej House 1-4: Housing Offer for People with Reduced Physical and Mental Functioning, Including Autism

Country	Denmark
Title of identified current practices	13. Røjlevej House 1-4: Housing Offer for People with Reduced Physical and Mental Functioning, Including Autism
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Information provided by the Social Pedagogical Center Næstved. https://www.socialpaedagogiskcenter.dk/boliger/roejlevej-hus-1-4#personale-c8
Short description of the current practice	Røjlevej House 1-4 offers housing for 24 young people and adults with reduced physical and mental functioning, including those with autism or on the autism spectrum. Divided into four houses, each accommodating six residents in their own apartments, the facility emphasizes an appreciative, narrative, and neuropedagogical approach to support citizenship and independence. Common areas facilitate social interaction, while the focus on diet, health, identity, and sexuality aims to enhance residents' well-being and quality of life. The staff consists of pedagogues, educational assistants, care assistants, and social and health assistants, trained in stress-reducing techniques and continuous professional development.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The current practice addresses the need for specialized housing and support services for individuals with autism and reduced physical and mental functioning in Odense Municipality. It provides a secure and supportive environment that promotes independence, social interaction, and well-being while catering to the unique needs of residents with disabilities.
Results/outcomes	The housing offer at Røjlevej House 1-4 has resulted in positive outcomes for residents, including improved socialization, independence, and overall well-being. By fostering a supportive community environment and offering tailored support services, the facility enhances the quality of life for individuals with autism and other disabilities. Additionally, the emphasis on continuous staff training ensures that residents receive high-quality care and support tailored to their specific needs.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.3 Italy

Current Practice 1: SENSHome

Country	Italy
Titles of identified current practice	1. SENSHome
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Dordolin, A. (2023). Autismo e spazi di vita: la ricerca SENSHome. QuaderniCIRD. Rivista del Centro Interdipartimentale per la Ricerca Didattica dell'Università di Trieste/Journal of the Interdepartmental Center for Educational Research of the University of Trieste-ISSN: 2039-8646. Il progetto Interreg SENSHome: la tecnologia al servizio del sociale (2023). Retrieved from: https://www.eurekasystem.it/blog/senshome-tecnologia-al-servizio-del-sociale/
Short description of the current practice	The SENSHome project (Interreg VA Italy-Austria) explored supporting living for those on the autism spectrum by developing technology-integrated furnishings. Funded by Interreg V-A Italy-Austria 2014-2020, it involved experts from the University of Carinthia, Eureka System s.r.l., and the University of Trieste. Objectives included improving comfort, autonomy, privacy, safety, and economic accessibility through modular, sensor-integrated furnishings tested in specialized labs.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The SENSHome project addresses the inadequacy of living environments in accommodating neurodiversity, particularly for individuals on the autism spectrum. Current spaces, including private, public, and educational settings, often fail to support their needs for independent living, autonomy, comfort, privacy, and safety. This project aims to improve these conditions through technology-integrated furnishings and modular designs, enhancing the quality of life and ensuring economic accessibility for users.
Results/outcomes	The SENSHome project tests in the demonstration environment confirmed the sensor system's effectiveness in recognizing dangerous events and detecting predefined environmental conditions. User evaluations, conducted through guided tours at the Bolzano lab and followed by questionnaires, showed positive feedback on system usability and ease of interaction with both technological and spatial devices. The refuge chair received the highest ratings for aesthetics, functionality, and safety. However, opinions on other furnishings and functionalities varied, highlighting the need for customizable solutions to meet individual preferences.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.3 Italy

Current Practice 2: TEACCH approach

Country	Italy
Titles of identified current practice	<p>2. TEACCH approach</p> <p>The TEACCH approach, developed by Schopler et al. in 1971, was initially used in special classes for children with ASD but has since expanded to inclusive settings, also benefiting adults (Siu et al., 2019). Key elements include organizing the physical environment, visual scheduling, independent work systems, and clear visual instructions. Popularized in Italy through translated manuals and training programs (Lomascolo et al., 2003), TEACCH has been integral in structuring educational services for autism.</p>
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	<p>Istituto Superiore di Sanità. (2018). Linea Guida 21: Raccomandazioni per la diagnosi e il trattamento di bambini e adolescenti con disturbo dello spettro autistico. Available at: LINK</p> <p>Lomascolo, M., Piccin, S., & Arduino, G. M. (2003). L'integrazione scolastica degli alunni con disturbo dello spettro autistico. Erickson.</p> <p>Sanz-Cervera, P., Pastor-Cerezuela, G., Fernández-Andrés, M. I., & Tárraga-Mínguez, R. (2018). Efficacy of TEACCH-based interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. <i>Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders</i>, 48(9), 3122–3135. LINK</p> <p>Siaperas, P., & Beadle-Brown, J. (2006). A case study of the use of a structured teaching approach in adults with autism in a residential home in Greece. <i>Autism</i>, 10(4), 330–343.</p> <p>Siu, A. M., Lin, Z., & Chung, J. (2019). An evaluation of the TEACCH approach for teaching functional skills to adults with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities. <i>Research in developmental disabilities</i>, 90, 14–21.</p>
Short description of the current practice	<p>The TEACCH program aims to help individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder achieve maximum autonomy and societal integration. It focuses on communication, learning, social skills, daily living skills, and independence, utilizing visual learning methods like cards and images to aid understanding and skill acquisition. Spatial organization is also key, using boxes and containers for structure. It has been shown effective with adults (Siu et al., 2019). In 2001, the Greek Society for the Protection of Autistic People established Greece's first autism residence using TEACCH principles, which we believe could also benefit supportive housing.</p>
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	<p>The TEACCH program provides effective educational and therapeutic support for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including adults, by addressing their unique learning styles through visual methods. It aims to enhance autonomy and societal integration by developing communication, social skills, and daily living skills. The program emphasizes family involvement, recognizing the crucial role of caregivers. Tailored to individual strengths and challenges, TEACCH sets progressive goals to foster success and motivation. Applying these principles to supportive houses could also be beneficial.</p>
Results/outcomes	<p>The effectiveness of the TEACCH intervention has been highlighted by studies involving children of various ages across different social contexts, indicating positive outcomes and high parental satisfaction (Sanz-Cervera et al., 2018). In November 2001, a study established a residence for people with autism, using structured teaching and the TEACCH method with all 12 residents (Siaperas et al., 2006). This case study used interview questionnaires and systematic observations to evaluate the program's effectiveness for 12 adolescents and adults with autism who had no prior interventions. The evaluation tools included the Childhood Autism Rating Scale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, and structured observations, focusing on personal independence, social abilities, and functional communication. After 6 months, significant progress was observed in all three areas for all residents. Observational data also showed increased activity and social behavior, with significant decreases in 'no activity' and 'no social act' categories.</p>

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.3 Italy

Current Practice 3: USDA project

Country	Italy
Titles of identified current practice	3. USDA project USDA Celebrates Open House for Belding Autism Center (2017). Retrieved from: https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/news-release/usda-celebrates-open-house-belding-autism-center
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Gaiani, A., Fantoni, D., & Katamadze, S. (2022). Autism and Architecture: The Importance of a Gradual Spatial Transition. <i>Athens Journal of Architecture</i> , 8(2), 175–194.
Short description of the current practice	The study by Alessandro Gaiani et al. (2022) created the practice named “ USDA ”, also called “ Gradual Spatial Transition ”, and explored how architecture can help young adults with ASD achieve greater independence by reducing environmental obstacles in the house. This method also encourages finding suitable environments through varied sensory spaces, avoiding excessive comfort that makes change traumatic . Architecture's role is crucial, focusing on arranging situations within a coherent framework rather than following strict guidelines. Emphasis is placed on transition spaces with varying stimuli intensities, addressing discomfort parameters like crowding and proximity to dynamic situations through mediation rather than removal. This guides individuals with ASD to environments that suit their preferences, balancing visibility and the ability to disappear quickly.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The practice by Alessandro Gaiani et al. (2022) addresses the need to help young adults with ASD achieve greater independence by reducing environmental obstacles in the home. This approach guides individuals with ASD to environments that suit their preferences, balancing visibility and the ability to disappear quickly.
Results/outcomes	The project employs a “Gradual Spatial Transition” strategy, moving from low to high stimulus areas, to foster independence and capability discovery. For example, their environment includes the “west block”, featuring six flexible classrooms and a central courtyard, promoting social interaction and safety. The middle block serves as an atrium, refectory, and offices, while the east block houses a gym, symbolizing high activity and interaction. The design integrates theoretical ideas into practical applications, emphasizing the importance of varied sensory spaces to avoid excessive comfort and facilitate adaptation. Transparent elements in connective areas reduce disorientation and allow for seamless transitions between different environments. These features, including niches and playful furniture, offer opportunities for solitude or social interaction based on students' needs. These principles could be used in supporting houses .

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.3 Italy

Current Practice 4: CASA MIA

Country	Italy
Titles of identified current practice	4. CASA MIA
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Cia, G., & Borghi, L. (2021). Raccontare le buone prassi. CASA MIA. Una casa accogliente per persone con disabilità. In DOPO DI NOI: l'attuazione della Legge 112/16. Monitoraggio 2019-2020 (pp. 81-91). Maggioli Editore. LEGGE 22 giugno 2016, n. 112. https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2016;112 Marco Bollani (2017). COME NOI Cooperativa Sociale Anffas Federsolidarietà Lombardia Tecnico Fiduciario Fondazione Nazionale Anffas Dopo di NOI. Retrieved from: https://solcomantova.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Marco-Bollani_convegno-Dopo-di-Noi.pdf
Short description of the current practice	The CASA MIA project (Cia & Borghi, 2021) aims to enhance housing autonomy, support domiciliary care, and promote inclusion, aligning with Law 112/16's objectives. Located in Correggio, within the "Caleidoscopio" neighborhood, it builds on the "Coriandoline" housing experience. The project received funding from the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Fondazione "Dopo di Noi," with the local community and Legacoop demonstrating strong support. CASA MIA represents an innovative welfare model that could be applied to supportive houses, which are still lacking in Italy.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The CASA MIA project aims to promote the right to self-determination and independent living for people with disabilities, aligning with the objectives of Law 112/16. It provides a concrete opportunity for individuals to live independently or cohabit in small, assisted living environments. The project focuses on adapting ordinary homes within residential buildings to support the transition from parental care or residential services, fostering autonomy, and enhancing the quality of life for people with intellectual and motor disabilities.
Results/outcomes	The CASA MIA project has successfully demonstrated a new perspective on social intervention and independent living (). Through the synergy between families and services, it has created small, assisted living environments that promote autonomy. The project has shown significant results in de-institutionalization, with over ten individuals transitioning from parental or residential care to independent living arrangements. This initiative has strengthened community involvement, proving the effectiveness of tailored support and the importance of adaptable living spaces.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.3 Italy

Current Practice 5: RIBY

Country	Italy
Titles of identified current practice	5.RIBY
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	BRIVIO, A. (2014). Riby. Robot per il sostegno alla terapia di individui adulti affetti da autismo. ROBOTICA EDUCATIVA AUTISMO: I ROBOT SOCIALI COME AIUTO NELLA TERAPIA PER L'AUTISMO. Retrieved from: https://robot.omitech.it/robotica-educativa-autismo-robot-nella-terapia/
Short description of the current practice	The practice focuses on the use of robotics to aid individuals with autism in developing social and cognitive skills. This involves the creation and utilization of robotic systems tailored to the needs of autistic individuals, also in the house context , providing interactive and engaging tools to facilitate learning and communication. These robots (named: RIBY) are designed to offer consistent and repetitive interactions that are beneficial for autistic users, helping them to practice and improve various skills in a controlled and supportive environment (Brivio, 2014).
The need/problem/issue addressed by the current practice	The issue addressed by the current practice is the difficulty individuals with autism face in developing social and cognitive skills due to traditional learning environments' limitations. These environments often lack the structured, consistent, and repetitive interactions that autistic individuals benefit from. The use of robotics in this context provides tailored, interactive tools that facilitate learning and communication, offering a controlled and supportive environment that can be customized to meet each user's specific needs and preferences.
Results/outcomes	The use of domestic robots for individuals with autism has shown positive outcomes. These robots provide consistent and structured interactions, essential for developing social and cognitive skills. Users have shown improved social engagement, communication abilities, and learning retention (Brivio, 2014).. The customizable nature of these robots allows for tailored educational activities and assistance with daily living tasks, promoting greater independence. Families and caregivers report high satisfaction, noting that robots enhance the quality of life and ease the management of daily routines and therapy exercises for autistic individuals.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.4. The Republic of North Macedonia

Current Practice 1: Day Centers for adults in Negotino and Volkovo, Skopje

Country	RN Macedonia
Title of identified current practices	1. Day Centers for adults in Negotino and Volkovo, Skopje
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	http://www.porakanegotino.eu.mk/index.php/services/dnevni-centri-za-vozasni-lica-vo-negotino-i-volkovo-skopje
Short description of the current practice	<p>Since 2003, the PORAKA NEGOTINO Day Center in Negotino has operated, and since 2012, it has operated in Volkovo, Gjorce Petrov municipality, Skopje.</p> <p>These Day Centers represent a support service for people with intellectual disabilities who live with their parents and support for people affected by the deinstitutionalisation process who live in the community with support in the Residential Housing Units in the community in Negotino and Skopje. Daycare centres aim at providing daycare, socialization, education, work engagement, and training for independent living. They also promote the usefulness of people with disabilities in intellectual development in society and help their parents organize their lives and perform daily family and social obligations.</p> <p>Daycare centres provide great support in implementing the deinstitutionalisation process.</p> <p>Many activities are carried out in the day centres during and outside workshops.</p>
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	This daycare centre and similar ones take care of people with intellectual disabilities or people with cerebral palsy.
Results/outcomes	Although this support service is a good practice, we can still say that in the Republic of Macedonia, there is still no developed system for supporting the independent living of people with autism. They still live with their families or together with other persons with disabilities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.4. The Republic of North Macedonia

This form of care/independent living with support, where people with disabilities are cared for without emphasising the diagnosis, is unique in North Macedonia. There is no support system or examples of independent living for adults on the spectrum because most of them are undiagnosed. Even if they live independently and successfully, these people are unaware of their condition. Due to this situation, we can conclude that in North Macedonia, this project and the partners' practice will significantly impact raising awareness of the challenges faced by people on the autism spectrum.

Numerous articles in social media and on web portals are proof of this situation.

One of them (<https://divos.mk/object/autizam-vo-makedonski-kontekst/>), which talks about "Autism in the Macedonian context" published in May 2019 points out that "in Macedonia, no one takes care of adults with autism"

According to the only institution that leads all social services in Macedonia (<https://zsd.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pregled-na-uslugi-od-socijalna-zastita-vo-Republika-Makedonija-2017.pdf>) JU INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES - SKOPJE the above examples are the only model for independent living with support that exists. In a text published on 21.05.2020

(<https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/skopje/%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BE-%D0%B0%D1%83%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D1%81%D1%90-%D1%83%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80-%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81/>) it is said that "People with autism are still outside the system". We also lack centres for adults, small group homes, social clubs, rehabilitation centres, and work engagement centres for adults. These persons are outside the system because they are not covered by the law on labour relations. Small group homes are being demanded more and more loudly, but local self-government and relevant ministries should also be involved.

One of the few examples who talks about the situation with autism is Tsare Mancheva. She says, "People with autism should also follow their dream" in her January 15, 2019 text. She explains: Most people don't even know about my condition because I was afraid of being rejected. I was scared to talk about it until a few years ago, but then I let go because I was visiting my aunt in Germany, where I met other people on the spectrum. I used to think I was the only one with this condition, but when I realised that other people were experiencing the same thing, a critical psychological moment happened to me. Now, I communicate smoothly, and I am starting to meet new people who accept me as I am. At first, I thought I would have experiences like those of my childhood, but on the contrary, now I have more confidence.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.4. The Republic of North Macedonia

I am a graduate teacher (with a master's degree in special education), and now I volunteer in a non-governmental organisation for children with special needs, which from this month should be part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. I work with children of Albanian nationality, so I also learned Albanian so we could communicate more easily. My superiors know about my condition because I didn't want to base our professional relationship on a lie when I started volunteering. In addition, I also post articles about autism on my All About Autism page. It may sound strange, but I have learned from my experience with people on the spectrum that they can cope with complex tasks and difficult people. They have the perfect patience for calm work. Her website: <https://sezaautizam.wordpress.com/>

In the text published on October 5, 2023 (<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/zatvoreni-doma-kako-drzhavata-ne-se-grizhi-za-lugjeto-so-autizam/32624002.html>) "Closed at home - How the state (doesn't) take care of people with autism" is said that: Young people with autism enrol in secondary school twice, just to have somewhere and someone to hang out with. If they show aggression or self-harm, which is often the case with autism, parents have nowhere to take them to get help. Such an institution in the country does not exist.

For this problem, there needs to be more research in the scientific field in this country. Because of all this, the planned activity of describing five successful examples cannot be entirely realised. However, the project, due to its innovation and originality, along with the results that will be achieved, will leave a significant mark in the history of North Macedonia.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 1: Promoting the Social Inclusion of Children with ASD: A Family-Centred Intervention

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	1. Promoting the Social Inclusion of Children with ASD: A Family-Centred Intervention
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	McConkey, R., Cassin, M.-T., & McNaughton, R. (2020).
Short description of the current practice	The study focuses on a home-based family intervention aiming to integrate children with ASD into community activities by addressing their social isolation.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Children with ASD experiencing isolation due to limited social and community engagement.
Results/outcomes	Significant improvements in children's ability to engage with the community and participate in activities outside the home, enhancing their social skills and reducing isolation. Parents also reported a decrease in stress and an increase in family cohesion.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 2: Irish clinicians' views of interventions for children with autistic spectrum disorders

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	2. Irish clinicians' views of interventions for children with autistic spectrum disorders
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1362361310364141
Short description of the current practice	This research captures clinicians' perspectives on various interventions, including supportive housing, and their effectiveness for children with ASD.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Clinicians' evaluations of the adequacy of current intervention strategies, including housing and community services.
Results/outcomes	Clinicians favoured a mix of interventions tailored to individual needs, which often included supportive housing solutions to enhance developmental outcomes.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 3: Assistive technology: Understanding the needs and experiences of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and/or intellectual disability in Ireland and the UK

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	3. Assistive technology: Understanding the needs and experiences of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and/or intellectual disability in Ireland and the UK
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	O'Neill, S. J., Smyth, S., Smeaton, A., & O'Connor, N. (2020).
Short description of the current practice	The study evaluates how assistive technologies can support the daily living and independence of individuals with ASD within supportive housing settings.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Enhancing independence in supportive housing through the use of assistive technologies.
Results/outcomes	Positive impact of assistive technologies on the independence of individuals with ASD in supportive housing, improving their ability to manage daily tasks and communications.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 4: The professional development needs of primary teachers in special classes for children with autism in the republic of Ireland

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	4. The professional development needs of primary teachers in special classes for children with autism in the republic of Ireland
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Finlay, C., Kinsella, W., & Prendeville, P. (2019).
Short description of the current practice	This study assesses the training needs of teachers who are critical in both educational settings and supportive housing for children with ASD.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Need for enhanced teacher training to support children with ASD effectively in both educational and residential settings.
Results/outcomes	Recognition of the need for ongoing professional development to enable teachers to better support the educational and residential needs of children with ASD, highlighting the interconnectedness of educational outcomes and residential stability.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 5: The Economic Costs and Its Predictors for Childhood Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ireland: How Is the Burden Distributed?

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	5. The Economic Costs and Its Predictors for Childhood Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ireland: How Is the Burden Distributed?
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	Roddy, Á., & O'Neill, C. (2018).
Short description of the current practice	This study estimates the societal costs associated with childhood ASD in Ireland, detailing the economic burden on families and state services.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Economic burden of ASD on families and the distribution of state versus family expenditure on ASD services, including supportive housing.
Results/outcomes	Significant financial burden on families, indicating a need for more services and interventions, including residential care or supportive living accommodations.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 6: National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022–2027

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	6. National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022–2027
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.housingagency.ie/sites/default/files/2023-06/NHSDP%20Implementation%20Plan%20.pdf
Short description of the current practice	This strategy provides a national framework to ensure that the housing needs of people with disabilities (PD), including those with ASD, are addressed in a structured and sustainable way. It emphasizes the integration of disability needs into mainstream housing policies.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The strategy addresses the need for more inclusive housing that supports the independence and community integration of people with disabilities, including those with ASD.
Results/outcomes	The strategy has led to the creation of a more coordinated approach between various government departments and agencies, aimed at integrating housing needs of PD into all aspects of housing policy. Outcomes include the development and dissemination of guidelines to local authorities on adapting housing units to be disability-friendly and increased funding allocations for specialised housing adaptations and a review process for existing housing policies to ensure they meet the needs of PD.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 7: Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	7. Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ef5ec-housing-for-all-a-new-housing-plan-for-ireland/
Short description of the current practice	This national report outlines a roadmap to provide increased housing accessibility and options for all citizens, including those with disabilities. It focuses on increasing the supply of social and affordable housing and enhancing the quality and suitability of housing. Specific actions include the revision of housing grants, the introduction of Disability Friendly Housing Technical Advisors in local authorities, and the establishment of regular reporting on the progress of housing initiatives.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The lack of suitable, affordable and high quality housing for all people, which includes those with ASD.
Results/outcomes	This plan has initiated several key developments in housing for people with disabilities: A commitment to increase the annual construction of accessible housing units. Introduction of the Housing Adaptation Grant, which has been utilized to modify existing homes to make them more accessible for individuals with disabilities. The plan has been instrumental in encouraging local governments to prioritize housing needs of disabled people in their urban planning and development agendas.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 8: Inclusion Ireland – Housing Resources

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	8. Inclusion Ireland – Housing Resources
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://inclusionireland.ie/resources/housing/
Short description of the current practice	Inclusion Ireland offers a centralised platform providing resources, advocacy, and guidance for individuals with disabilities looking for housing. It emphasises rights-based approaches to housing and independent living. The organization works through public awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, and direct support services to assist individuals in navigating housing options.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The lack of resources and appropriate and accessible guidance for people with disabilities managing independent living, including those with ASD.
Results/outcomes	Inclusion Ireland's advocacy and resource provision have achieved: Enhanced public and policy-maker awareness of the housing challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Influenced legislation and policy changes to improve housing accessibility and affordability. Provided direct assistance to hundreds of families in navigating the housing system, significantly improving their living conditions.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 9: A Vision for Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	9. A Vision for Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/mental-health---a-vision-for-change.pdf
Short description of the current practice	While broader in scope, this report acknowledges the specific mental health services and housing needs of those with ASD.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	Integrating mental health services with other supports, including housing, for individuals with ASD.
Results/outcomes	Though the report did not directly implement housing policies, it indirectly influenced housing for individuals with mental health challenges including those with ASD. By advocating for community-based services, which include supportive housing. The emphasis on reducing hospitalisations and promoting community living supports the need for appropriate housing that facilitates recovery and integration into society. The outcomes in terms of housing would therefore include increased awareness and a push towards developing housing solutions that are integrated with mental health supports for those with ASD.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.5. Ireland

Current Practice 10: Implementation of Policy under National Housing Strategy for Disabled People

Country	Ireland
Title of identified current practices	10.Implementation of Policy under National Housing Strategy for Disabled People
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.housingagency.ie/sites/default/files/2023-06/NHSDP%20Implementation%20Plan%20.pdf
Short description of the current practice	This component of the National Housing Strategy discusses the systematic approach to implementing the policy across different levels of government and agencies. It involves coordination between the Housing Agency, local authorities, and the Department of Health to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively. National and Local Authority Housing and Disability Steering Groups have been established to oversee and drive the implementation at both national and local levels.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The lack of accessible and supportinve housing for people with disabilities, including those with ASD
Results/outcomes	The implementation efforts have resulted in: Established regular monitoring and reporting systems that ensure accountability and transparency in the delivery of housing services for people with disabilities. Formation of local and national steering groups that have effectively coordinated the implementation of housing policies, ensuring that the strategies are carried out as planned. Significant improvements in collaboration between health and housing sectors, leading to more integrated service delivery for individuals with disabilities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.6. European Union

Current Practice 1: Autism Satisfaction with Care Holistic Interview (ASCHI)

Country	EU
Title of identified current practices	1. Autism Satisfaction with Care Holistic Interview (ASCHI)
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/aut.2019.0080 Crompton, C. J., Michael, C., Dawson, M., & Fletcher-Watson, S. (2020). Residential care for older autistic adults: Insights from three multi-expert summits. <i>Autism in Adulthood</i> , 2(2), 121-127. https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/contemplating-autistic-supported-living https://osf.io/3m8gh
Short description of the current practice	The current practice is based on a four-part interview schedule designed to be used with autistic adults in residential care homes.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The ASCHI covers topics identified as being important to autistic adults living in residential care, including social times with others, daily routine, activities, environment, independence, advocacy, physical health, and well-being.
Results/outcomes	The ASCHI is an open-access tool for older autistic adults in residential care and helps shape future research, practice, and policy.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.6. European Union

Current Practice 2: IVEA, Innovative Vocational Education for Autism

Country	EU
Title of identified current practices	2. IVEA, Innovative Vocational Education for Autism
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://ivea-project.eu/the-project/overview/ Sun, L. (2021). Effectiveness of Virtual Reality on Employment Training for Young Adults with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Systematic Review.
Short description of the current practice	The IVEA project is aimed at the social inclusion of people with autism and a more focused culture on non-discriminative and active citizenship by promoting critical thinking across Europe. The IVEA project will contribute to the achievement of different objectives related to innovative approaches for addressing persons on the autism spectrum and their families while providing a new European holistic Guide for inclusion through employment.
The need/problem/issue addressed by the current practice	The IVEA project pointed out the need to enable and empower young autistic adults with soft skills to promote successful inclusion in the job market. Autistic people can have great competence in many types of skills (informatics, technologies, mathematics and science, etc.), however, the experience showed that they may have difficulties not only in finding employment but also facing the demands of a new job situation. Dealing with colleagues and employers can sometimes trigger challenges that might jeopardize the success of their inclusion at work.
Results/outcomes	The project brought together universities, autism associations, professionals, and NGOs across Europe to create a new European Guide for the effective vocational training of autistic individuals, thereby contributing to their successful employment. The main outcome of the project was a European Guide for the employment of people with autism, which was conceived as a result of two distinct training courses: one tailored for individuals on the autism spectrum and another for representatives of potential employers, including stakeholders, NGO staff, and administrative department employees from various industries such as shops. Participants in these training sessions were then integrated into a final internship program aimed at providing practical experience for individuals with autism within the aforementioned entities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.6. European Union

Current Practice 3: New Paths to Inclusion Network

Country	EU
Title of identified current practices	3. New Paths to Inclusion Network
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	<p>Ísvan, N., Bonardi, A., & Hiersteiner, D. (2023). Effects of person-centered planning and practices on the health and well-being of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: a multilevel analysis of linked administrative and survey data. <i>Journal of Intellectual Disability Research</i>, 67(12), 1249–1269.</p> <p>https://includ-ed-eu.com/sites/default/files/good-practice/files/training_and_practice_in_person_centered_planning_-_a_european_perspective.pdf</p>
Short description of the current practice	The “New Paths to InclUision Network” with 19 partners from 14 European Countries transfers the evidence-based concept of person-centered planning. Person-centered planning is a family of process-oriented approaches to empower people with disabilities to live a self-determined life in the community.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The objective of the network is to help organisations to transform their services and deliver individualised and person-centred support for persons with disabilities, as required in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To make this happen, the network aims to equip organisations and their employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to the individual needs of persons with disabilities.
Results/outcomes	The New Paths to InclUision Network brings together organisations of persons with disabilities, service providers, universities, and research centres from fourteen European countries and Canada whose common aim is to achieve change; and support organisations to deliver community-based and person-centered services for people with disabilities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.6. European Union

Current Practice 4: The Autism VR Project

Country	EU
Title of identified current practices	4. The Autism VR project
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://autism-vr.eu/ https://autism-vr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VRAA-IQ3-Manual_Final_EN.pdf Sait, M., Alattas, A., Omar, A., Almalki, S., Sharf, S., & Alsaggaf, E. (2019). Employing virtual reality techniques in environment adaptation for autistic children. <i>Procedia Computer Science</i> , 163, 338–344.
Short description of the current practice	The purpose of the Autism VR project was to identify 10 everyday situations where autistic individuals between the ages of 15–25 struggle and see if it was possible to develop VR training simulations for practising those situations.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The project aimed to showcase good practices in this field: A multi-skilled partnership composed of organisations active in the field of digital-based technologies, social, labour market integration, and special educational needs, will develop a VR training toolkit for people with ASD with the purpose of rehabilitation and training in communication and social skills. Furthermore, potential employers are to be informed about the advantages of hiring a person with ASD.
Results/outcomes	The creation of a manual for the Employment of People with Autism Spectrum Disorder and related good practices. As well as a VR that contains environments with everyday situations.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.6. European Union

Current Practice 5: The ASDEU Programme

Country	EU
Title of identified current practices	5. The ASDEU programme
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://www.autismeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/LINK68.EN_.pdf Hertz-Picciotto, I., Schmidt, R. J., & Krakowiak, P. (2018). Understanding environmental contributions to autism: Causal concepts and the state of science. <i>Autism Research</i> , 11(4), 554–586.
Short description of the current practice	ASDEU is a three-year programme funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General of Health and Food Safety (DG-SANTE) aiming to increase understanding of and improve responses to the needs of people on the autism spectrum.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed by the current practice	The scope of the ASDEU research was wide, looking into areas such as prevalence, the economic and social costs of autism, early diagnostic and evidence-based intervention, and effective care and support for adults and older people on the autism spectrum.
Results/outcomes	Through this project, professionals across Europe have received training and support to enhance care for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Best practices have been adopted, fostering collaboration between Member States and harmonising evidence-based guidelines. This coordinated effort ensures consistent, high-quality support for individuals with ASD, promoting inclusivity and better addressing their needs at a European level.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.7. National Reports and Studies

National Report and study 1: Towards Human-rights based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services across Europe

Country	EU
Title of identified report	1. Towards Human-rights based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services across Europe
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://easpd.eu/publications-detail/easpd-innovation-awards-2024-mental-health-and-psychosocial-disability-services/ https://easpd.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/2024-May10-EASPD-Mental_Health_Report-Web.pdf
Short description of the report	The national report addresses the critical issues faced by persons with disabilities in Europe regarding independent living. It discusses the impact of austerity measures, inadequate funding, and the failure of governments to fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Through various testimonies and reports, it highlights the struggles of disabled individuals in securing necessary support and personal assistance, emphasizing the need for policy changes and increased funding to ensure their rights and quality of life are upheld.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed	The document addresses the widespread problem of insufficient support for independent living for persons with disabilities. It reveals how austerity measures and budget cuts across various European countries have led to systemic violations of disabled persons' rights. This has resulted in reduced personal assistance, poor living conditions, and increased institutionalization, all of which undermine the autonomy and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.
Results/outcomes	The outcomes discussed in the document show a varied impact across different regions. In Sweden, initial success with independent living funds is being undermined by recent cuts and restrictive policies. The UK faces significant rights violations due to austerity measures, with decreased disability benefits threatening independent living. In countries like Greece and Bulgaria, there is minimal support for independent living, forcing reliance on family or poor institutional care. The document calls for increased funding, policy changes, and better implementation of the UNCRPD to improve conditions for persons with disabilities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.7. National Reports and Studies

National Report and study 2: Models of promising practices on independent living and inclusion in the community for people with significant support needs

Country	EU
Title of identified report	2. Models of promising practices on independent living and inclusion in the community for people with significant support needs
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://easpd.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Models_of_promising_practices_on_independent_living_and_inclusion_in_the_community_for_people_with_significant_support_needs.pdf
Short description of the report	The report highlights the disproportionate impact of austerity measures on disabled people and the importance of independent living allowances. The document includes testimonies from various countries, illustrating the effects of financial cuts and the necessity for better policies and support systems. It emphasizes the need for adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the role of European policies and institutions in facilitating independent living for disabled individuals.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed	The report identifies significant issues faced by disabled people across Europe, primarily the impact of austerity measures which have led to substantial cuts in disability benefits and personal assistance. In countries like the UK, Sweden, and Greece, these cuts have resulted in reduced support for disabled individuals, threatening their right to independent living. The lack of adequate funding and support systems forces many disabled people into institutional care or makes them heavily reliant on family support, which is not always feasible. The problem is compounded by the inconsistent implementation of the UNCRPD across different European countries, leading to disparities in the quality of life and rights enjoyed by disabled individuals
Results/outcomes	The outcomes documented include various responses from European institutions and advocacy groups aiming to address these issues. Despite the challenges, there have been successes such as the growth of Sweden's independent living fund, although it now faces threats from reduced funding. The UN's involvement in the UK highlighted systematic violations of disabled people's rights, prompting calls for better compliance with international standards. However, the responses from governments have been mixed, with some ignoring UN recommendations. The document underscores the necessity for continued advocacy and the reallocation of resources to support independent living, suggesting that investment in these areas can lead to better societal integration and economic contributions from disabled individuals

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.7. National Reports and Studies

National Report and study 3: The future is now: Person-centred Technology to empower persons and disability services

Country	EU
Title of identified report	3. The future is now: Person-centred Technology to empower persons and disability services
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://easpd.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PCT_Conference_Report_Oct.pdf
Short description of the report	The "Supporting the Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities – Role of the European Policies and Institutions," report outlines discussions from a European Parliament meeting held on September 26, 2017. It features testimonies and insights from various representatives and activists about the state of independent living for persons with disabilities across different European countries. The focus is on the challenges faced, the impact of austerity measures, and the need for more supportive policies and frameworks to ensure the rights and dignity of disabled individuals are upheld according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
The need/ problem/ issue addressed	The primary issue addressed in the document is the significant impact of austerity measures on the lives of persons with disabilities. In many European countries, budget cuts have led to reduced financial support and services, undermining the rights to independent living and community inclusion guaranteed by the UNCRPD. For instance, in Sweden, personal assistance has been cut, leading to fewer people receiving the necessary support to live independently. Similarly, in the UK, cuts to disability benefits have been labeled as a "human catastrophe" by the UN, highlighting systematic violations of disabled people's rights. The overarching problem is the insufficient implementation of UNCRPD mandates at the national level, which has resulted in deteriorating conditions and increased institutionalization of disabled individuals.
Results/outcomes	The outcomes discussed in the document reflect a mix of progress and ongoing challenges. Positive developments include increased recognition of the issues by international bodies like the UN, which has conducted investigations and highlighted violations, thereby putting pressure on national governments. For example, Sweden's independent living fund, despite current challenges, has historically been successful, increasing from 7,000 beneficiaries in 1995 to 16,000. However, there are also stark negative outcomes, such as the UK's continued budget cuts leading to grave violations of rights, and the ongoing lack of independent living allowances in countries like Greece and Bulgaria, where institutional care remains prevalent. These mixed outcomes underline the need for continuous advocacy, policy revision, and better implementation of supportive measures to ensure the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.7. National Reports and Studies

National Report and study 4: Fuelling housing and community options for adults with autism and other neurodiversities

Country	EU
Title of identified report	4. Fuelling housing and community options for adults with autism and other neurodiversities
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://firstplaceglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/doc-apitw-report.pdf
Short description of the report	The report is an extensive review of the current state of housing for adults with autism and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). It highlights the critical need for appropriate, accessible, and affordable residential options and the significant policy and data gaps that hinder the effective provision of housing and support services for this population. It also emphasises the importance of comprehensive data to shape policy solutions and improve the quality of life for these individuals.
The need/ problem/ issue addressed	The primary issue addressed is the severe shortage of affordable, accessible housing for adults with autism and/or I/DD. This shortage is exacerbated by insufficient data collection, which obscures the full extent of the housing needs of this population. Many adults with autism and/or I/DD live with aging caregivers, and there is a looming crisis as these caregivers can no longer provide support. Existing federal and state programs are inadequate, both in scope and funding, to meet the growing demand for long-term support services (LTSS) and housing. The lack of coordinated policy efforts and data further complicates the development of effective solutions to address these critical needs.
Results/outcomes	The document outlines that the current practices and policies have resulted in a fragmented system that fails to provide sufficient housing options for adults with autism and/or I/DD. There are significant data gaps that prevent a clear understanding of the housing needs and preferences of this population. As a result, many individuals are at risk of homelessness or being placed in restrictive institutional settings. The report calls for better data collection and policy reforms to create diverse and affordable residential options that can support the varied needs of adults with autism and/or I/DD. Improving data quality and policy coordination is essential for addressing the unmet housing demand and enhancing the quality of life for these individuals.

2.2. Current Practices and Status of Supportive Houses for Individuals with ASD

2.2.7. National Reports and Studies

National Report and study 5: Assisting People with Autism: Guidance for Local Authority Housing Officers Report

Country	EU
Title of identified report	5. Assisting People with Autism: Guidance for Local Authority Housing Officers Report
Reference (e.g. link, citation, national report, or article)	https://nda.ie/publications/assisting-people-with-autism-guidance-for-local-authority-housing-officers-report
Short description of the report	The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) briefing on EU Funds 2021–2027 examines how European Union funds are allocated and utilized concerning the right to independent living. The briefing reviews planned investments under the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework, stressing the importance of community-based services and support rather than institutional settings. It discusses the legal framework, past shortcomings, and the current regulatory landscape, calling for stronger measures to ensure compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
The need/ problem/ issue addressed	The primary issue addressed is the continued investment of EU funds into institutional and segregated settings, which conflicts with the principles of the UNCRPD and EU Charter. Despite regulations promoting deinstitutionalization, there has been a trend of moving individuals from large institutions to smaller group homes, which still violates their rights to independent living. The briefing underscores the need for a shift towards community-based services and support, ensuring non-discrimination and full social and occupational integration.
Results/outcomes	The outcomes of the current practice include ongoing violations of the UNCRPD and insufficient support for independent living. Investments into segregated settings have persisted despite regulations, with some national plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) funding new institutions and renovations that do not align with deinstitutionalization goals. Positive aspects include specific commitments to community-based services in some regional operational programs, such as Portugal's emphasis on personal assistance and community-based social responses. However, the lack of comprehensive safeguards and transparency in monitoring these investments undermines overall progress towards independent living.

2.3. Conclusions from the Desk Research

The conclusions from the desk research on supportive housing for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across different countries highlight several key findings:

- **State of Supportive Housing Development:** Across the partner countries (Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, and North Macedonia), the development of supportive housing for individuals with ASD is at different stages. Denmark demonstrates the most advanced infrastructure, with multiple public and private entities involved in providing tailored residential solutions for individuals with autism across various age groups. Cyprus, on the other hand, has made recent strides in building new community-based homes but still lags behind Denmark in terms of a comprehensive network of services dedicated to autism-specific housing.
- **Employment Challenges:** In each country, adults with ASD face significant barriers to employment. The employment rates for autistic individuals remain significantly lower than those for individuals with other disabilities. For example, in Denmark, while vocational programs exist, only 27.2% of adults with ASD are employed, compared to 77.7% of their neurotypical peers. In Italy, the unemployment rate for individuals with ASD is less than 10%, highlighting the need for targeted employment inclusion programs.
- **Gaps in Service Provision:** Despite progress, there are significant gaps in service provision for individuals with ASD, particularly in North Macedonia. The lack of autism-specific institutions and supportive housing programs in the country illustrates the disparity in available resources across the partner countries. Similarly, Italy's supportive housing programs, while innovative, are still relatively limited, and the country faces challenges in meeting the needs of its growing ASD population.
- **Role of Technology and Innovation:** Innovative programs, such as the SENSHome project in Italy, demonstrate the potential for technology to enhance the living environments of individuals with ASD. The integration of sensor-based systems into housing can improve safety, comfort, and autonomy, showing a path forward for future supportive housing projects.

In conclusion, while there is progress in creating supportive housing and services for individuals with ASD, more needs to be done, particularly in harmonizing services, addressing employment gaps, and utilizing technology to support independent living. Each country presents valuable lessons that can inform future efforts to enhance the quality of life for individuals with ASD.



Project Partners



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Evidence Based Report

on the status of supportive housing for
individuals with autism, needs analysis

Field Research

Prepared by
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Field Research

This section outlines the findings from a field study conducted in Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, Ireland and North Macedonia. The study focuses on adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and aims to identify the unique needs and barriers they encounter when transitioning to independent living. Using structured questionnaires, data was collected from the participants to capture their personal experiences. This research sheds light on critical factors affecting the housing autonomy of young adults with ASD, providing an essential foundation for developing inclusive housing strategies.

The field research was conducted through online questionnaires, which were shared with project stakeholders, resulting in a broader range of responses than initially anticipated. Consequently, additional age ranges beyond young adults were included. This should not be considered unreliable data, as it reflects the wider audience that engaged with the questionnaire. The percentage of responses outside the target group does not significantly affect the overall findings, and including or excluding these responses does not alter the conclusions. Furthermore, the question "Do you consider yourself high functioning?" was included to provide valuable insights, as some individuals with ASD may not identify as high functioning, even if they are.



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3. Field Research

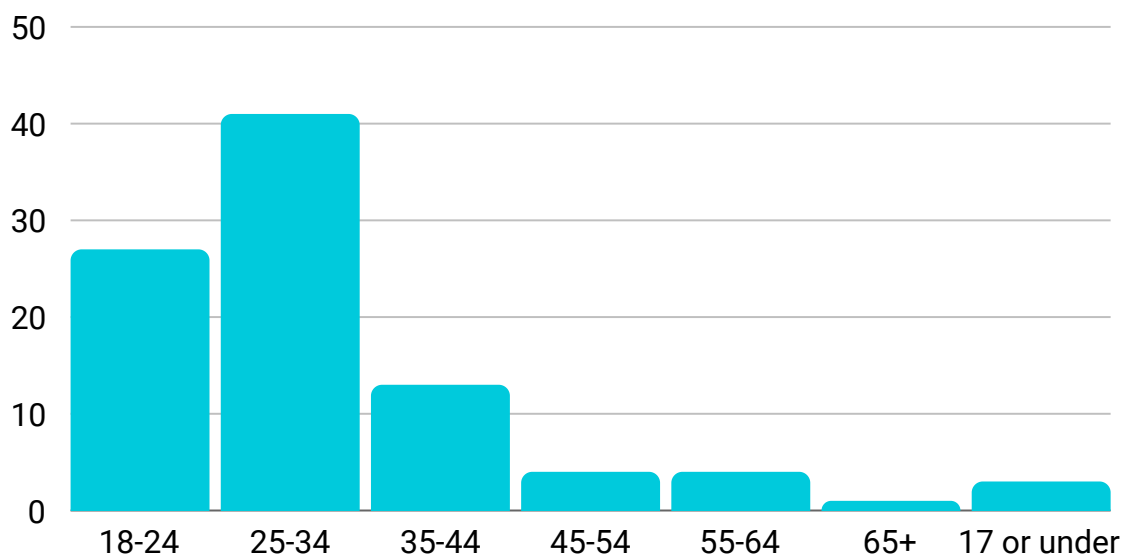
3.1. Field Research analysis of the National Reports

3.1.1. Overall Description of Participants

The dataset includes 72 responses collected from participants, primarily focusing on individuals with high-functioning autism. Of the respondents, 87.5% self-reported as having high-functioning autism, with 51.4% identifying as male.

Age range of the participants

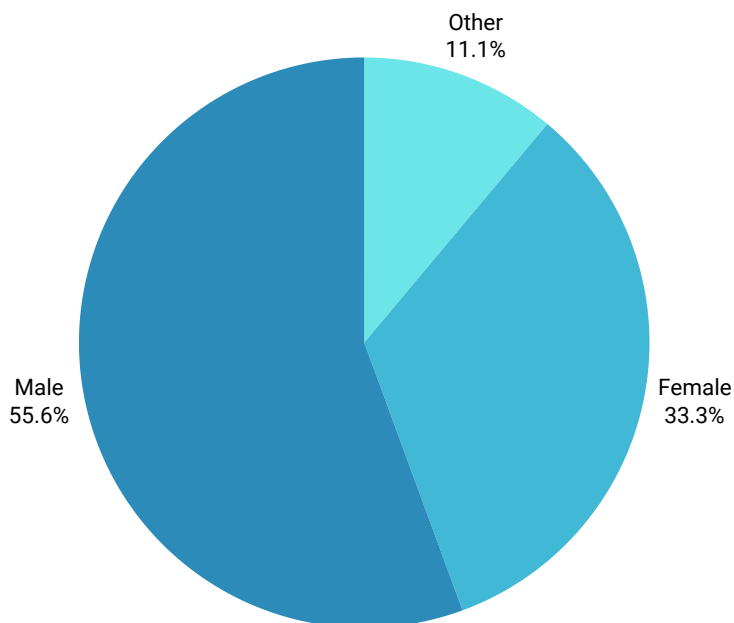
The participants in this study have a wide age range, with the majority falling between 25-34 years old, representing 41% of the sample. The second-largest group is between 18-24 years old, accounting for 27% of the participants. Smaller age groups include those aged 35-44 years, making up 13%, and those between 45-54 and 55-64 years, both constituting 4% each. Additionally, 3% of participants are under 17, while 1% are 65 or older.



Graph 1. Representation of participants' age range

Gender representation among the participants

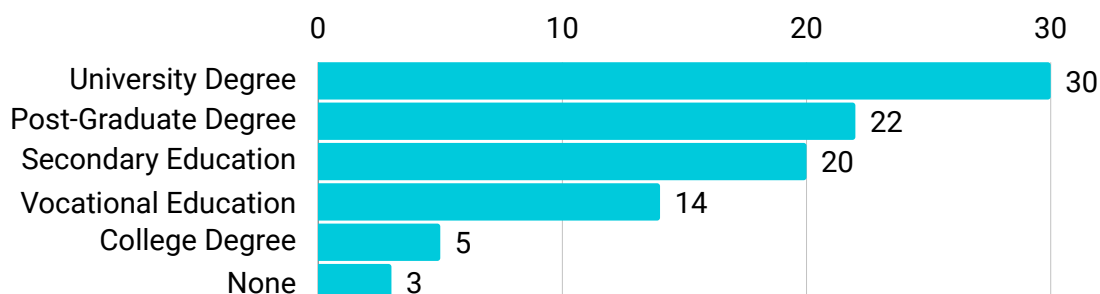
The gender distribution of the participants shows that 55.6% identify as male, making them the largest group in the study. Female participants account for 33.3%. Additionally, 11.1% of participants identified as "Other."



Graph 2. Representation of participants' gender

Educational levels of the participants

The participants in this study have a diverse range of educational backgrounds. The largest group, 30%, hold a university degree, while 22% have completed post-graduate studies. 20% of the participants have attained secondary education, and 14% have completed vocational education. Additionally, 5% of the participants hold a college degree, and 3% reported having no formal education.

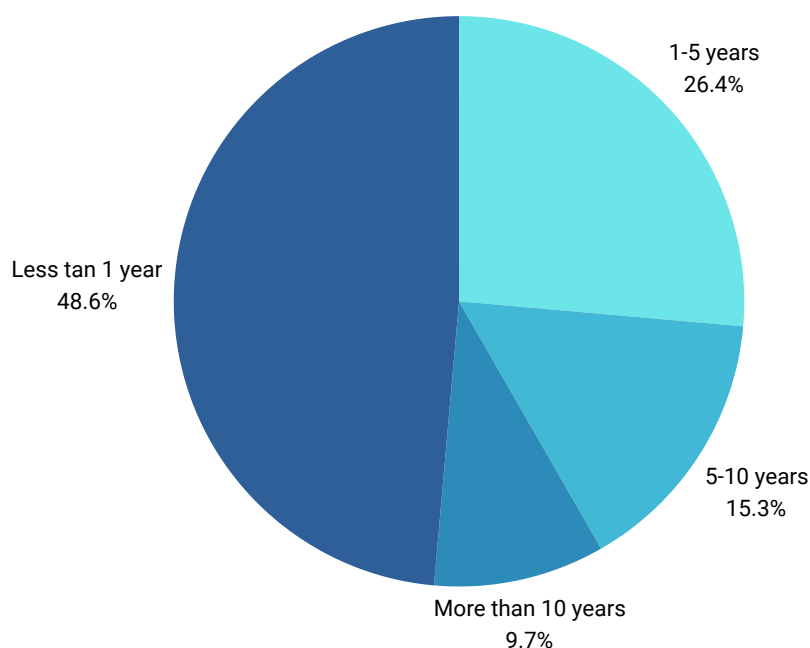


Graph 3. Representation of participants' educational level

Living arrangements of the participants and duration of living independently among the participants



In terms of living arrangements, 36% of participants live with family members, making this the most common arrangement. 25% live alone, while 21% live with a spouse. A smaller proportion, 4%, live with support, and another 4% live with friends. Additionally, 3% live at supportive home, and 1% of participants rent out a spare room. Regarding the number of years participants have lived alone, the largest group, 48.6 %, have lived alone for 0-1 years, indicating a relatively recent shift to independent living. 26.4 % have lived alone for 1-5 years, while 15.3 % have done so for 5-10 years. A smaller group, 10%, have lived alone for more than 10 years.



Graph 4. Representation of participants' years of living alone

3.1.2 Analysis of Stress and Anxiety

Participants experience varying levels of stress in their daily lives, with 26% reporting feeling anxious or stressed once or twice a week, and 15% experiencing stress multiple times a day. When it comes to living independently without support, 34% feel a little stressed, while 18% feel much stressed, and 29% do not feel stressed about it at all.

In terms of what would help them manage stress, 24% believe that help from family, friends, or support groups would be beneficial, and 20% consider physical activity as a key stress reliever. Additionally, 12% feel that greater support from professionals, such as educators or therapists, would be helpful.

This findings highlights the importance of social support and physical activity in managing stress, while professionals' assistance is also seen as valuable by a portion of the participants.

3.1.3 Analysis of Social Isolation and Loneliness

Participants' responses show that feelings of isolation or loneliness when living alone without support are a significant concern for many. To address this, 28% of participants believe that developing greater self-confidence would help reduce feelings of isolation. Additionally, 20% suggested that training on social skills and interactions, as well as fostering greater social awareness and empathy, would be beneficial. 16% highlighted that increased motivation to socialize could further help alleviate loneliness. These responses suggest that participants see building self-confidence, improving social skills, and enhancing social awareness as key strategies for tackling social isolation and loneliness.

3.1.4 Analysis of Sensory Overload

Participants' responses show that many experience sensory overload at home or during daily activities. The most commonly reported issue is loud noises, mentioned by 24% of participants. 16% indicated that brightness, bad smells, and the texture of objects around them contribute to their sensory overload. Additionally, 12% reported that being away from other people and loud noises together exacerbate their sensory discomfort.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment focused on identifying the specific types of support requested by individuals with high-functioning autism to help them manage independent living. Based on the survey data, the most frequently requested areas of support were identified, highlighting the primary challenges faced in independent living.

Key Areas of Support

1

Managing Stress and Anxiety:

47.2% of respondents indicated that they need training and support in managing stress and anxiety. This was the most frequently requested area, underscoring the importance of emotional and psychological support for individuals transitioning to or managing independent living. Participants expressed a need for tools and strategies to cope with daily stressors, which are strongly linked to their overall confidence in living independently.

2

Support with Daily Home Activities:

20.8% of respondents requested help with practical tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, and grocery shopping. This suggests that many individuals face challenges in managing routine household responsibilities, which can contribute to their overall stress and anxiety. Providing hands-on support or training in these areas would improve their ability to maintain an independent lifestyle.

3

Financial Management:

A notable proportion of participants expressed difficulty in managing finances, identifying this as a significant barrier to independent living. Although specific data on this was not quantified in the survey, managing budgets, paying bills, and financial planning are commonly reported areas where autistic individuals require support.

4

Mental Health Support:

Related to the need for stress and anxiety management, several participants also highlighted the importance of ongoing mental health support, such as access to therapists, counsellors, or support groups. Continuous support in maintaining mental well-being is seen as crucial for those living independently.

5

Social and Communication Skills:

While not as frequently mentioned as other areas, some participants noted difficulties in managing social interactions and building relationships, both within and outside the home. Support in this area could help individuals better navigate social challenges in daily life, contributing to a more fulfilling independent living experience.

Conclusion

The research reveals significant challenges and needs that individuals with high-functioning autism face as they transition to independent living. The analysis identified three key factors—years living alone, sensory overload frequency, and daily stress/anxiety levels—which have a measurable impact on stress related to independent living. The regression analysis further shows that while years of living alone tend to slightly reduce stress about living independently, this effect was not statistically significant. In contrast, the findings underscore a strong association between daily stress/anxiety levels and increased stress about living independently, highlighting the need for comprehensive stress management interventions. These findings align with other research that demonstrates how heightened stress levels are prevalent among autistic individuals, particularly in relation to changes in routine or environment (Gotham et al., 2015). Such results emphasise the crucial role of supporting individuals in managing their daily emotional challenges to foster confidence and facilitate successful autonomous living.

In addition to psychological and sensory difficulties, the needs assessment reveals that practical support is a critical necessity for individuals with high-functioning autism. Nearly 47.2% of respondents indicated they need training in managing stress and anxiety, while 20.8% expressed a need for assistance with daily home activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and grocery shopping. Research by Smith et al. (2019) also highlights the importance of practical support in independent living, noting that difficulties with home management tasks can significantly impact overall well-being. Moreover, the research highlights financial management as a significant barrier, although specific data on this issue was not quantified. Other studies, such as Howlin et al. (2004), have also shown that autistic individuals often struggle with financial planning and literacy, which further impedes their ability to live independently. These findings suggest that developing comprehensive support systems—encompassing emotional and psychological support, training in home management, and financial literacy programmes—will be crucial in reducing stress and empowering individuals with autism to live independently with greater confidence.

By addressing these key areas—stress management, daily living support, and financial skills—the research reveals that targeted interventions can significantly alleviate the challenges associated with independent living. As highlighted by Wei et al. (2014), interventions that combine both emotional and practical skill-building lead to improved autonomy and quality of life for autistic individuals. This approach would not only improve day-to-day functioning but also enhance the overall well-being and autonomy of individuals with high-functioning autism, facilitating a smoother transition to independent living.

3.2 Cyprus

Participants' Disclaimer

The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

3.2.1 Overall Description of Participants

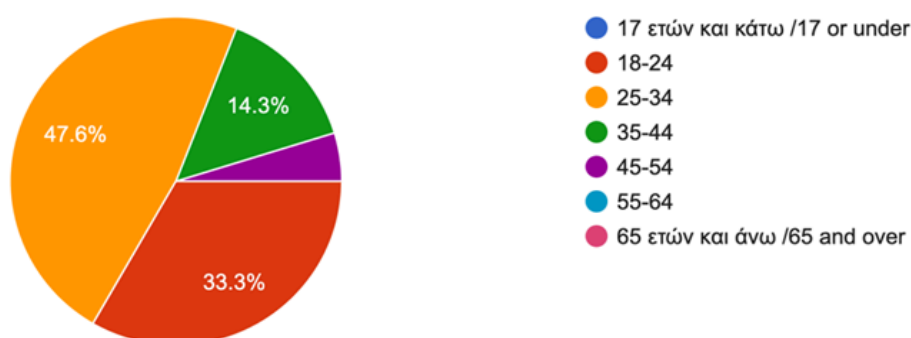
21 adults voluntarily participated in this study. All of them identify as having high-functioning autism; this was the main criterion of participation. The participants were found from various settings, including day programmes, special education centres and associated partners. Generally, in Cyprus, in the registry of the "Committee of the Protection of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities", 307 individuals reported a diagnosis of Autism, representing 32% of all persons with a diagnosis of intellectual disability (ΕΠΑΝΑ, 2022). This number does not include people diagnosed with "intellectual disability with autistic characteristics", or people not on the registry.

Age range of the participants

Participants' age ranged from 18 to 54 years. Almost half of them (47.6%) ranged between 25-34 years old, one third (33.3%) ranged between 18-24 years old, 14.3% between 35-44 years old and

Ηλικία/ Age

21 responses



Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

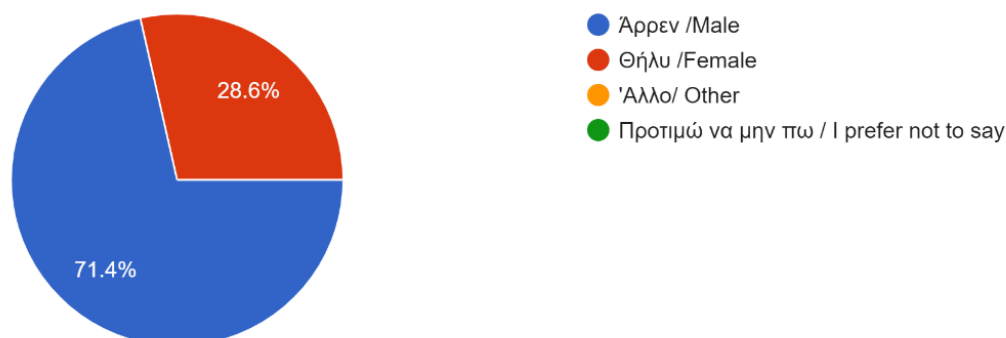
3.2 Cyprus

Gender representation among the participants

15 out of 21 participants identify as male and 6 as female. None of them answered the options “other” or “I prefer not to say”. This result is similar to the general population of people with autism spectrum disorder, a ratio of 4:1, males being the most prominent (Saure, Castrén, Mikkola, & Salmi, 2023).

Φύλο / Gender

21 responses



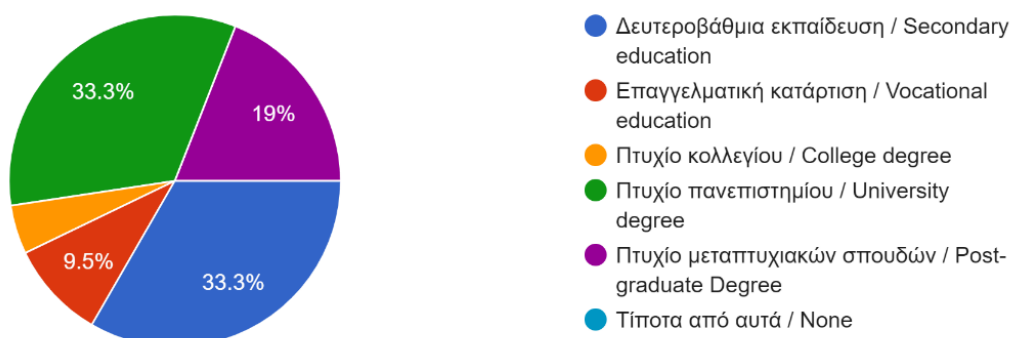
Graph 2: Visual Representation of the Sex Range of Participants

Educational levels of the participants

Out of the 21 participants, 7 (33.3%) hold a university degree, 7 (33.3%) have completed secondary education, 4 (19%) have a postgraduate degree, 2 (9.5%) have undergone vocational training and 1 (4.8%) hold a college degree. Indistinct results exist about the educational levels of adults on the spectrum, in Cyprus. However, the education in Cyprus has transitioned in the past couple of years, from a segregated to an inclusive system in accordance with international guidelines. Namely, more children diagnosed with autism can get incorporated in the traditional class and are given more opportunities to develop educationally (Van Kessel, et al., 2020).

Εκπαίδευση / Education

21 responses



Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education level of Participants

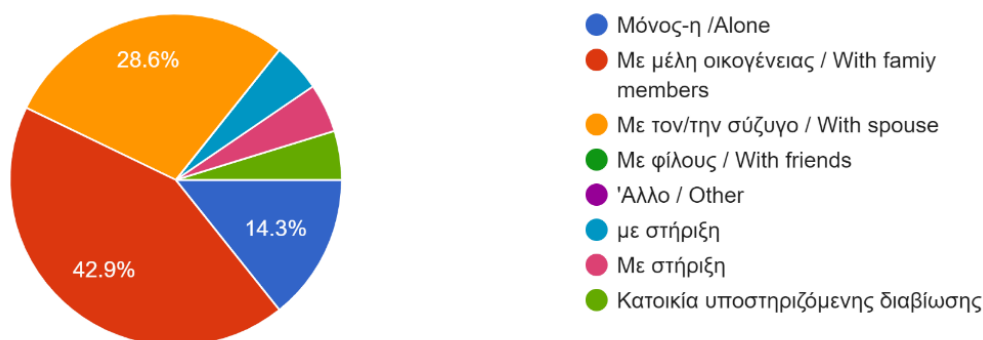
3.2 Cyprus

Living arrangements of the participants

Under half the participants (42.9%) currently live with family members, 28.6% live with their spouse, 14.3% live alone, and 14.3% currently live with support. In Cyprus, adults on the spectrum

Καθεστώς διαβίωσης /Living Status

21 responses



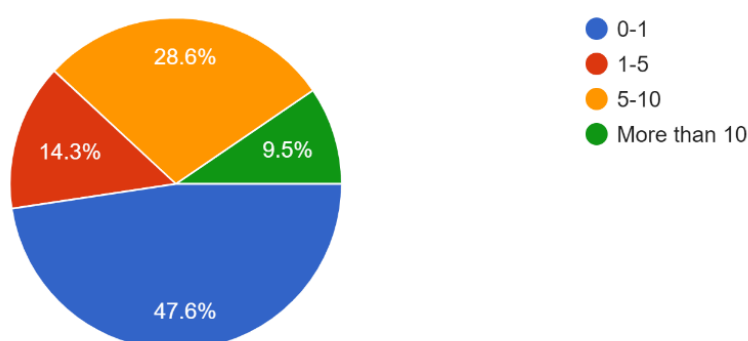
Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

Duration of living independently among the participants

28.6% have been living alone 5-10 years, 14.3% 1-5 years and 9.5% have been living independently for over 10 years.

Χρόνια Ανεξάρτητης Διαβίωσης / Years of Living Alone

21 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

3.2 Cyprus

3.2.2 Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

For the current study, stress was defined as the feeling that someone's mind is constantly racing with too many thoughts and worries, making it hard to focus on anything else. Similarly, anxiety was defined as the constant worry about something bad happening, even if there's no real danger.

Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

In the question 'Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life', participants had five options to choose from. 4.8% (1/21) mentioned 'I never feel anxious and/or stressed', 33.3% (7/21), the majority of them, choose the option 'I only feel anxious and/or stressed once or twice a week', 28.6% (6/21), choose the option 'I feel anxious and/or stressed three or four times a week', 14.3% (3/21), selected the option 'I mostly feel anxious and/or stressed once every day', and finally 19% (4/21) reported 'I mostly feel anxious and/or stressed multiple times a day'.

Several studies have indicated that adults with ASD have a high prevalence of anxiety disorders, with estimates ranging from 27% to 46% for any anxiety disorder (Hollocks, Lerh, Magiati, Meiser-Stedman, & Brugha, 2018; Nah, Brewer, Young, & Flower, 2018), a fact which is also apparent from the results of the present investigation.

Δηλώστε το επίπεδο του στρες/άγχους που βιώνετε στην καθημερινή σας ζωή. / Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

21 responses



Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

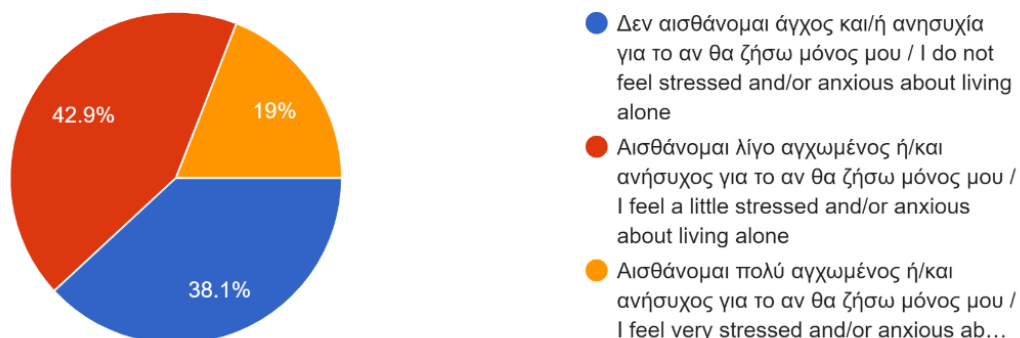
In the question 'How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?', the participants reported as follows: 38.1% (8/21) chose the option 'I do not feel stressed and/or anxious about living alone', the majority of them, 42.9% (9/21), mentioned 'I feel a little stressed and/or anxious about living alone', and finally, only 19% (4/21) reported 'I feel very stressed and/or anxious about living alone'. The literature in Cyprus, suggests an emphasis on the levels of anxiety of parents and carers of people on the spectrum, rather than the anxiety experienced by the individual with ASD (Πουρνάρα, 2018).

3.2 Cyprus



Πόσο στρεσαρισμένος/αγχωμένος αισθάνεστε στη σκέψη να ζήσετε μόνοι σας χωρίς υποστήριξη; How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

21 responses



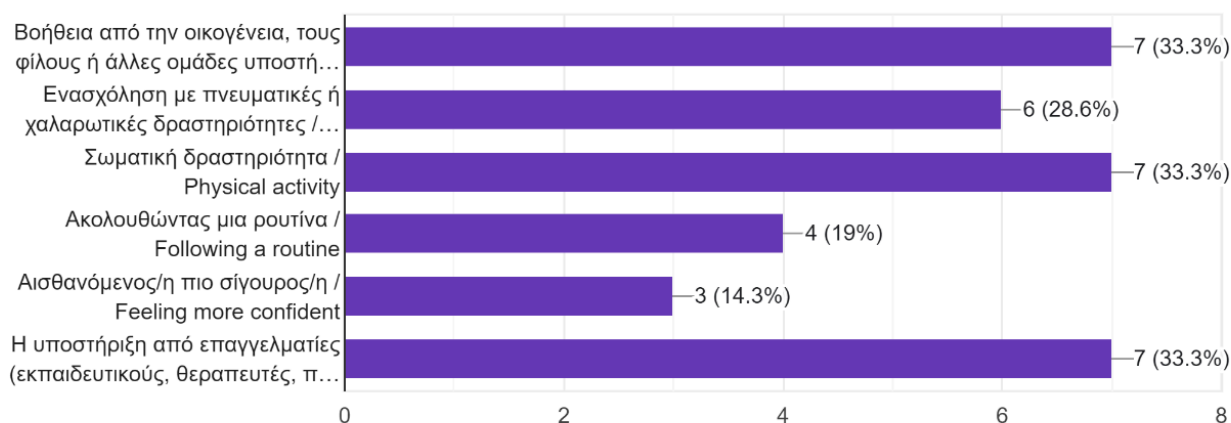
Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants were given 7 options to choose from in regards to coping strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety. Participants were allowed to choose multiple answers, as well as having the option of adding their own answer in 'other'. The most popular answers, each with 33.3% electability (7/21) were: "Help from family, friends or other support groups", "Physical activity" and "Greater support from professionals (educators, therapists, trainers, etc.)". The next popular answer, with 28.6% electability (6/21) was "Engaging in mindful or relaxing activities". 19% of participants (4/21) elected "Following a routine" and lastly, 14.3% (3/21) chose "Feeling more confident" as a strategy for helping to best deal with stress and anxiety. None of the participants chose to write an answer of their own in the "Other" option provided.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω πιστεύετε ότι θα σας βοηθούσε να αντιμετωπίσετε το στρες/άγχος; Which of the following do you feel would help you to deal with stress/anxiety?

21 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

3.2 Cyprus

3.2.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

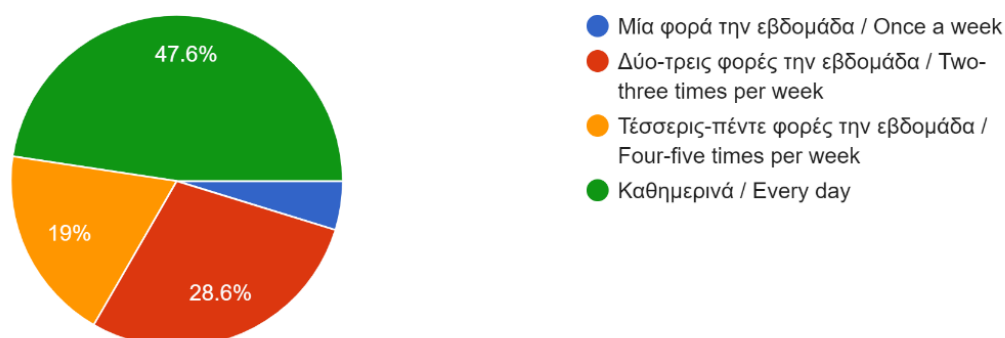
This part of the survey, focused on social isolation or loneliness, which were defined as the feeling of being surrounded by people, but still feeling isolated and disconnected, as if there is an invisible barrier preventing you from truly connecting with others.

Frequency of social interactions among the participants

The following question focused on the frequency of in-person social interactions of participants, ranging from “once per week” to “every day”. The results showed that almost half (47.6%) answered that they interact “every day”, 19% “four - five times per week”, 28.6% “two – three times per week”, and only 1 participant (4.8%) reported “once a week”. Literature shows significant challenges with social isolation in adults with ASD (Orsmond, Shattuck, Cooper, Sterzing, & Anderson, 2013), however, interventions seem to improve the social skills and the community participation of individuals with autism (McConkey, Cassin & McNaughton, 2020).

Πόσο συχνά αλληλεπιδράτε με άλλους (αυτοπροσώπως); How often do you interact with others (in person)?

21 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

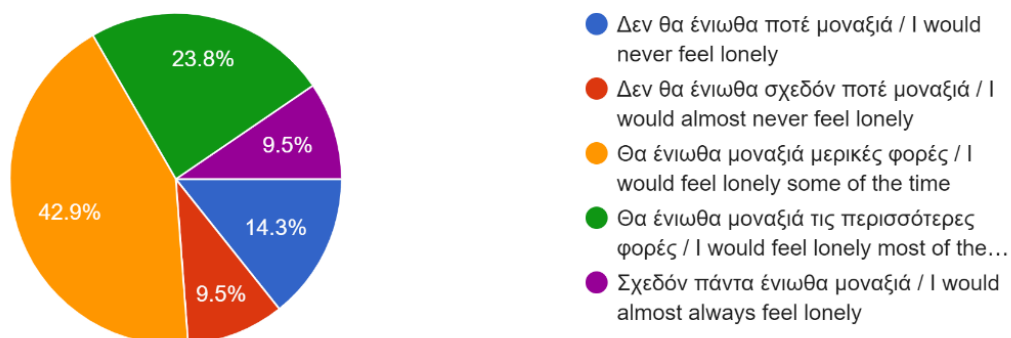
To the question “Do you or would you feel isolated/ lonely when living alone without support?”, 5 options were provided; ranging from “never” to “almost always”. 13.3% (3/21) participants reported “I would never feel lonely”, 9.5% (2/21) reported “I would almost never feel lonely”, the majority of them 42.9% (9/21) reported “I would feel lonely some of the time”, 23.8% (5/21) reported “I would feel lonely most of the time” and 9.5% (2/21) reported “I would almost never feel lonely” when living alone without support.

3.2 Cyprus



Αισθάνεστε ή θα μπορούσατε να αισθανθείτε απομονωμένοι/μοναχικοί εάν ζούσατε μόνοι σας χωρίς υποστήριξη; Do you or would you feel isolated/lonely when living alone without support?

21 responses



Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

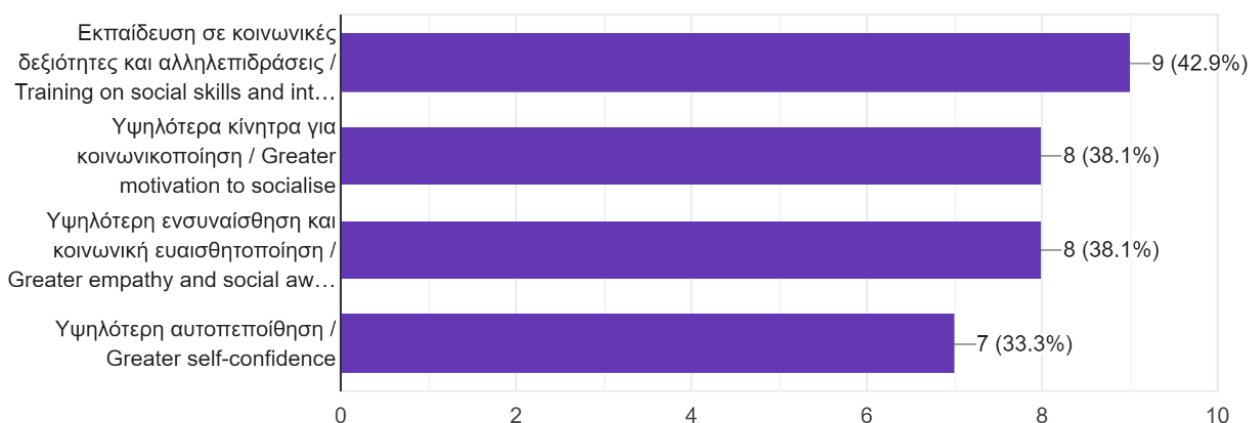
Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

To the question “Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?”, 42.9% (9/21 participants) answered “Training on social skills and interactions”, 38.1% (8/21) answered “Greater motivation to socialise”, 38.1% (8/21) answered “Greater empathy and social awareness” and 33.3% (7/21) “Greater self-confidence”. Participants could choose more than one answer and had the option to give their own answer under “other”, however no one chose to complete that option.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω θα σας βοηθούσε να αισθάνεστε λιγότερο

απομονωμένοι/μοναχικοί; Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?

21 responses



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

3.2 Cyprus

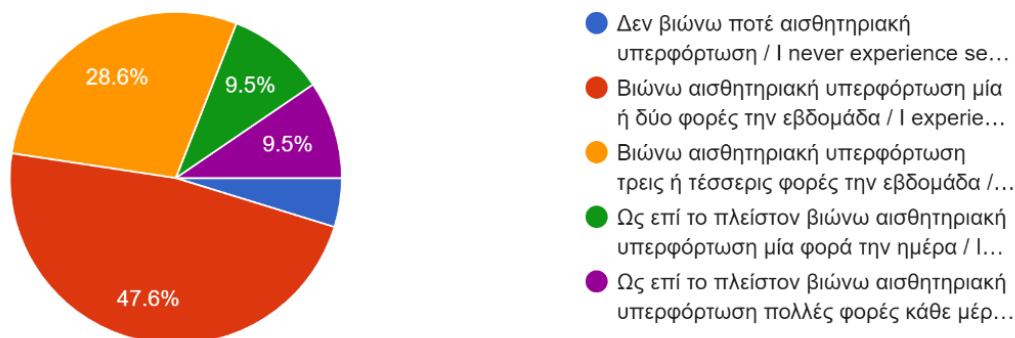
3.2.4 Measurement of Sensory Overload

Experiencing sensory overload was described as feeling like being in a room where everyone is watching you, the light is too bright, every sound is too loud and every touch is too intense, all at the same time. This feeling can make it difficult to concentrate, interact with others, or even perform simple tasks until the overload subsides.

Incidents of sensory overload in daily life

The participants were asked the following question: “Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?”. Nearly half of the participants (47.6%) reported “experiencing sensory overload once or twice a week”, a quarter (28.6%) reported “experiencing sensory overload three or four times a week”, 9.5% (2/21) reported experiencing “once every day”, 9.5% (2/21) reported experiencing sensory overload “multiple times every day” and 4.8 % (1/21) answered “I never experience sensory overload”. MacLennan, O’Brien and Tavassoli (2022), examined the sensory experience of adults in the spectrum, identifying the extremely high 96% of their sample, experience sensory reactivity experience, and highlighting the importance of in-depth research of the specific autistic characteristic.

Βιώνετε ποτέ αισθητηριακή υπερφόρτωση στο σπίτι ή κατά τη διάρκεια άλλων δραστηριοτήτων στην καθημερινή σας ζωή; Do you ever experience s...ome or during other activities in your daily life?
21 responses



Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

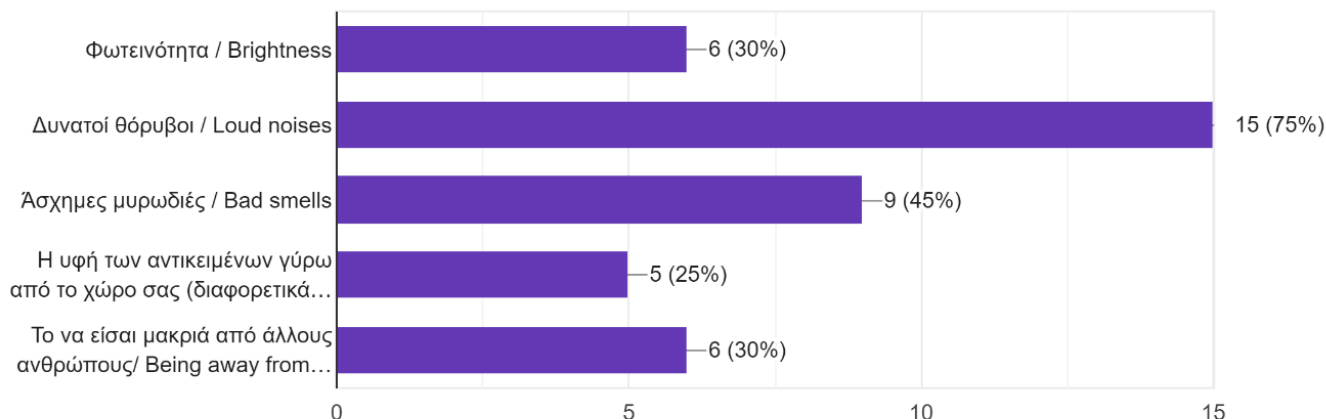
Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

20 out of the 21 participants that reported some amount of sensory overload in the previous question, were then asked whether their sensory overload could be improved by being able to control any of the following options. Participants were able to select as many answers as they liked. The majority of participants (75%) chose “Loud noises”, 45% “Bad smells”, 30% “Brightness”, 30% “Being away from other people” and 25% “Texture of objects around your living space (different clothing materials, bed sheets, etc.”. “Other” option was not filled out by any participant.

3.2 Cyprus

Αν απαντήσατε ότι βιώνετε αισθητική υπερφόρτωση στην τελευταία ερώτηση, θα βελτιωνόταν η δυσάρεστη αυτή κατάσταση αν μπορούσατε να ελέγχ... to control the following? (Tick all that apply)

20 responses



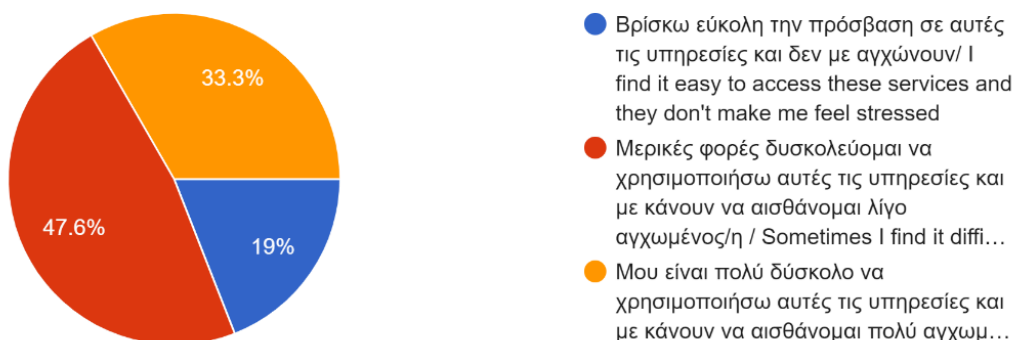
Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

Difficulties in accessing public services

In the following question, participants were asked whether they find it challenging to navigate essential public services such as healthcare, bank and financial, insurance etc. Out of the 3 options, the majority (47.6%) responded with "I sometimes find it difficult to use these services and they make me feel a little stressed", 33.3% responded with "I find it very difficult to use these services and they make me feel very stressed" and 19% responded "I find it easy to access these services and they don't make me feel stressed".

Σας δυσκολεύει η περιήγηση σε βασικές δημόσιες υπηρεσίες (υγειονομική περίθαλψη, τραπεζικές και χρηματοπιστωτικές υπηρεσίες, ασφάλ..., bank and financial services, insurance, etc.)?

21 responses



Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

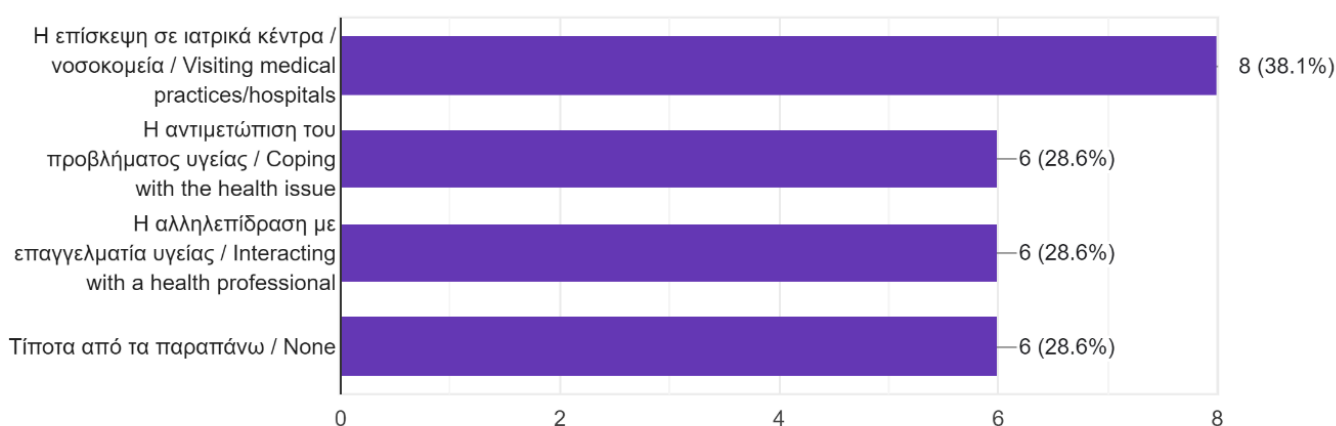
3.2 Cyprus

Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. Participants were able to choose all answers that applied to them. The results yielded that the majority of participants (38.1%) find difficulty “visiting medical practices/hospitals, and all other answers yielded 28.6% (“coping with the health issue”, “interacting with a health professional”, and “none of the above”. No one reported another option.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω σενάρια σας είναι δύσκολο να αντιμετωπίσετε όταν έχετε κάποιο πρόβλημα υγείας; (Σημειώστε όλα όσα ισχύουν) W... experience a health issue? (tick all that apply)

21 responses



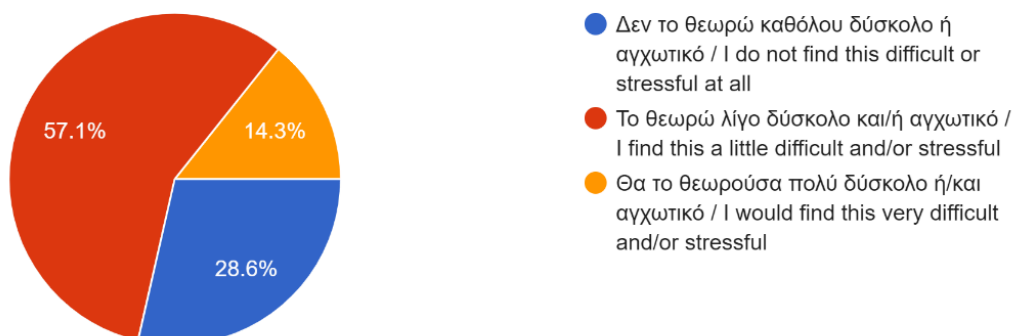
Graph 15: Visual Representation of the common issues encountered during health crisis.

Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Participants were asked how they felt about managing everyday home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.), and whether it would be difficult or stressful. Participants had 3 options to choose from, ranging from “I do not find this difficult or stressful at all” to “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”. 57.1% (12/21) or participants reported the middle option: “I find this a little difficult and/or stressful”, 28.6% (6/21) “I do not find this difficult or stressful”, and 14.3% (3/21) “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”.

Αισθάνεστε ότι η διαχείριση των καθημερινών οικιακών δραστηριοτήτων που πρέπει να κάνετε μόνοι σας (όπως η καθαριότητα, η υγιεινή διατροφή, ...market, etc.) is/would be difficult or stressful?

21 responses



Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

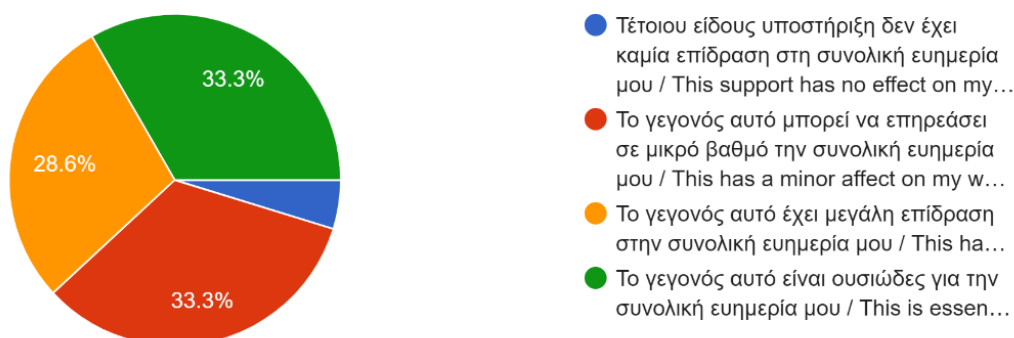
3.2 Cyprus

Impact of support from professionals on well-being

This question investigated how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals were to participants overall well-being. 33.3% (7/21) reported this having “A minor effect on their wellbeing”, 33.3% (7/21) reported “This is essential for their well-being”, 28.6% (6/21) having “A great effect on my well-being” and 4.8% (1 participant) reported that “This support has no effect” on their well-being.

Παρακαλώ δηλώστε πόσο χρήσιμη είναι η υποστήριξη από εκπαιδευτικούς, θεραπευτές και άλλους επαγγελματίες υποστήριξης για τη συνολική ...ort professionals is to your overall well-being?

21 responses



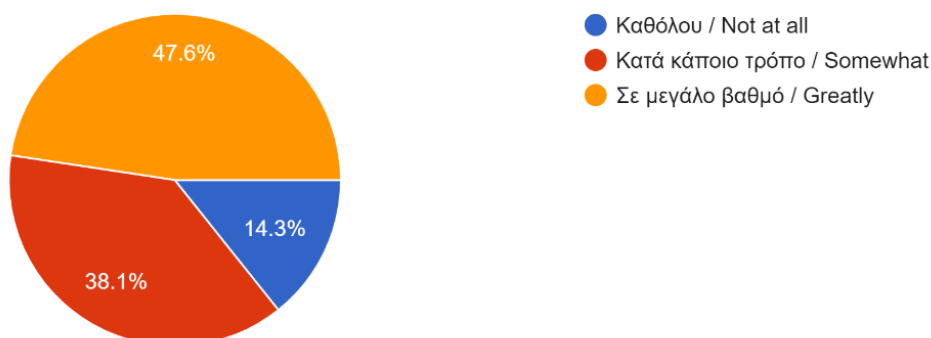
Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

Participants were asked whether they felt they would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently. Out of the three given options, almost half of them, 47.6% (10/21) responded “Yes”, 38.1% (8/21) responded “Somewhat” and 14.3% (3/21) responded “No” to benefittina from areater support from

Πιστεύετε ότι θα ωφεληθείτε περισσότερο αν λάβετε υποστήριξη από εκπαιδευτικούς, θεραπευτές ή άλλους ειδικούς για να ζήσετε ανεξάρτ...ther specialists in order to live independently?

21 responses



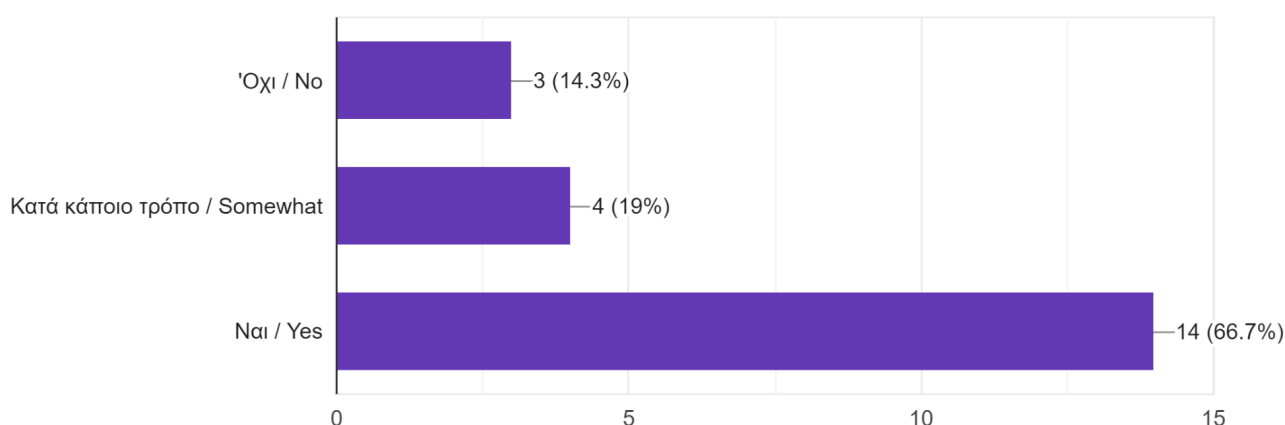
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

3.2 Cyprus

Role of autism awareness in effective support

Further to the previous question, participants were asked to what extent a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support. Most of them 66.7% (14/21) responded 'Yes', followed by 19% (4/21) who answered 'Somewhat', and lastly 14.3% (3) responded 'No'.

Πιστεύετε ότι μια μεγαλύτερη ευαισθητοποίηση και κατανόηση του αυτισμού θα βοηθούσε αυτούς τους επαγγελματίες να παρέχουν πιο ουσιαστική υποστήριξη; Professionals to provide more effective support?
21 responses

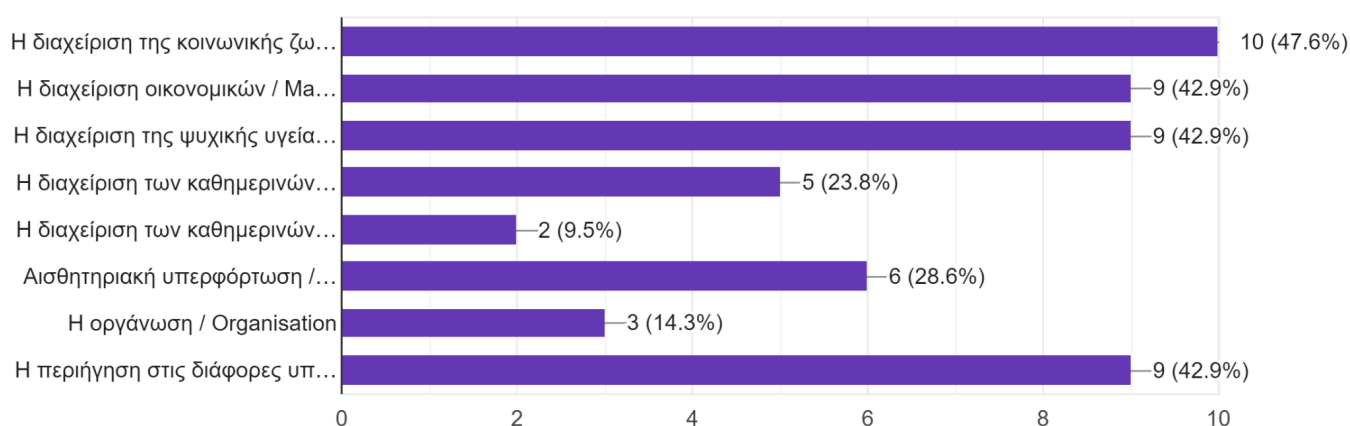


Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.

Challenges in various aspects of independent living

This question focused on various areas of independent living that participants felt they struggle/would struggle with. They were able to choose as many of the options as they wanted. The most popular response (47.6%) was "managing social life and interactions". The second most popular responses (each yielding 42.9% responses) were: "Managing finances", "managing mental health (stress, anxiety, etc.)", and "Navigating Services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)". 33.3% reported struggling with "Managing daily life activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)", 28.6% reported with "Sensory Overload", and 14.3% with "Organisation".

Σε ποιους από τους ακόλουθους τομείς της ανεξάρτητης διαβίωσης αισθάνεστε ότι δυσκολεύεστε/θα δυσκολευόσασταν; Which of the following do you feel you struggle/would struggle with?
21 responses



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

3.2 Cyprus

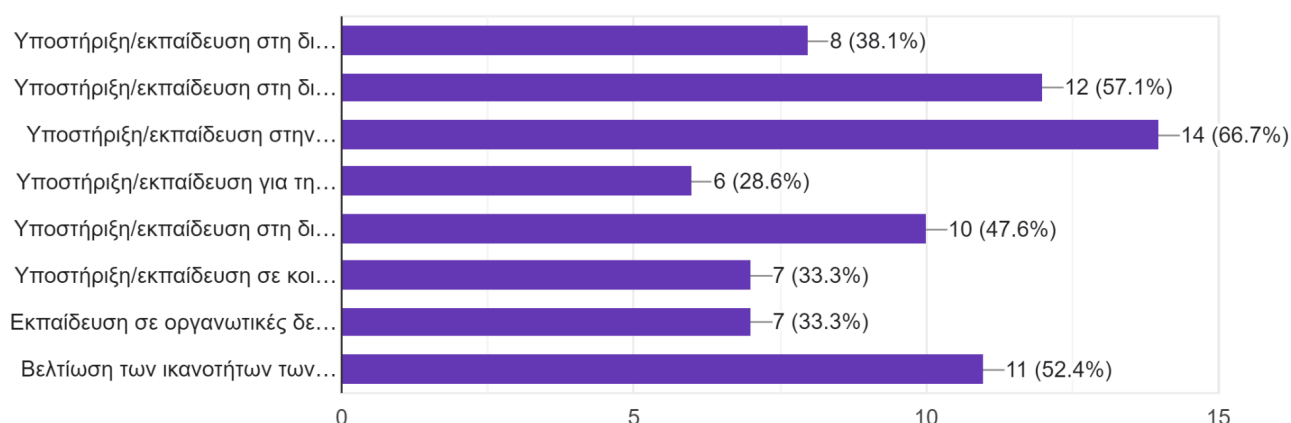
Additional barriers to independent living

6 participants (28.6%) responded to the open-ended question of whether anyone felt there are any additional barriers that may affect their ability to live alone. 2 participants stated their “Parents” as an additional barrier (9.5%), 1 participant stated they “Would like to have a trial period to help with their anxiety levels”, another stated they would find it “Hard to commute as they could get lost and disorientated”, and another stated “Other people wanting to take advantage of me and harm me. Having the support from professionals help me”. The last participant stated that “I don’t feel there is an additional barrier to living alone”.

Support systems for independent living

The following question investigated additional support systems which participants felt would help with their independent living. 8 options were provided, of which participants could choose as many as they wanted. The most popular answer, with 66.7% electability, was “Support/training in navigating complex services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. The second most popular answer, with 57.1%, was “Support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health”. The third most selected answer, with 52.4%, was “Improving the abilities of educators/trainers to train autistic people in the above fields”. Next, with 47.6%, was “Support/training in managing finances”. With 38.1% was “Support/training in managing everyday home activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”. The 2 answers with 33.3% electability were “Support/training in social interactions and social skills” and “Organisational skills training”. Lastly, with 28.6%, was “Support/training in understanding sensory issues/overload and how to manage them”. No one gave the “other” answer provided.

Ποια από τα παρακάτω θα σας βοηθούσε να νιώσετε μεγαλύτερη υποστήριξη κατά την ανεξάρτητη διαβίωσή σας; Which of the following...o feel more supported when living independently?
21 responses



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the options participants think will help them feel more supported when living independently.

3.2 Cyprus

Further support required for independent living

4 participants responded to this open-ended question of "Is there anything else you feel would support you to live independently?". 2 of them responded with "no", meaning that 90.5% of the total sample did not have anything further to add. The 2 responses were "To have a career/companion sometimes" and "I believe that people with autism should not have restrictions".

3.2.5 Overall Conclusion

In conclusion most of the participants of this study are male ranging between 18 to 54 years old, all of them have finished school education and a significant amount followed additional studies. Most of them still live with their families and the rest live either alone, with a spouse or with support. Most participants reported feeling overall stressed once or twice a week and a little stressed in the idea of living alone. The three most effective strategies for managing stress listed from participants are receiving help from support groups, physical activity and greater support from professionals.

The majority of the participants have daily interactions with others, and most of them believe they would feel lonely if they were to live alone without support. Based on the responses, receiving training on skills and interactions, greater motivation to socialise and greater empathy and social awareness from others, will help them mitigate isolation and loneliness. In general, participants experience sensory overload two to four times a week, and the major contributor is loud noises. Most participants find accessing public services challenging, and specifically visiting medical practices and hospitals. Most participants find it difficult to cope with everyday home activities alone. Mixed results are given regarding the impact of support from professionals, from essential to a minor effect in their well-being. However it seems like they will benefit from enhanced professional support for living independently.

Participants believe that greater awareness of autism and issues surrounding it is needed from professionals to effectively support them. The greatest challenges for living independently are managing social life and interactions, managing finances, managing mental health, and navigating services. It is important to note, that to an open-ended question about any additional barriers, two participants mentioned their parents. Finally, the most important support systems for successful independent living for these participants are: receiving support/training in navigating complex services, support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health, and improving the abilities of educators/educators to train autistic people in the previously mentioned fields, such as managing finances, and everyday home activities.

3.3. Denmark

Participants' Disclaimer

The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

Introduction to the report

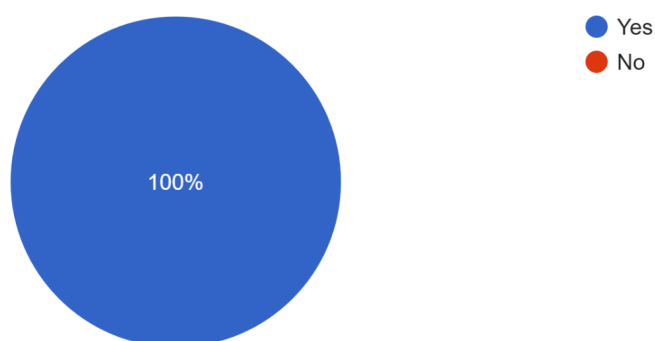
The purpose of this report is to shed light on the living conditions, challenges and support options for people with high-functioning autism. The data is collected from a survey covering areas such as housing, perceived stress and anxiety, sensory overload, social interactions and perceptions of public services.

3.3.1 Demographic profile of respondents

The survey respondents include people with high-functioning autism in the 18-64 age range. Most are aged 18-34, fairly evenly split between genders, and with varying levels of education: from no education to a master's degree. Respondents live in a variety of situations, including living alone, with family or partner, and some have lived alone for over 10 years.

Anser du dig selv for at have højt-fungerende autisme?

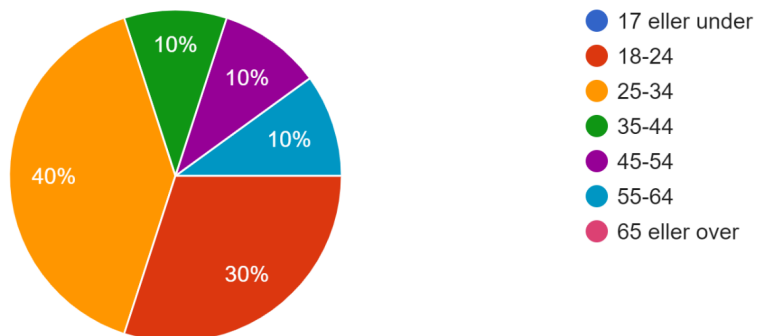
10 responses



3.3. Denmark

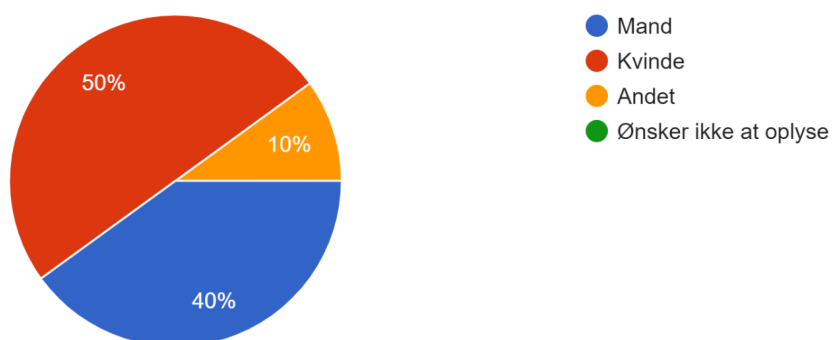
Alder

10 responses



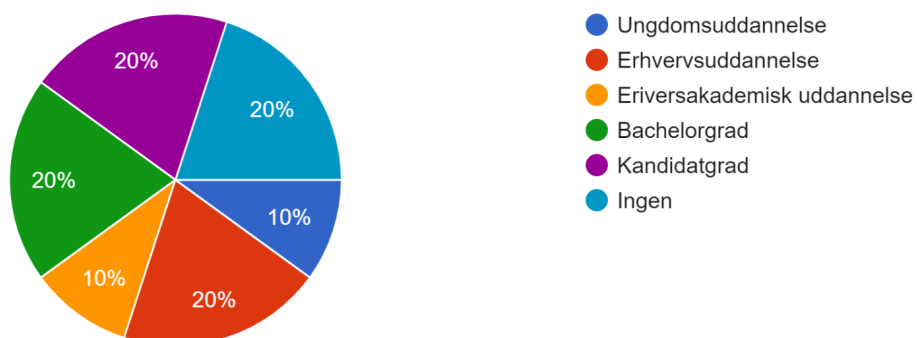
Køn

10 responses



Uddannelse

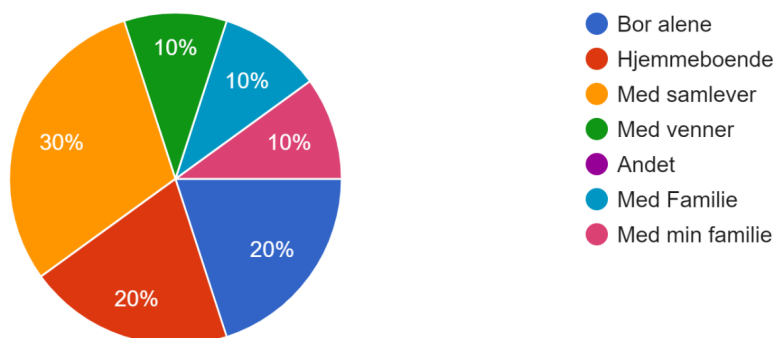
10 responses



3.3. Denmark

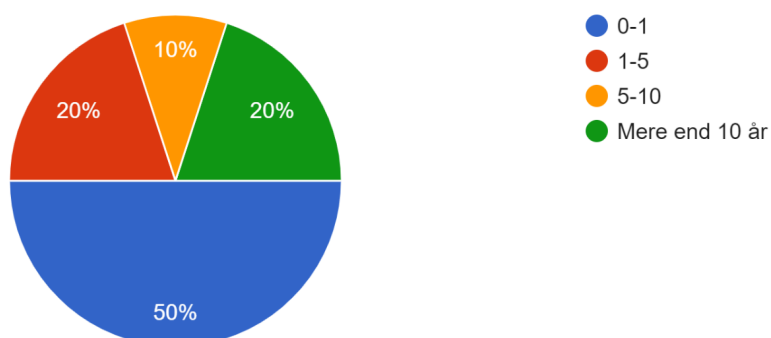
Boligsituation

10 responses



Hvor mange år har du boet alene?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

3.3.2 Perceived stress and anxiety

Most respondents report feeling daily anxiety and stress, although the degree varies. Some feel only a little stressed at the thought of living alone, while others find it very stressful. Especially younger respondents (18-24 years old) report feeling more stress at the thought of living alone without support.

Angiv niveauet af stress/angst du oplever i dit daglige liv.

10 responses



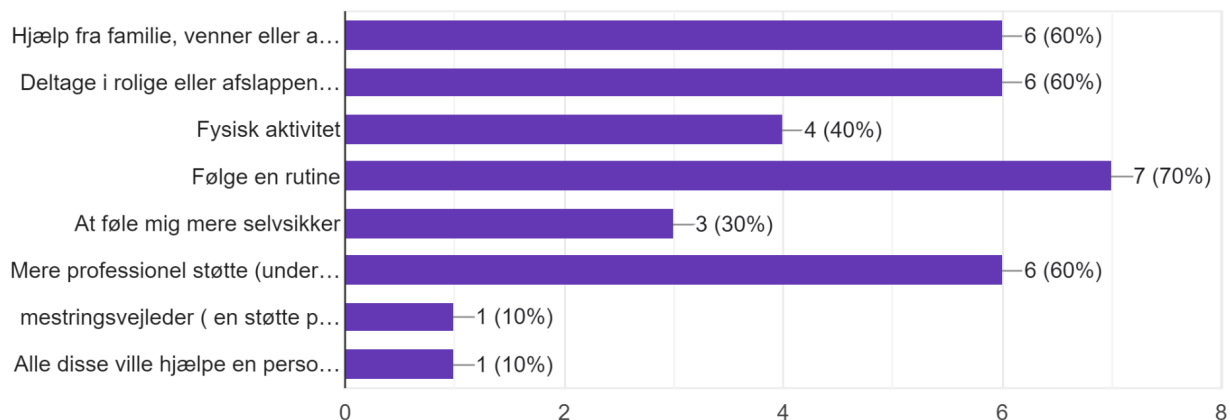
Hvor stresset/angst føler du dig ved tanken om at bo alene uden støtte?

10 responses



Hvilket af følgende føler du ville hjælpe dig med at håndtere stress/angst?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

3.3.3 Social interactions and feelings of isolation

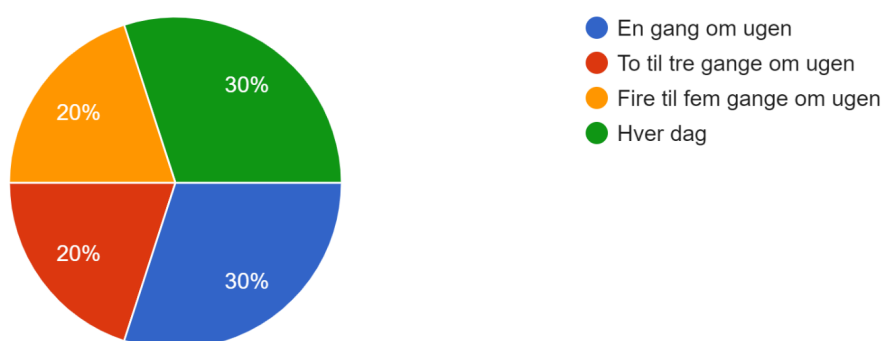
Most people interact with others at least once a week, but the intensity of these interactions varies.

Many mention that they would feel isolated if they lived alone without support, although some report feeling lonely only rarely.

Social skills support: Many respondents believe that training in social skills and interactions could reduce feelings of isolation.

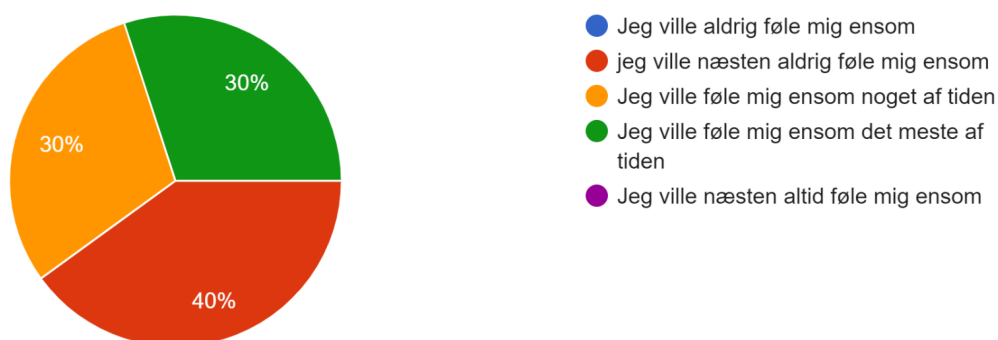
Hvor ofte interagerer du med andre (fysisk)?

10 responses



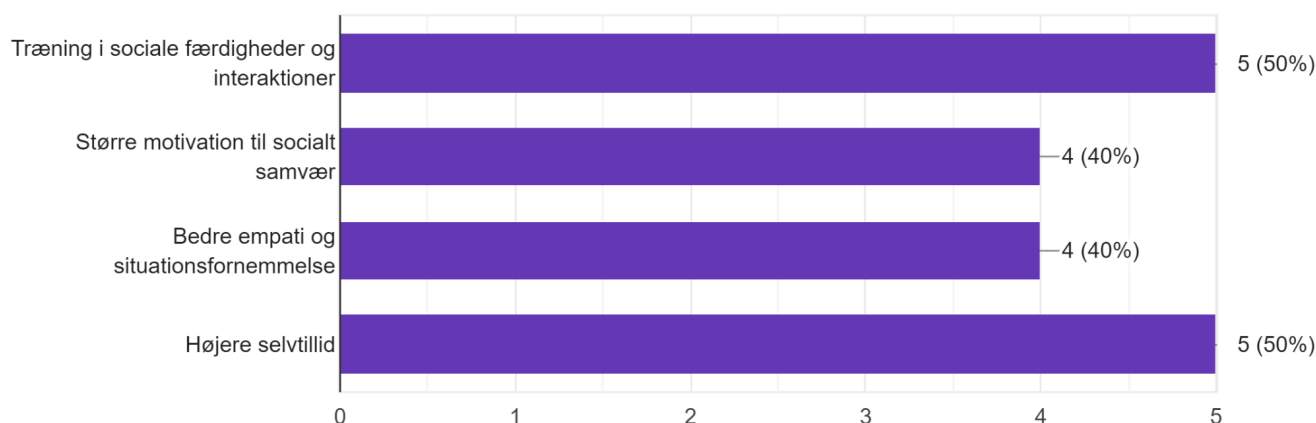
Føler du dig eller ville du føle dig isoleret/ensom, ved at bo alene uden støtte?

10 responses



Hvilket af følgende ville hjælpe dig med at føle dig mindre isoleret/ensom?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

3.3.4 Sensory overload

Several respondents experience sensory overload in daily life, with stimuli such as brightness and loud noises being particularly challenging: Some experience this daily or several times a day, while others rarely or never experience sensory overload. To reduce sensory overload, adjusting brightness and noise levels are mentioned as potential solutions.

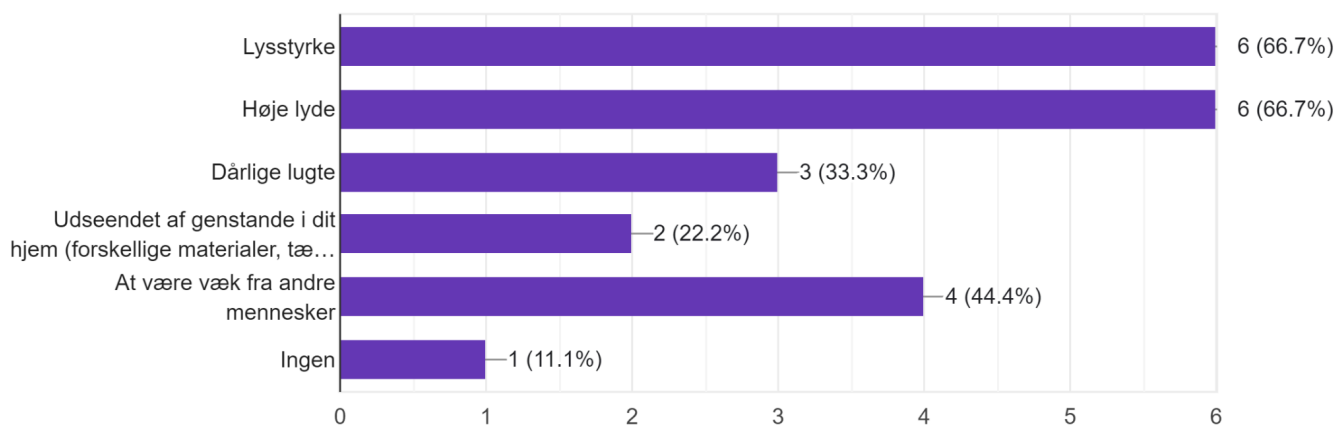
Oplever du nogensinde sensorisk overbelastning derhjemme eller under andre aktiviteter i dit daglige liv?

10 responses



Hvis du svarede, at du oplever sensorisk overbelastning i det sidste spørgsmål, ville det så hjælpe kunne kontrollere følgende? (Sæt gerne flere kryds)

9 responses



Synes du, at det er udfordrende at navigere i vigtige offentlige tjenester (sundhed, bank- og finanstjenester, forsikringer osv.)?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

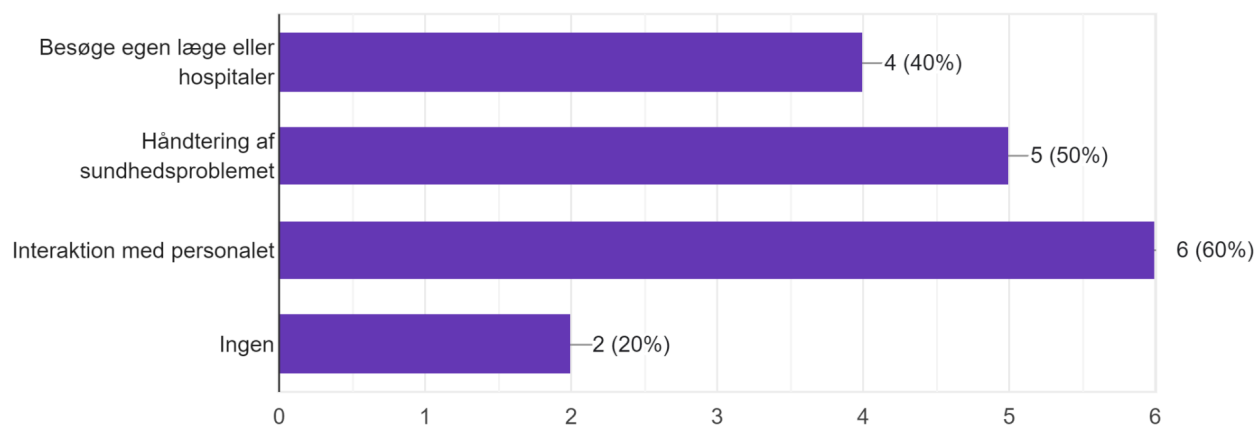
Føler du, at det er/ville være svært eller stressende at klare de daglige aktiviteter i hjemmet alene?
(f.eks. at gøre rent, spise sundt, gå i supermarkedet osv.)

10 responses



Hvilke af følgende scenarier synes du er svære at håndtere, når du oplever et helbredsproblem?
(sæt kryds ved alt, hvad der gælder)

10 responses



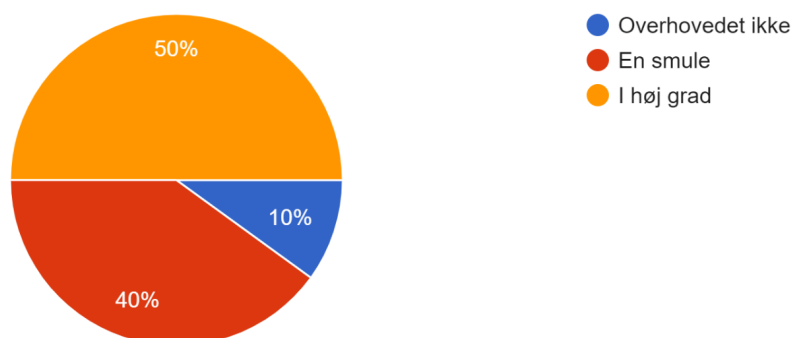
3.3. Denmark

Access to public services

There is a marked difference in how easy respondents find it to navigate public services such as healthcare and financial services: Some describe it as challenging and stressful, especially when interacting with staff or dealing with health issues. Several seek support and training in understanding and navigating complex services, which could ease their stress.

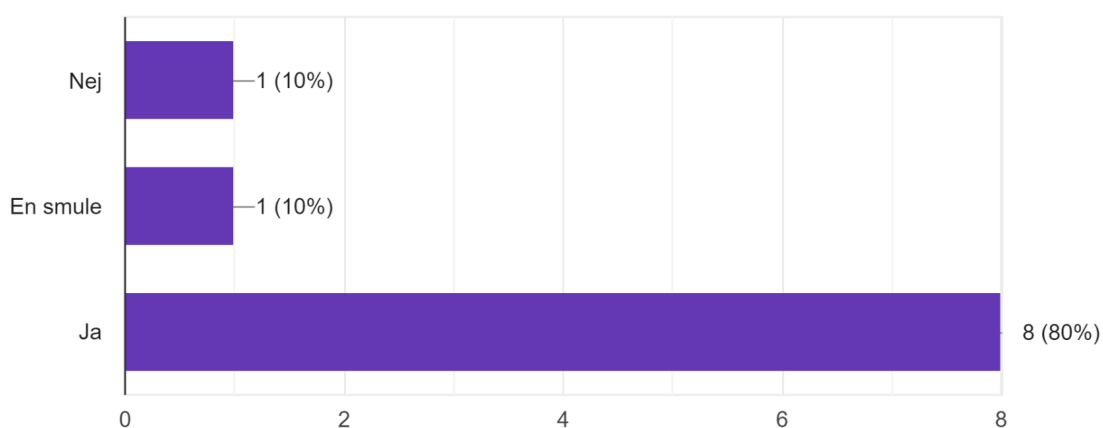
Føler du, at du ville have gavn af mere støtte fra pædagoger, terapeuter eller andre specialister for at kunne leve selvstændigt?

10 responses



Mener du, at en større bevidsthed om og forståelse af autisme ville hjælpe disse fagfolk til at yde en mere effektiv støtte?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

Challenges of independent living

When it comes to independent living, the main challenges for respondents are:

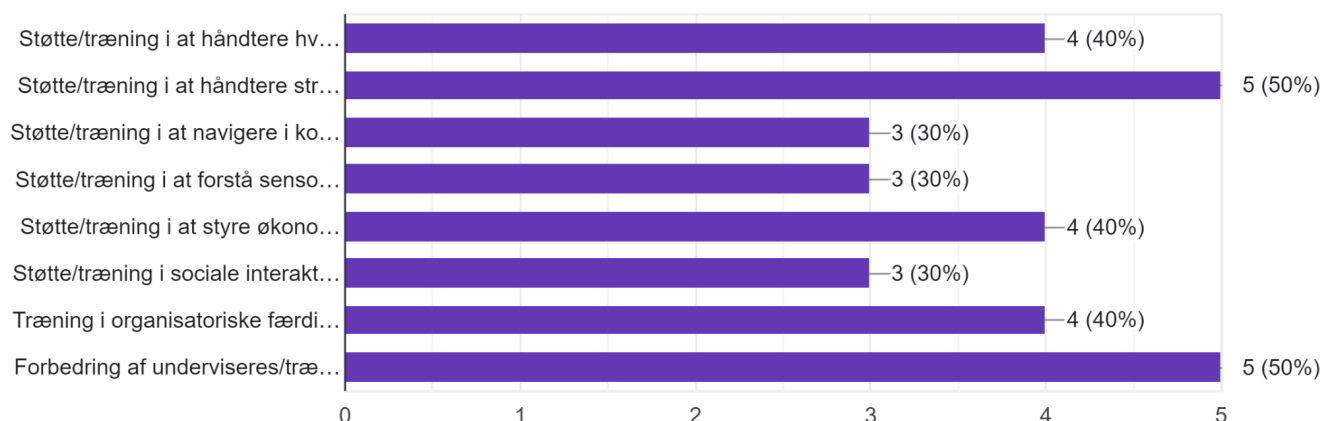
- Managing everyday activities: such as cleaning, healthy cooking and general housekeeping.
- Managing finances: Several find it difficult to manage their finances without support.
- Sensory overload and mental health: These aspects greatly affect their daily wellbeing.
- Social interactions: Many find social situations challenging and want training to better navigate them.

Hvis du føler, at der er andre barrierer, som påvirker din evne til at bo alene, så skriv det her:

1. Svært ved at finde boliger der lever op til mine krav, mht til støj, beliggenhed og selve boligens indvendige rumfordeling. *(Difficult to find accommodation that meets my requirements in terms of noise, location and the interior layout of the home itself.)*
2. Mental Health problems *(Mental Health problems)*
3. Jeg finder det svært at forstå sociale signaler og regler, hvilket gør det udfordrende at navigere i dagligdagen. *(I find it difficult to understand social cues and rules, making it challenging to navigate daily life.)*
4. Min følsomhed overfor lyde og lys kan gøre det svært at være i visse omgivelser uden at blive overvældet. *(My sensitivity to sounds and light can make it difficult to be in certain environments without becoming overwhelmed.)*
5. Jeg har svært ved at holde styr på tid og opgaver, hvilket fører til, at jeg ofte føler mig desorienteret og stresset. *(I find it difficult to keep track of time and tasks, which often leaves me feeling disorientated and stressed.)*
6. Jeg har ikke nogen større barrierer, men jeg kan nogle gange finde sociale situationer udfordrende. *(I don't have any major barriers, but I can sometimes find social situations challenging.)*
7. Jeg har svært ved at navigere i det offentlige system, især med bureaukrati og papirarbejde. *(I find it difficult to navigate the public system, especially with bureaucracy and paperwork.)*
8. Min angst kan ofte blive overvældende, hvilket gør det svært at tage beslutninger eller fuldføre opgaver. *(My anxiety can often become overwhelming, making it difficult to make decisions or complete tasks.)*

Hvilke af følgende ting ville hjælpe dig til at føle dig mere støttet, når du bor selvstændigt?

10 responses



3.3. Denmark

Need for more support and understanding

A common theme in the responses is a need for more targeted support:

- Training and coaching: Many respondents believe that training in managing everyday tasks and stress management would improve their quality of life.
- Greater understanding of autism: Several suggest that a better understanding of autism among professionals could improve support and make it easier for them to live independently.

Question: Er der andet, som du mener, ville hjælpe dig til at leve et selvstændigt liv?

1. Visual indicators for my daily needs, reminder to drink water and similiar
2. At have en mentor eller coach, der kan hjælpe mig med sociale færdigheder og kommunikative udfordringer. *(Having a mentor or coach to help me with social skills and communication challenges.)*
3. Mere tilgængelig støtte til at finde og tilpasse mit hjemmemiljø til mine sensoriske behov. *(More accessible support to find and adapt my home environment to my sensory needs.)*
4. Værktøjer eller apps til at organisere min dag og holde styr på mine opgaver kunne være en stor hjælp. *(Tools or apps to organise my day and keep track of my tasks would be a great help.)*
5. Lejlighedsvis adgang til rådgivning eller vejledning om sociale interaktioner kunne være nyttigt. *(Occasional access to counselling or guidance on social interactions could be useful.)*
6. Assistance med at forstå og håndtere officielle dokumenter og processer ville hjælpe mig med at blive mere selvstændig. *(Assistance with understanding and dealing with official documents and processes would help me become more independent.)*
7. Flere strategier og værktøjer til at håndtere angst og reducere stress ville være en stor hjælp for mig. *(More strategies and tools to manage anxiety and reduce stress would be a great help to me.)*

3.3.5 Conclusion

The data shows that people with high-functioning autism often experience daily stress and sensory overload, making it challenging to navigate daily life and live alone without support. Increased access to support in the form of training in activities of daily living, better understanding from professionals and social skills could help these individuals live more independently and reduce their sense of isolation.

The report points to a need for targeted initiatives and tailored support to help people with high-functioning autism thrive in everyday life.

3.4. Italy

Participants' Disclaimer

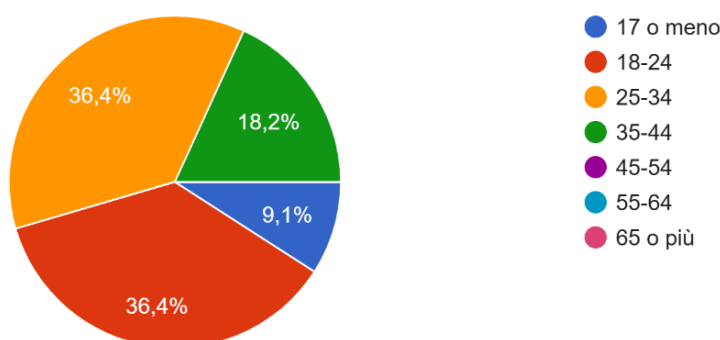
The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

3.4.1 Overall Description of Participants

The study included participants from diverse age ranges, with the majority falling within the 18-24 and 25-34 categories, each representing 36.36% of the sample. A smaller percentage (18.18%) were aged between 35-44, and 9.09% were 17 or under. This age distribution indicates a broad representation of adults who might be transitioning to or already experiencing independent living.

Età

11 risposte

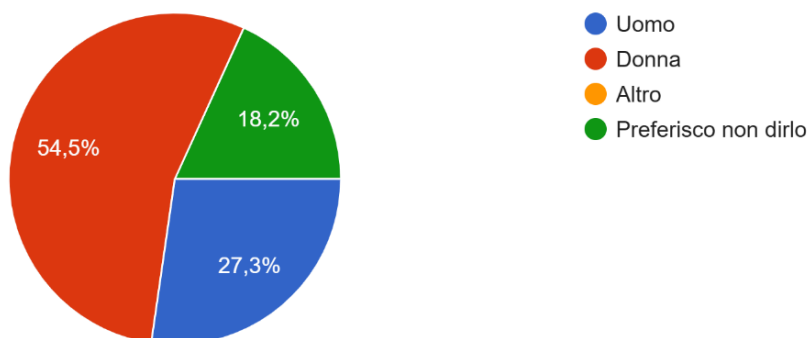


Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

Gender representation showed that 54.55% identified as female, 27.27% as male, and 18.18% preferred not to disclose their gender.

Genere

11 risposte



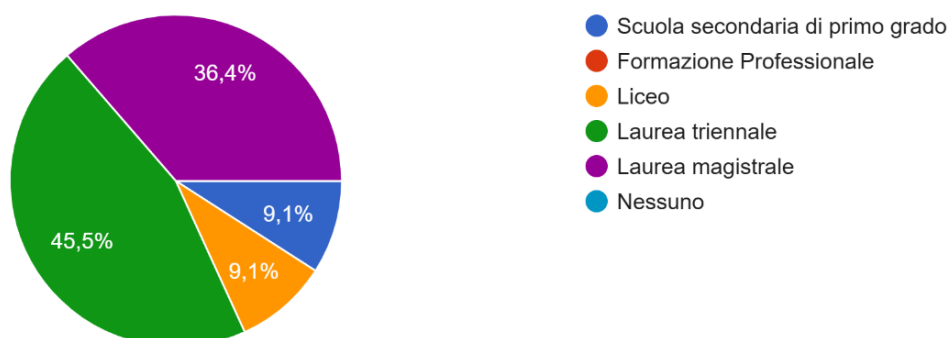
Graph 2: Visual Representation of the Sex Range of Participants

3.4. Italy

The educational backgrounds varied, with 45.45% having a bachelor's degree and 36.36% holding a master's degree, suggesting a relatively educated participant pool. The remaining participants had completed high school (9.09%) or middle school (9.09%).

Livello di istruzione

11 risposte

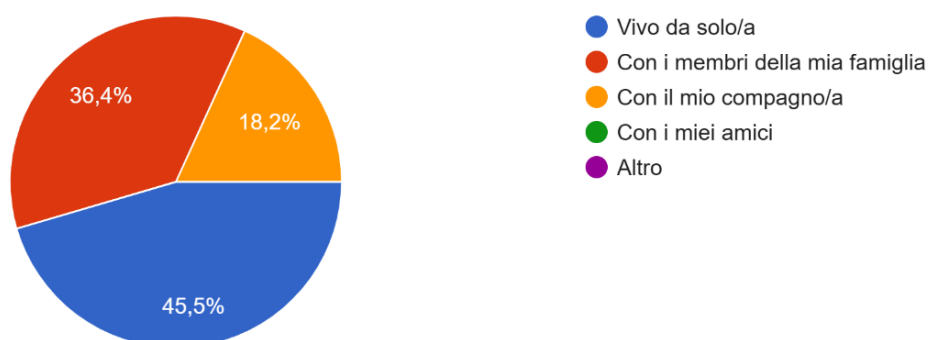


Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education level of Participants

In terms of living arrangements, 45.45% reported living alone, 36.36% lived with family members, and 18.18% resided with a partner.

Stato abitativo

11 risposte

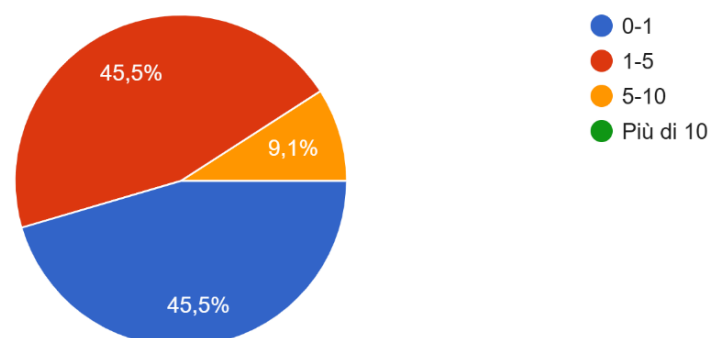


Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

Among those living alone, the duration was equally split, with 45.45% living independently for 0-1 year and another 45.45% for 1-5 years, indicating that many participants might be in the early stages of independent living.

Da quanto tempo vivi a solo? Se non vivi da solo seleziona 0

11 risposte



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

3.4. Italy

3.4.2 Stress and Anxiety

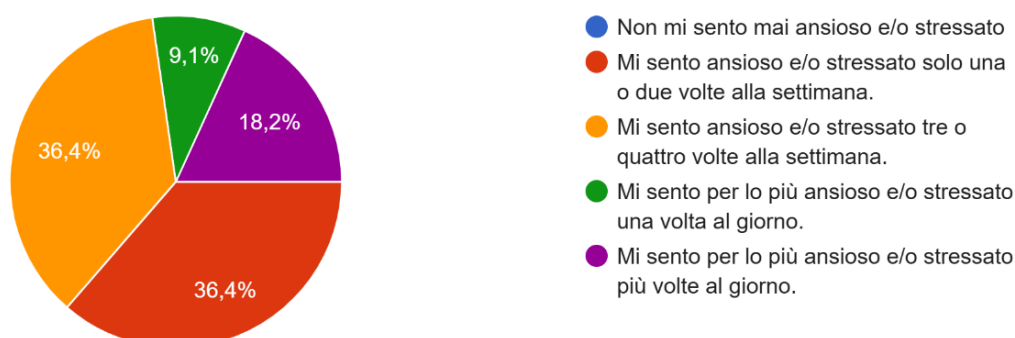
In the present study, stress was characterized as the sensation of having a mind overwhelmed by numerous thoughts and concerns, making it challenging to concentrate on other matters. In a similar vein, anxiety was described as a persistent fear that something negative might occur, even in the absence of any actual threat.

Daily Stress and Anxiety Levels

Participants reported varying levels of stress and anxiety in their daily lives, with 36.36% experiencing anxiety or stress 3-4 times a week, and an equal percentage feeling anxious or stressed 1-2 times weekly. Meanwhile, 18.18% indicated feeling anxious/stressed multiple times a day, and 9.09% experienced such feelings once a day. This highlights that over half of the participants face regular stress and anxiety, which could impact their ability to manage daily tasks and responsibilities.

Indica il livello di stress/ansia che provi nella tua vita quotidiana.

11 risposte



Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

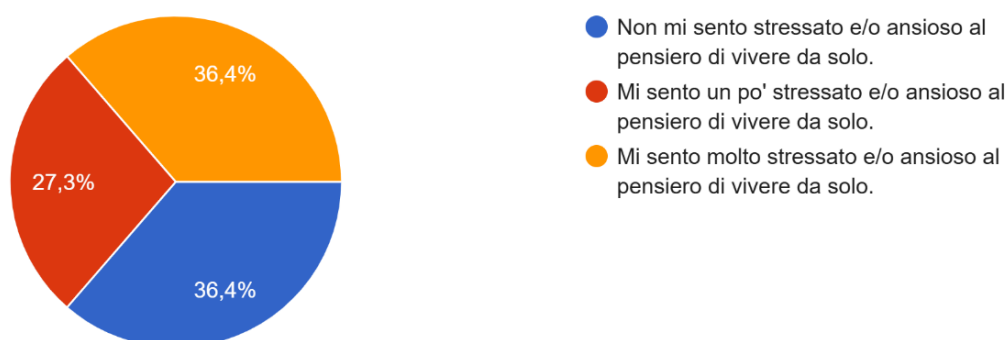
3.4. Italy

Stress and Anxiety

When asked about the prospect of living alone without support, responses were evenly divided, with 36.36% feeling very stressed or anxious and another 36.36% not feeling anxious at all. Meanwhile, 27.27% reported feeling a bit stressed or anxious. These results suggest that while some participants are confident in their ability to live independently, others require significant support to manage the associated stress.

Quanto ti senti stressato/ansioso al pensiero di vivere da solo senza supporto?

11 risposte



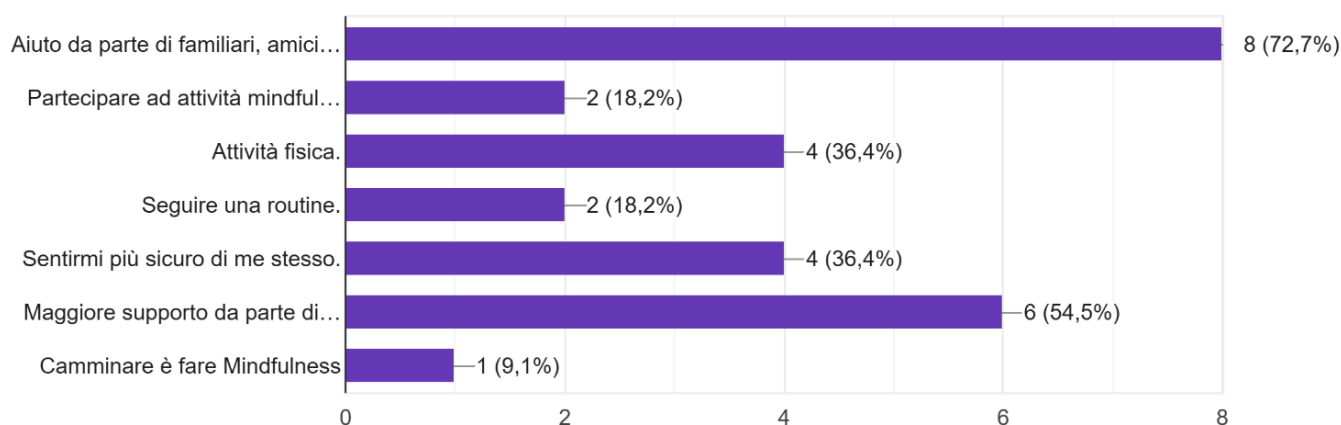
Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants identified several strategies to manage stress and anxiety, the most common being support from family, friends, or support groups. Many also emphasized the importance of physical activity, professional support from educators or therapists, mindfulness or relaxing activities, and establishing a routine. These strategies reflect the multifaceted approach required to address stress and anxiety effectively.

Quale delle seguenti cose pensi che ti aiuterebbe a gestire lo stress/l'ansia?

11 risposte



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

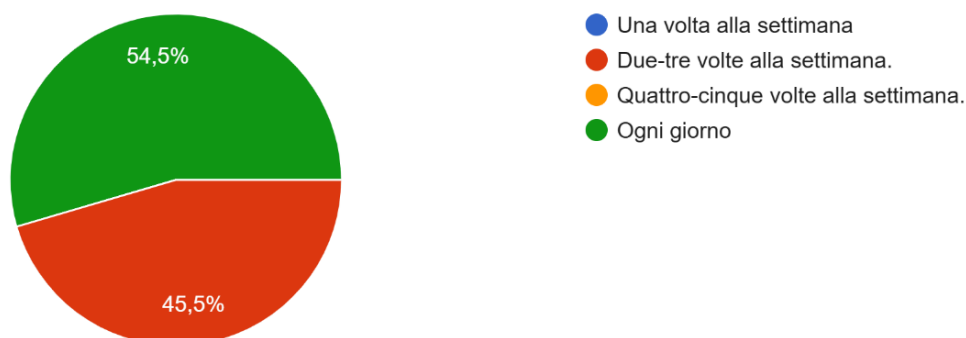
3.4. Italy

3.4.3 Social Isolation and Loneliness

This section of the survey addressed social isolation or loneliness, which were described as the experience of being in the presence of others yet still feeling detached and disconnected, as if an invisible barrier hinders genuine connection with those around you.

Quanto spesso interagisci con gli altri (di persona)?

11 risposte



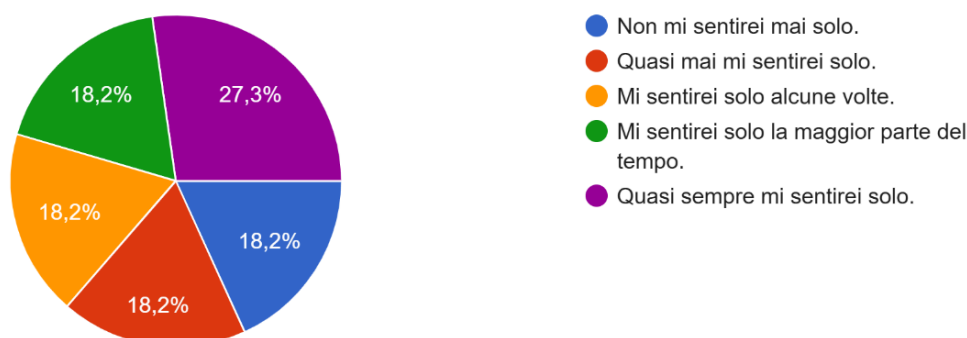
Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

Despite regular interactions, 27.27% of participants reported that they would feel lonely almost always if living independently, while 18.18% felt they would be lonely sometimes, most of the time, rarely, or never. This indicates that a substantial proportion may experience loneliness even if they have some level of support, emphasizing the need for social interventions and community integration.

Ti senti o ti sentiresti isolato/solo vivendo da solo senza supporto?

11 risposte



Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

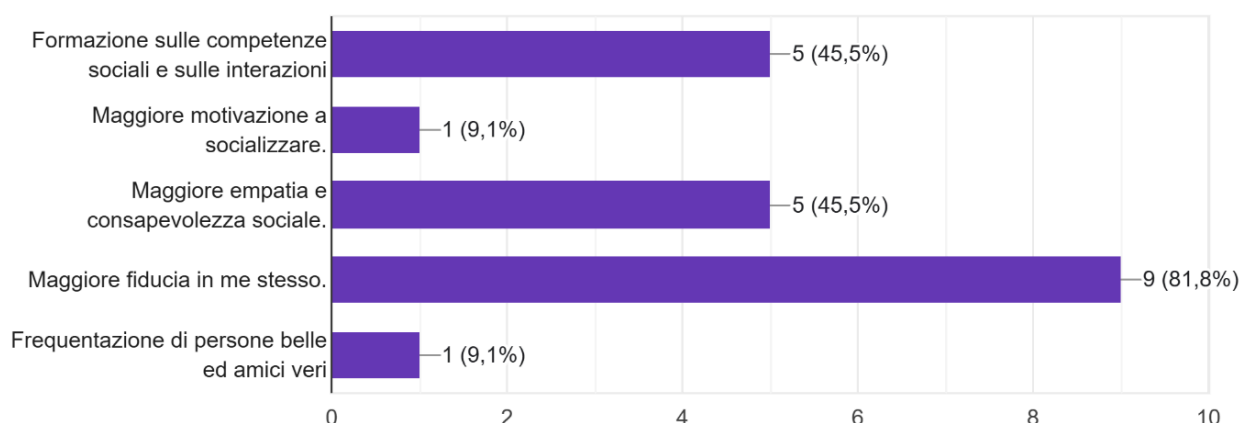
3.4. Italy

Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

Participants identified increased self-confidence (27.27%) and greater empathy/social awareness (also 27.27%) as crucial strategies for mitigating loneliness. Training in social skills, motivation to socialize, and building relationships with genuine friends were also seen as valuable. These findings highlight the need for tailored programs that enhance social skills and confidence to reduce isolation among individuals with high-functioning autism.

Quale delle seguenti opzioni ti aiuterebbe a sentirti meno isolato/a?

11 risposte



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

3.4.4 Sensory Overload

Sensory overload was characterized as the sensation of being in a space where it feels like all eyes are on you, with lights that are excessively bright, sounds that are overwhelmingly loud, and touches that are uncomfortably intense, all occurring simultaneously. This overwhelming experience can hinder one's ability to focus, engage with others, or carry out even basic tasks until the sensation diminishes.

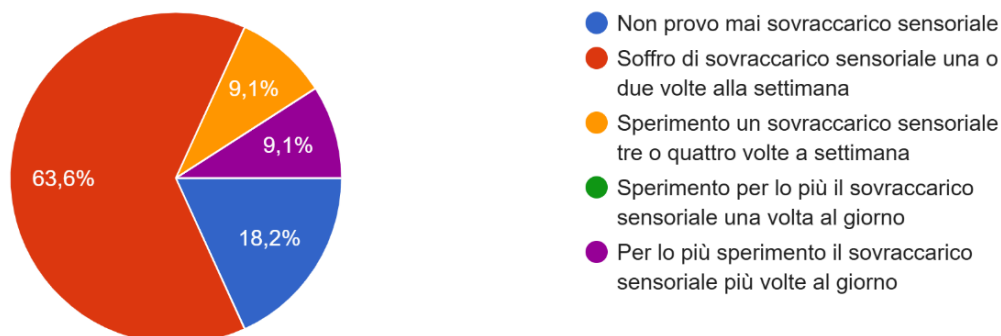
Incidence of sensory overload in daily life

Sensory overload was a significant issue, with 63.64% experiencing it 1-2 times a week, while 9.09% experienced it 3-4 times weekly or multiple times a day. Only 18.18% reported never experiencing sensory overload. This indicates that sensory overload is a common challenge, necessitating strategies to manage this aspect of daily living.

3.4. Italy

Ti capita mai di avvertire un sovraccarico sensoriale a casa o durante altre attività della tua vita quotidiana?

11 risposte



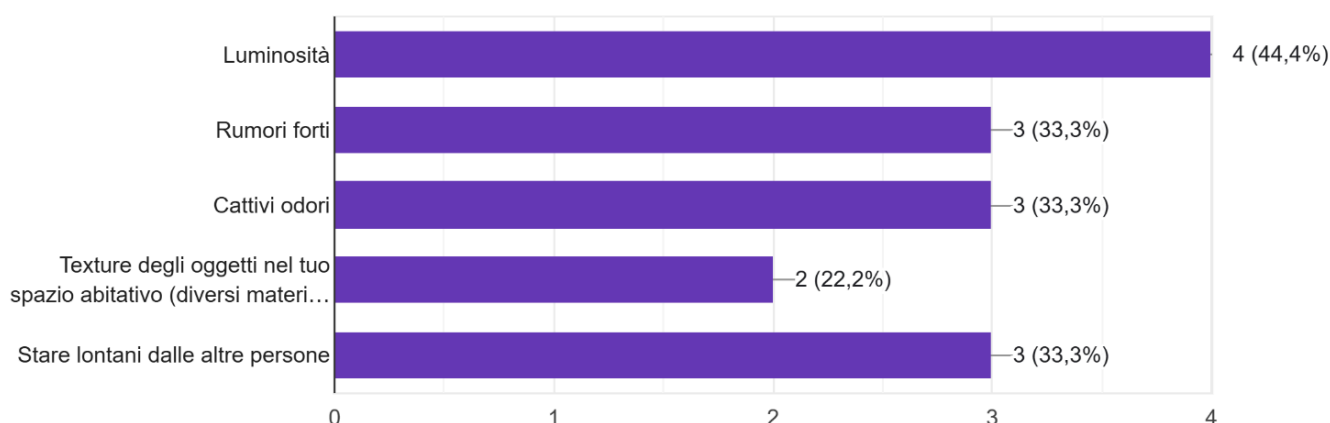
Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

Preferred solutions included staying away from other people (22.22%) and managing textures in the living space, brightness, strong odors, and loud noises. These preferences underscore the need for personalized approaches that enable individuals to control their sensory environment to enhance comfort and well-being.

Se nell'ultima domanda hai risposto che soffri di sovraccarico sensoriale, questa sensazione migliorerebbe se fossi in grado di controllare quanto segue? (Spunta tutte le risposte pertinenti)

9 risposte



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

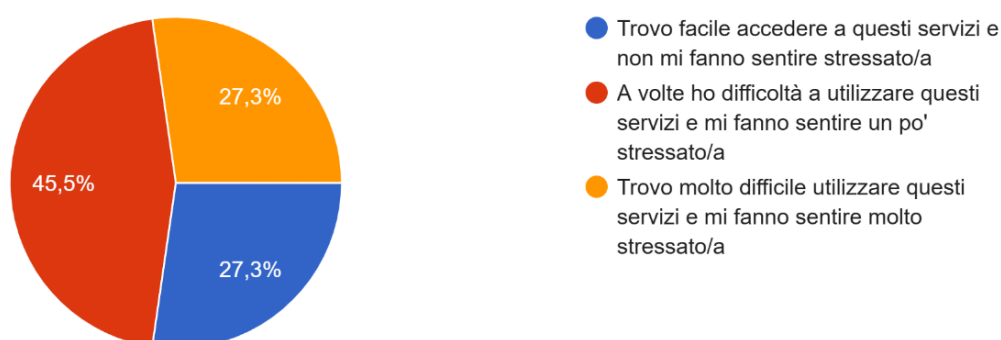
3.4. Italy

Difficulties in accessing public services

Participants faced challenges in accessing public services, particularly during health crises. While 45.45% reported no difficulties, others struggled with visiting medical offices/hospitals (18.18%) or interacting with health professionals (18.18%). This highlights the importance of making public services more accessible and accommodating for individuals with high-functioning autism.

Trovi difficile orientarti tra i servizi pubblici essenziali (sanità, servizi bancari e finanziari, assicurazioni, ecc.)?

11 risposte



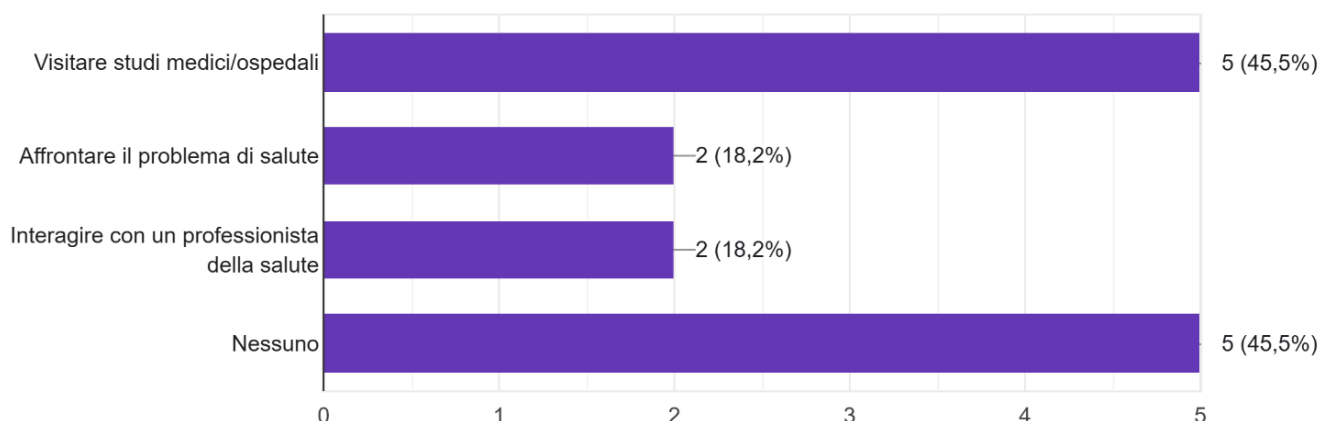
Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. The survey revealed that when faced with health-related issues, 45.45% of participants reported no particular difficulties, indicating a level of comfort or adequacy in managing such situations independently. However, a notable portion of respondents (18.18%) experienced challenges specifically with visiting medical offices or hospitals. An equal percentage (18.18%) struggled not only with visiting medical facilities but also with interacting with healthcare professionals. Additionally, 9.09% faced difficulties in handling the health problem itself, and another 9.09% found both visiting medical facilities and dealing with the health issue challenging.

Quale dei seguenti scenari trovi difficile da affrontare quando riscontri un problema di salute? (spunta tutte le risposte pertinenti)

11 risposte



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

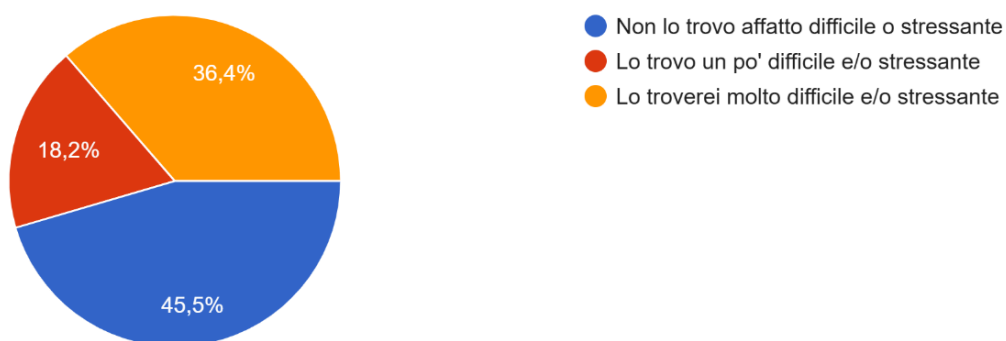
3.4. Italy

Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Managing daily home activities was not seen as difficult or stressful by 45.45% of participants, yet 36.36% found it very difficult, and 18.18% found it somewhat challenging. These findings suggest that while some participants are adept at home management, others may need additional support to maintain independence.

Pensi che gestire da solo le attività domestiche quotidiane (come pulire, mangiare sano, andare al supermercato, ecc.) sia/sarebbe difficile o stressante?

11 risposte



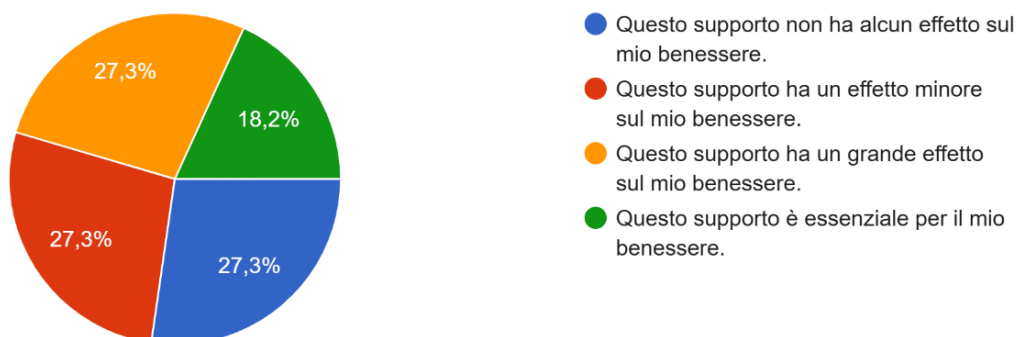
Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

Impact of support from professionals on well-being

Participants were divided on the usefulness of professional support: 27.27% felt it had a minor or significant effect on their well-being, while 18.18% considered it essential. This diversity of responses suggests that while some individuals can thrive with minimal intervention, others benefit greatly from consistent professional guidance.

Indica quanto è utile il supporto di educatori, terapisti e altri professionisti del supporto per il tuo benessere generale.

11 risposte



Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

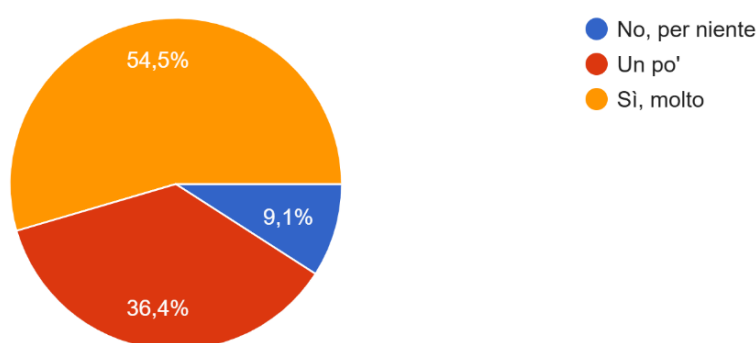
3.4. Italy

Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

The majority (54.55%) expressed a strong need for more professional support to live independently, while 36.36% indicated a moderate need. Only 9.09% felt no need for additional support. These findings emphasize the importance of providing tailored professional services to support independent living.

Ritieni che trarresti beneficio da un maggiore supporto da parte di educatori, terapisti o altri specialisti per vivere in modo indipendente?

11 risposte



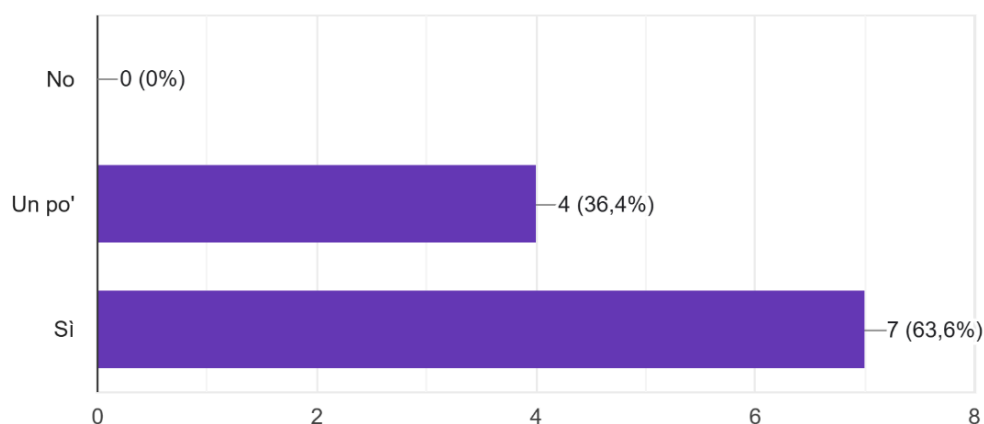
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

Role of autism awareness in effective support

Participants strongly felt that greater autism awareness would enhance the effectiveness of support provided by professionals, with 63.64% agreeing and 36.36% indicating some agreement. This suggests that increasing autism awareness and understanding is crucial for delivering effective support services.

Ritieni che una maggiore consapevolezza e comprensione dell'autismo aiuterebbe questi professionisti a fornire un supporto più efficace?

11 risposte



Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.

3.4. Italy

Challenges in various aspects of independent living

The most prominent difficulties reported were in managing their social life and interactions, with 45.5% of participants indicating that they find this aspect particularly challenging. This suggests that many individuals feel uncertain or struggle with maintaining social connections and relationships, which are crucial components of independent living.

Similarly, 45.5% of participants expressed difficulties in managing their mental health, specifically stress and anxiety. This finding underscores the importance of emotional and psychological support for individuals with high-functioning autism, as these internal struggles can significantly impact their ability to cope with day-to-day responsibilities and challenges.

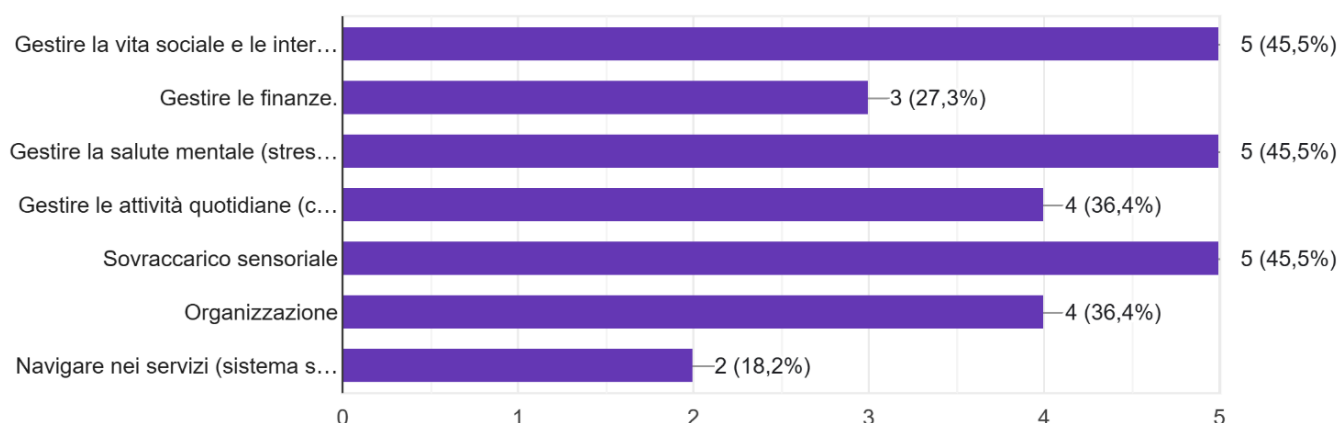
The issue of sensory overload was another significant challenge, with 45.5% of participants reporting difficulties in this area. Sensory sensitivities can be overwhelming and disruptive, making it harder for individuals to manage other aspects of daily life, especially in environments that are not adapted to their sensory needs.

Organization emerged as another area of concern, affecting 36.4% of respondents. This difficulty could manifest in managing schedules, household tasks, or maintaining an organized living space, all of which are essential skills for independent living. Similarly, 36.4% of participants reported challenges with daily activities such as cooking, cleaning, and performing household chores, indicating that practical life skills are a crucial area where support is needed.

Financial management posed a problem for 27.3% of participants, suggesting that while it may not be a universal issue, a significant portion still finds it difficult to handle budgeting, expenses, or understanding financial matters. This challenge can be a substantial barrier to achieving full independence.

Lastly, navigating essential services such as healthcare and financial institutions was reported as a challenge by 18.2% of participants. This lower percentage indicates that while most may feel capable of accessing these services, there is still a need for guidance and support in dealing with complex systems that can be daunting and difficult to manage alone.

Con quale delle seguenti aree della vita indipendente senti di avere difficoltà o avresti difficoltà?
11 risposte



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

3.4. Italy

Additional barriers to independent living

Additional barriers mentioned included difficulties in daily management, disorder or clutter, and lack of motivation (each 33.33%). These findings point to the need for support systems that address both practical and motivational aspects of independent living.

Support systems for independent living

The survey results clearly show that the majority of participants expressed a strong need for support or training in several key areas to help them feel more confident and capable of living independently. The most significant need identified was training in the management of domestic activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and handling daily chores, with 72.7% of participants indicating this as a priority. This suggests that practical life skills are a fundamental area where individuals with high-functioning autism require guidance and structured support to maintain their independence.

The second most commonly identified need was support for managing stress, anxiety, and overall mental health, as indicated by 54.5% of participants. This highlights the importance of providing mental health resources and training that can help individuals cope with the emotional challenges associated with independent living, ensuring they have the tools to handle stress and maintain a sense of well-being.

Furthermore, 36.4% of participants expressed the need for support in navigating complex services such as healthcare, financial systems, and other essential public services. This finding suggests that many individuals find it challenging to understand or access these systems independently, indicating the necessity for guidance or training in navigating such environments.

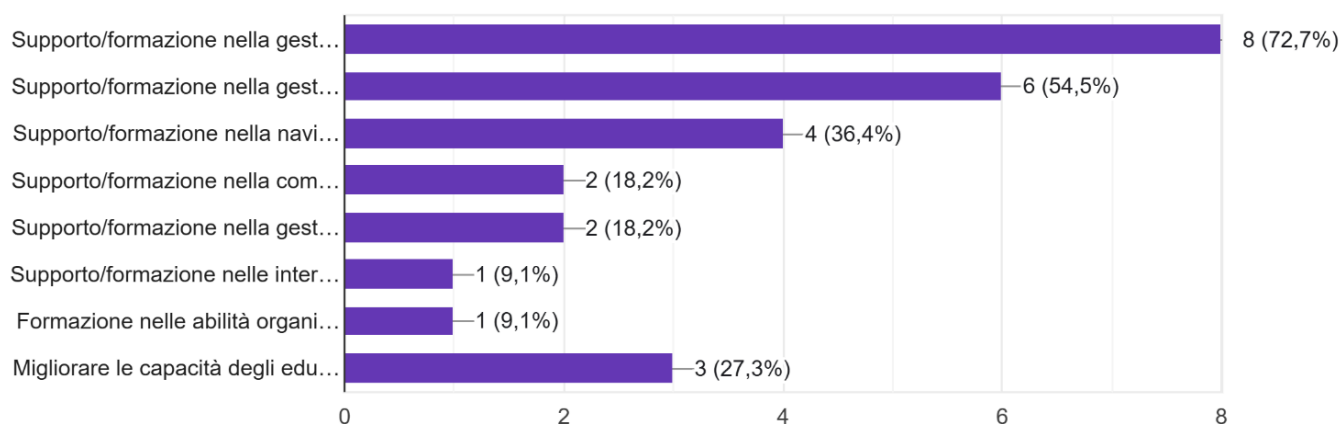
Support or training in understanding and managing sensory issues was also mentioned by 18.2% of participants, which reflects the ongoing need for tailored strategies to manage sensory overload in various settings. Another 18.2% indicated that they would benefit from assistance in managing their finances, underscoring the importance of financial literacy and management skills in fostering true independence.

In addition to these areas, 9.1% of participants identified the need for training in social interactions and organizational skills, emphasizing that social and planning skills are also vital components of successful independent living. Lastly, 27.3% of respondents felt that enhancing the skills of educators and trainers who work with autistic individuals would be beneficial, indicating that professional development for those providing support is just as critical in helping individuals with autism navigate independent living.

3.4. Italy

Quale delle seguenti opzioni ti aiuterebbe a sentirti più supportato/a vivendo in modo indipendente?

11 risposte



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

3.4.5 Conclusion

The data reveals that individuals with high-functioning autism face a range of challenges in independent living, with particular difficulties in managing social interactions, mental health, sensory overload, and daily activities. The need for comprehensive support is evident, especially in areas such as training for domestic tasks, mental health management, navigating services, and financial literacy. While some participants are capable of navigating aspects of independent living, many require tailored interventions and greater professional support to thrive. These findings highlight the importance of developing structured, multifaceted support systems to facilitate independence and improve the quality of life for individuals with high-functioning autism.

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Participants' Disclaimer

The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

3.5.1 Overall Description of Participants

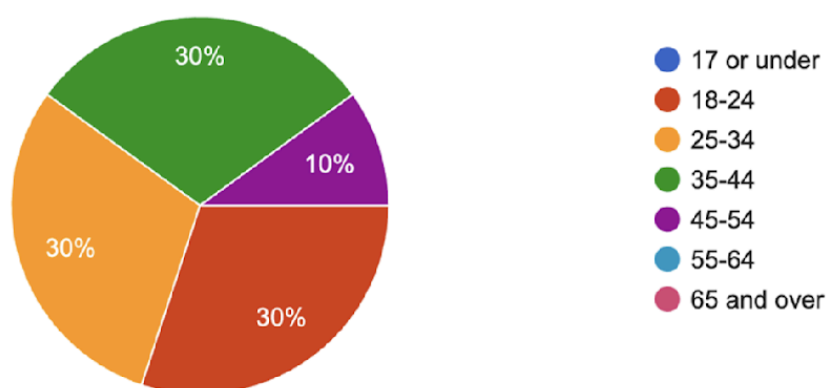
Ten adults voluntarily participated in this study. All of them identified as having high-functioning autism; this was the main criterion of participation. The participants were found using the "snow ball" principle, where two people with whom we have contact are sent to other people with autism that they know.

The age range of the participants

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 54. 30% were between 25 and 34, one-third (30%) were between 18 and 24, one-third (30%) were between 35 and 44, and one participant (10 %) was between 45 and 54. Details on the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants can be found in graph nr. 1.

Age

10 responses



Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Gender representation among the participants

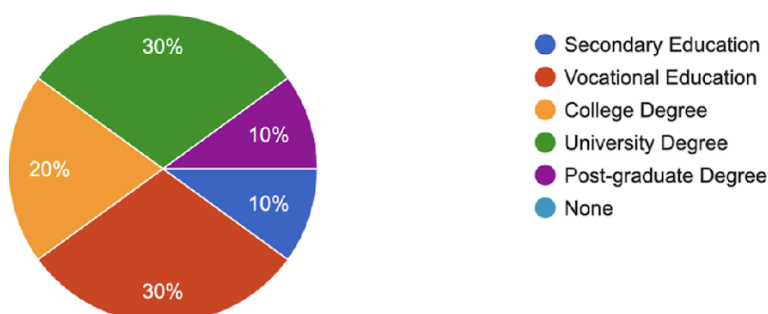
All the participants were male.

The educational levels of the participants

Most participants have completed higher levels of education, with university and vocational education being the most common. Therefore, 30% of the participants hold a university degree, 20% have completed secondary education, 10% have a postgraduate degree, 30% have vocational education, and 10% have secondary education.

Education

10 responses



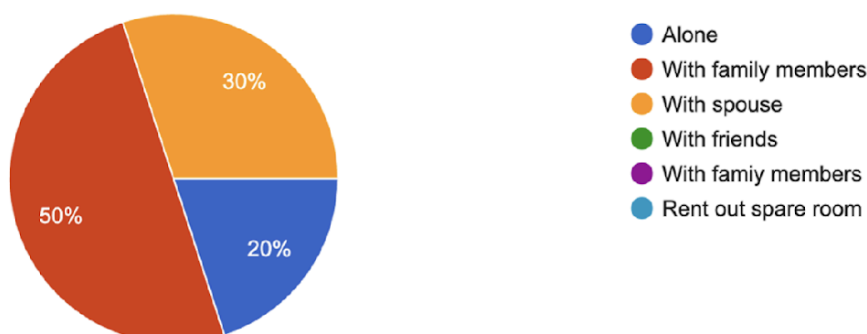
Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education Level of Participant

Living arrangements of the participants

Half of the participants (50 %) currently live with family members, 30% live with their spouse, 20% live alone.

Leaving status

10 responses



Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

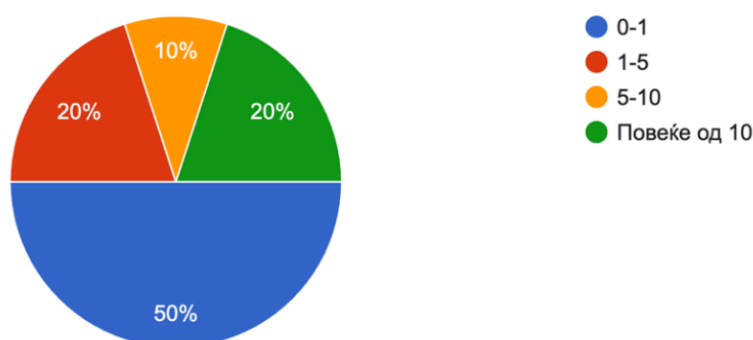
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Duration of living independently among the participants

The answers to this question suggest that half of the participants are relatively new to independent living, while the other half have more extended experience with it. The graph shows that 50% of participants have been living independently for 0-1 year, 20% of participants have been living independently for 1-5 years, 10% of participants have been living independently for 5-10 years, and 20% of participants have been living independently for more than 10 years.

Години на самостојно живеење

10 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

3.5.2 Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

For the current study, stress was defined as the feeling that someone's mind is constantly racing with too many thoughts and worries, making it hard to focus on anything else. Similarly, anxiety was defined as the constant worry about something terrible happening, even if there's no real danger.

Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

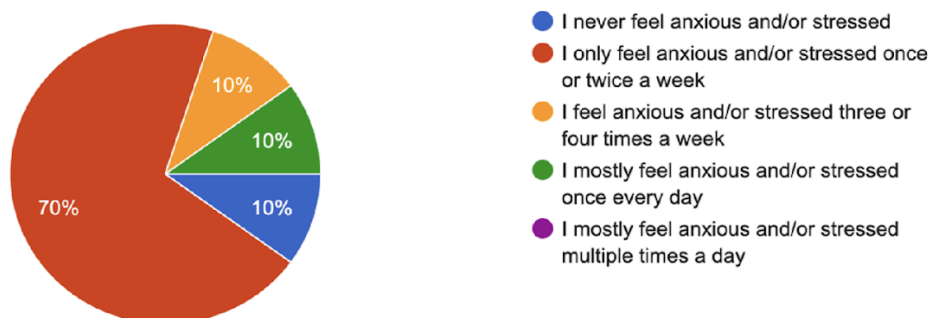
In the question 'Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life', participants had five options to choose. The data indicates that a significant majority (70%) of participants experience stress or anxiety on a weekly basis, while a smaller proportion of participants experience higher frequencies of stress or no stress at all. This could highlight a need for stress management strategies in our project, particularly for those facing frequent or daily stress. In the graph, we can see that 70% of participants feel anxious and/or stressed once or twice a week, 10% of participants feel anxious and/or stressed three or four times a week, 10% mostly feel anxious and/or stressed every day, 10% never feel anxious and/or stressed.

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Stress and Anxiety

Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

20 responses



Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

In the question 'How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?', the participants reported as follows: (30%) chose the option 'I do not feel stressed and/or anxious about living alone', the majority of them, (40%), mentioned 'I feel a little stressed and/or anxious about living alone', and 30% reported 'I feel very stressed and/or anxious about living alone'.

How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

20 responses



Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

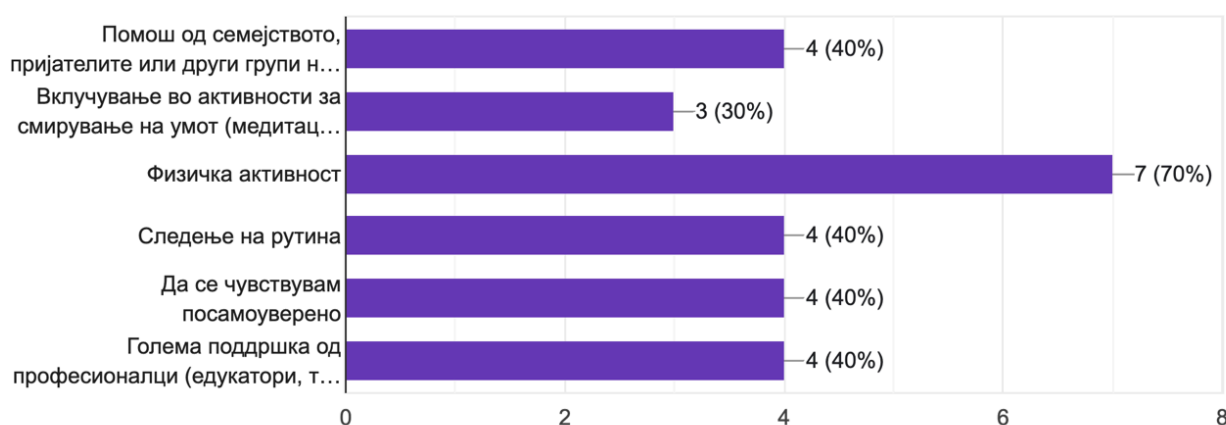
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants were given seven options to choose from coping strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety. Participants were allowed to select multiple answers, and they could add their own answers in 'other'. The most popular answers were "Physical activity" with , "Help from family, friends or other support groups" (40%), and other answers were presented with 30%.

Кое е твоето мислење, што од подолу наведеното би ти помогнало да се справиш со стрес /анксиозност?

10 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

3.5.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

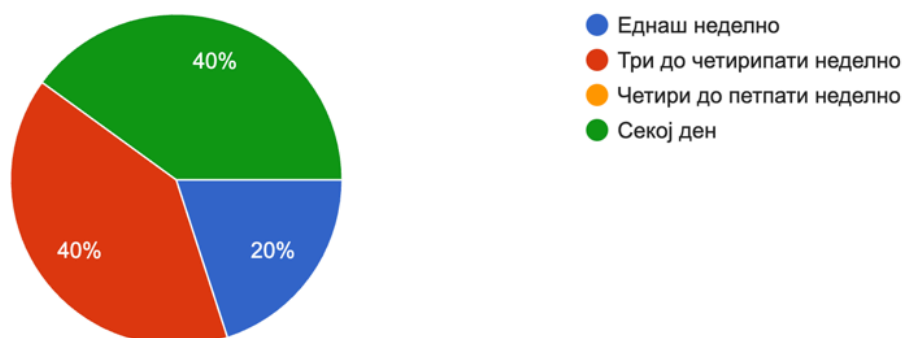
This part of the survey focused on social isolation or loneliness, which was defined as the feeling of being surrounded by people but still feeling isolated and disconnected, as if there is an invisible barrier preventing you from truly connecting with others.

Frequency of social interactions among the participants

The following question focused on the frequency of in-person social interactions of participants, ranging from "once per week" to "every day". The results showed that almost half (40 %) ...

Колку често си во контакт со други луѓе (лично)?

10 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

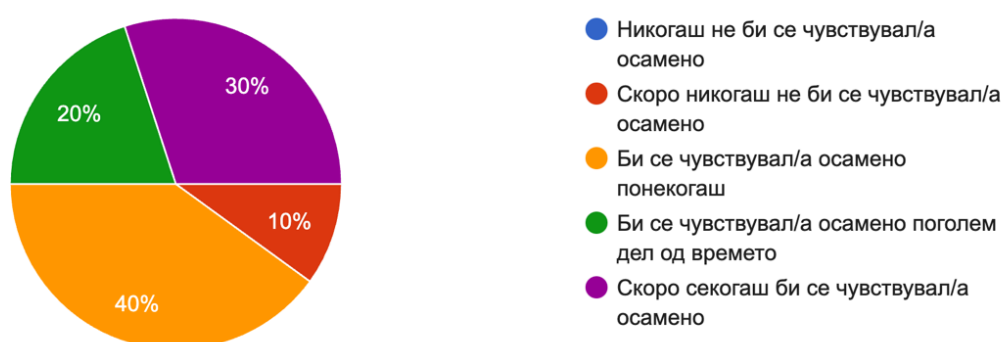
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

To the question, “Do you or would you feel isolated/ lonely when living alone without support?” Five options ranged from “never” to “almost always”. 10% reported “I would almost never feel lonely”, the majority of them (40%) reported “I would feel lonely some of the time”, (20%) reported “I would feel lonely most of the time,” and (30%) reported “I would almost never feel lonely” when living alone without support.

Дали се чувствуваш или би се чувствувал изолирано/осамено кога би живеел самостојно без поддршка?

10 responses



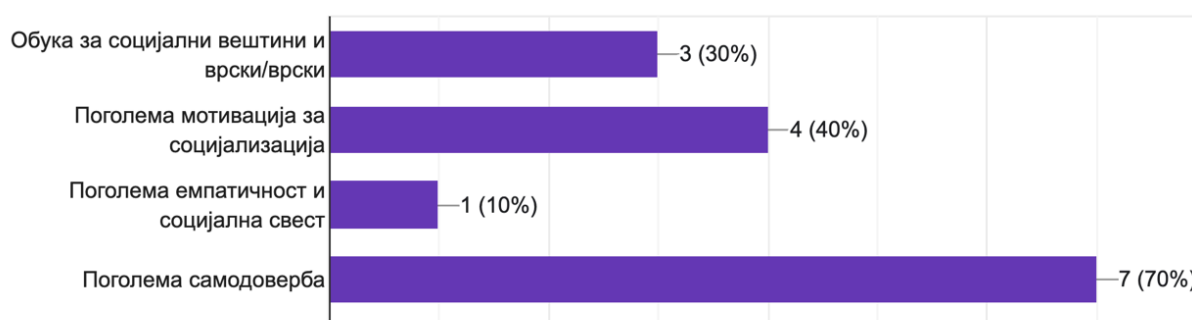
Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

To the question “Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?”, 30% answered “Training on social skills and interactions”, 40% answered “Greater motivation to socialise”, 1% answered “Greater empathy and social awareness” and 70% “Greater self-confidence”.

Кое од подолу наведеното би ти помогнало да се чувствуваш помалку изолирано/осамено?

10 responses



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

3.5.4 Measurement of Sensory Overload

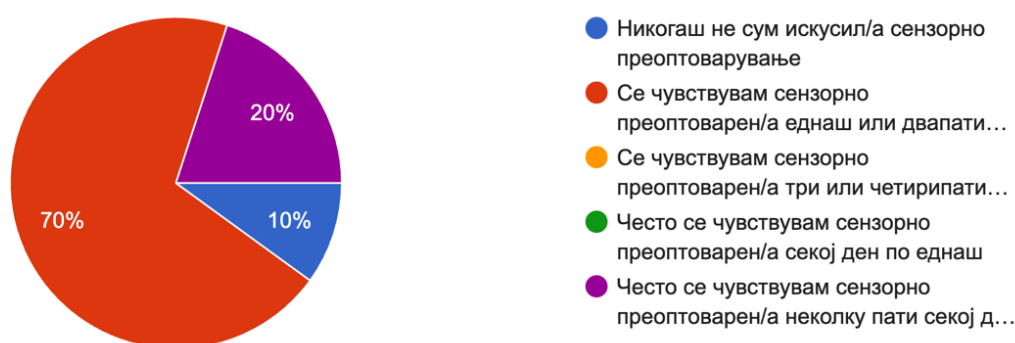
Experiencing sensory overload was described as feeling like being in a room where everyone is watching you, the light is too bright, every sound is too loud and every touch is too intense, all at the same time. This feeling can make it difficult to concentrate, interact with others, or even perform simple tasks until the overload subsides.

Incidents of sensory overload in daily life

The participants were asked the following question: "Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?". 70% reported "experiencing sensory overload once or twice a week", 20% "multiple times every day" and (10%) answered "I never experience sensory overload".

Дали воопшто си искусил сензорно преоптоварување во домот или при други активности во твојот секојдневен живот?

10 responses



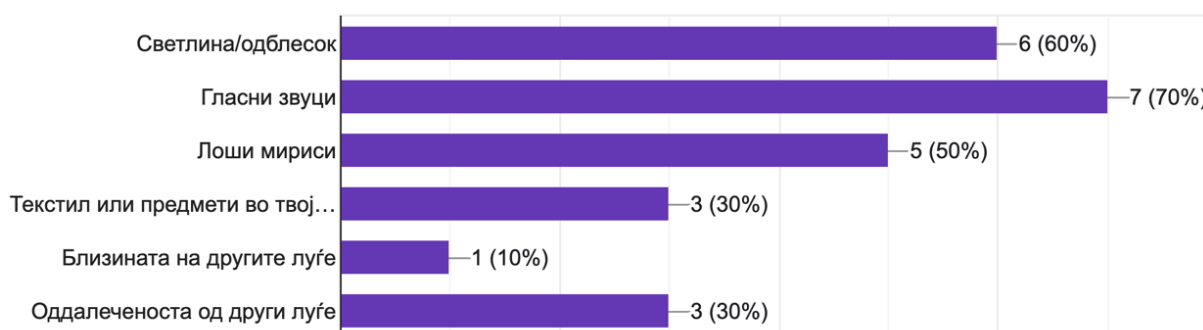
Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

Participants were able to select as many answers as they liked. The majority of participants (70%) chose "Loud noises", 50% "Bad smells", 30% "Brightness", 60% "Being away from other people" and 1% "Texture of objects around their living space (different clothing materials, bed sheets, etc.)" and 30% answered nothing.

Доколку одговори дека си искусил/а сензорна преоптовареност во претходното прашање, дали би било подобро доколку би можел/а да г...тролираш следното? (Означи го секој одговор)

10 responses



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Difficulties in accessing public services

In the following question, participants were asked whether they find it challenging to navigate essential public services such as healthcare, bank and financial, insurance etc. Out of the 3 options, (50%) responded with "I sometimes find it difficult to use these services and they make me feel a little stressed", 30% responded with "I find it very difficult to use these services and they make me feel very stressed" and 20% responded "I find it easy to access these services and they don't make me feel stressed".

Дали сметаш дека се соочуваш со придизвик при користењето на значајни јавни услуги (здраствена заштита, банарски и финансиски услуги, осигурување и др.)?

10 responses



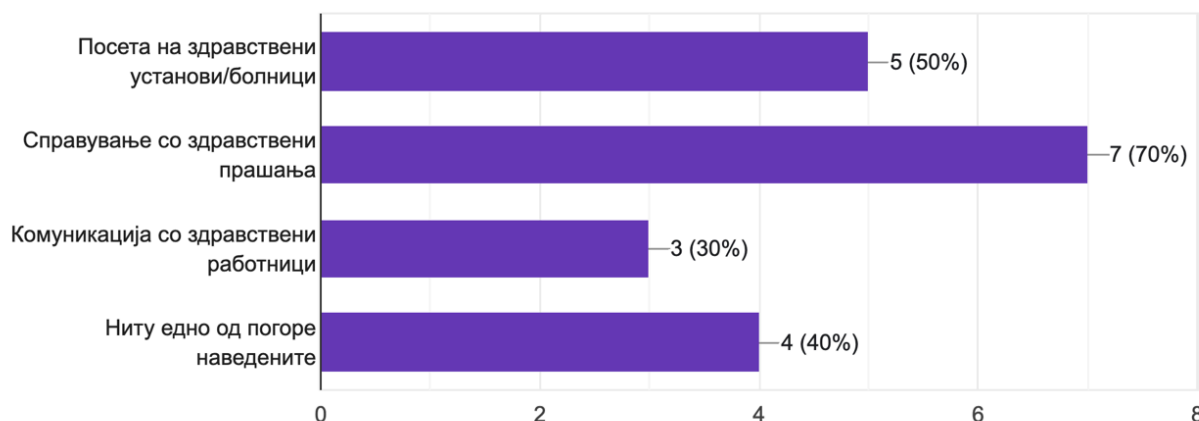
Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. Participants were able to choose all answers that applied to them. The results yielded that the majority of participants (50%) find "visiting medical practices/hospitals, and all other answers yielded 70% ("coping with the health issue", 30% "interacting with a health professional", and 40% "don't find".

Кое од следните сценарија ти претставува потешкотија да се соочиш кога е твоето здравје или здравствена услуга во прашање ? (Означи го секој одговор)

10 responses



Graph 15: Visual Representation of the common issues encountered during health crisis.

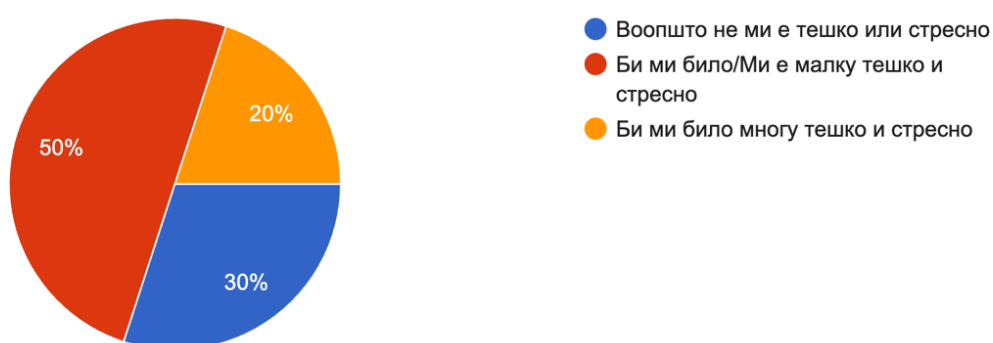
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Participants were asked how they felt about managing everyday home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.), and whether it would be difficult or stressful. Participants had 3 options to choose from, ranging from “I do not find this difficult or stressful at all” to “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”. 50% of the participants reported the middle option: “I find this a little difficult and/or stressful”, 30% “I do not find this difficult or stressful”, and 20% “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”.

Дали имаш чувство дека самостојното справување со секојдневните домашни активности (како чистење, здрава исхрана, пазарување и сл.) е/би било тешко или стресно?

10 responses



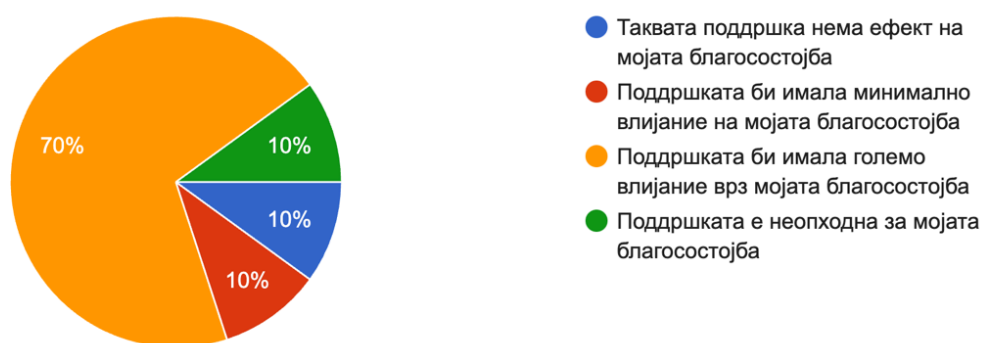
Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

Impact of support from professionals on well-being

This question investigated how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals were to well-being. 10% reported this having “A minor effect on their wellbeing”, 10% reported “This is essential for their well-being”, 70% having “A great effect on my well-being” and 10% reported that “This support has no effect” on their well-being.

Те молиме посочи колку поддршката од едукатори, терапевти и други професионалци би ти била корисна за твоја целокупна благосостојба?

10 responses



Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

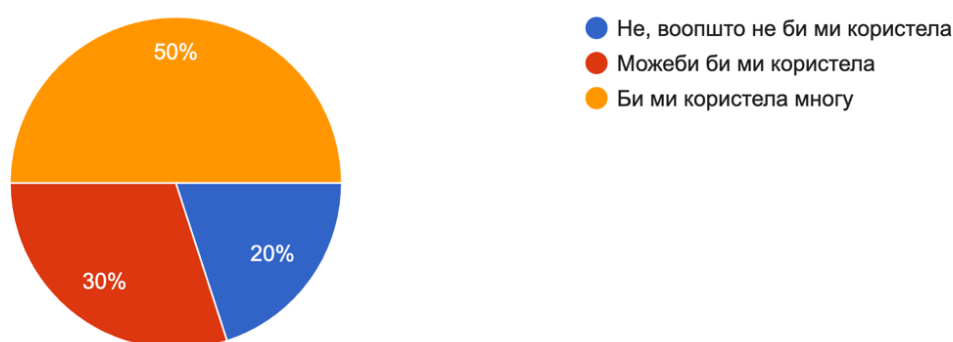
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

Participants were asked whether they felt they would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently. Out of the three given options, almost half of them, 50% responded "Yes", 30% responded "Somewhat" and 20% responded "No" to benefitting from greater support from professionals. Role of autism awareness in effective support.

Дали имаш чувство дека би ти користела поголема поддршка од едукатори, терапевти и други професионалци со цел да живееш самостојно?

10 responses



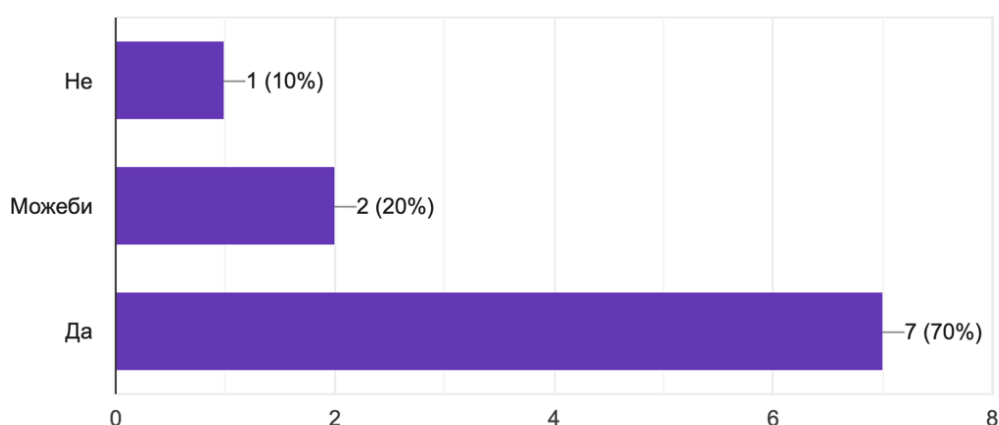
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

Role of autism awareness in effective support

Further to the previous question, participants were asked to what extent a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support. Most of them 70% responded 'Yes', followed by 20% who answered 'Somewhat', and lastly 10% responded 'No'.

Дали имаш чувство дека поголема свест и разбирање за аутизмот би помогнало професионалците да ти обезбедат поефективна поддршка?

10 responses



Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.

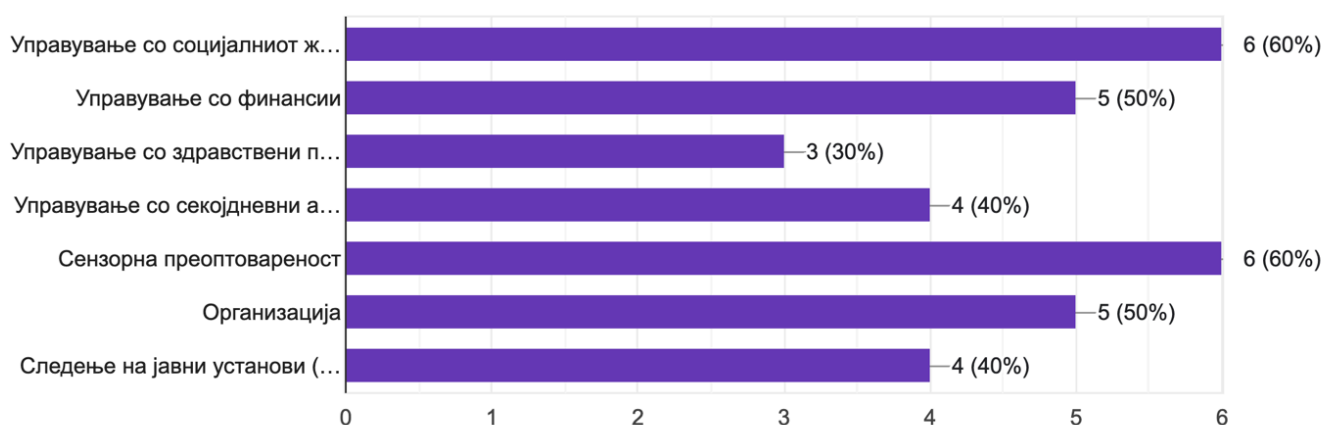
3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Challenges in various aspects of independent living

This question focused on various areas of independent living that participants felt they struggle/ would struggle with. They were able to choose as many of the options as they wanted. The most popular was “managing social life and interactions”. The second most popular responses 50% were: “Managing finances”, 30% “managing mental health (stress, anxiety, etc.)”, and 30% “Navigating Services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. 30 % reported struggling with “Managing daily life activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”, 60% reported with “Sensory Overload”, and 50% with “Organisation”.

Со кое од следните области од самостојно живеење сметаш дека ти претставуваат/би ти претставувале потешкотија

10 responses



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

Additional barriers to independent living

Adapted sensory spaces at work, education according to my interests, personal assistance, paying bills and communication with people.

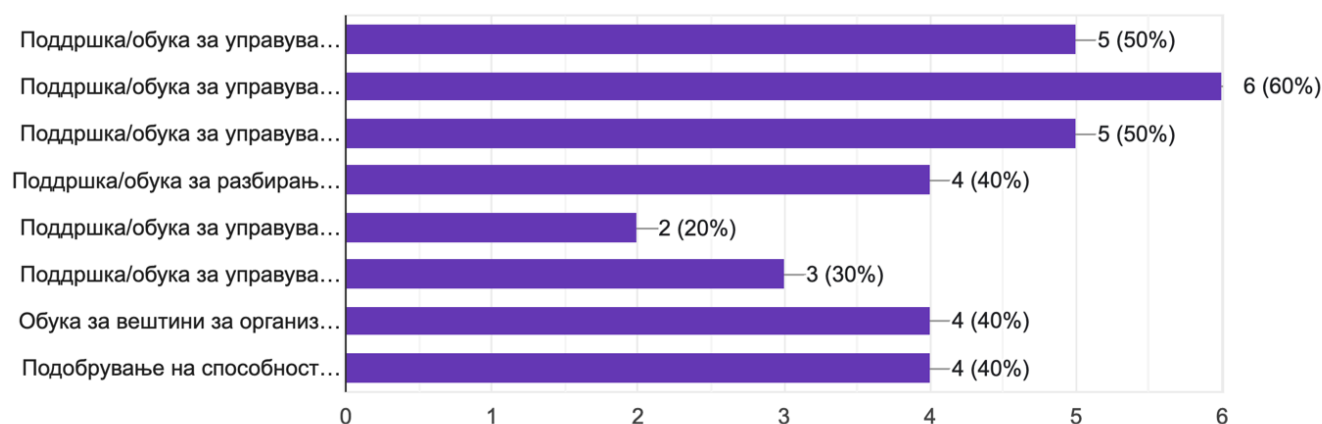
Support systems for independent living

The following question investigated additional support systems which participants felt would help with their independent living. 8 options were provided, of which participants could choose as many as they wanted. The most popular answer, with 60 % electability, was “Support/training in navigating complex services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. The second most popular answer, with 50%, was “Support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health”. The third most selected answer, with 50%, was “Improving the abilities of educators/trainers to train autistic people in the above fields”. Next, with 40%, was “Support/training in managing finances”. With 30% was “Support/training in managing everyday home activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”, 40 % electability were “Support/training in social interactions and social skills” and “Organisational skills training”. Lastly, with 20%, was “Support/training in understanding sensory issues/overload and how to manage them”.

3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Кое од подолу наведеното би ти обезбедило поголема поддршка при самостојно живеење?

10 responses



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the options participants think will help them feel more supported when living independently.

Further support required for independent living

“Meeting other people that live alone”; “Successful examples”, Support from third person and I need love.

3.5.5 Overall Conclusion

In summary, most study participants are males aged between 18 and 54. All of them have completed school education, with many pursuing further studies. Most continue to live with their families, while others live independently, with partners, or with support. Participants reported feeling stressed once or twice a week, with some expressing mild stress over living alone. The top three stress management strategies highlighted by participants include support from groups, physical exercise, and additional professional assistance. Most engage in daily social interactions, yet most believe they would feel lonely living alone without support. Participants suggested that training in social skills and communication, encouragement to socialize, and increased empathy and understanding from others could help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Sensory overload, primarily caused by loud noises, occurs two to four times weekly for most participants. Many find accessing public services, particularly medical facilities, challenging and struggle with managing daily household tasks independently. Opinions on the influence of professional support on well-being are mixed, but enhanced support appears to benefit independent living. Participants emphasised the need for greater autism awareness among professionals to provide effective support. Key challenges to independent living include managing social interactions, finances, mental health, and navigating services. Notably, two participants cited their parents as barriers in response to an open-ended question. Finally, crucial support systems for independent living identified by participants include guidance on navigating complex services, managing stress and mental health, and improving educators' ability to teach skills like financial management and handling daily tasks.

3.6. Ireland

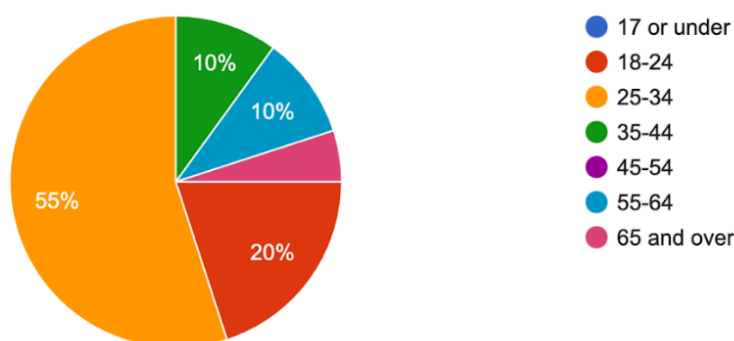
The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

3.6.1. Overall Description of Participants

The majority of participants (75%) are young adults between 18 and 34 years old, indicating that independent living is a pressing concern primarily among individuals transitioning into adulthood and early stages of independent life.

Age

20 responses



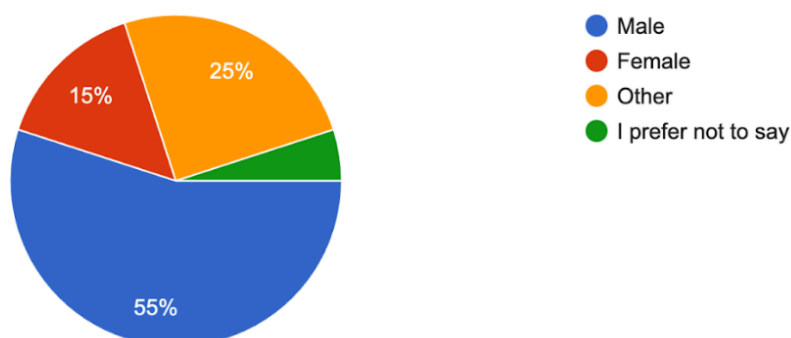
Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

Gender representation among the participants

A higher proportion of male participants reflects the general diagnosis rates of autism, which tend to be higher in males. However, the representation of females and non-binary individuals underscores the importance of inclusive approaches that address diverse gender-specific needs.

Gender

20 responses



Graph 2: Visual Representation of Gender representation among the participants

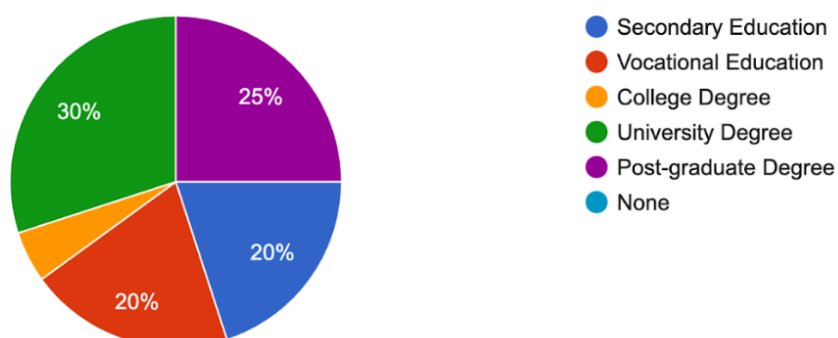
3.6. Ireland

Educational levels of the participants

A significant portion of respondents have attained higher education degrees, suggesting that despite educational achievements, autistic individuals may still face substantial challenges in achieving independent living, highlighting gaps between educational support and life skills development.

Education

20 responses



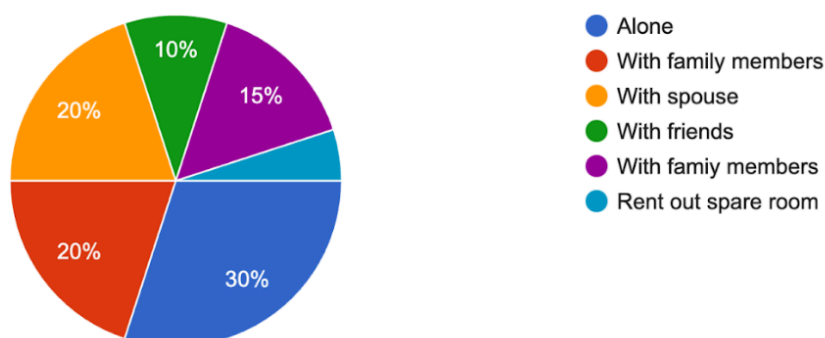
Graph 3: Visual Representation of Educational levels of the participants

Living arrangements of the participants

Less than a third of respondents were currently living alone, indicating potential challenges or barriers in transitioning to independent living. The largest group of respondents were those that lived with family, which may reflect the struggles of autistic people to live as independent adults.

Living Status

20 responses



Graph 4: Visual Representation of living status of the participants

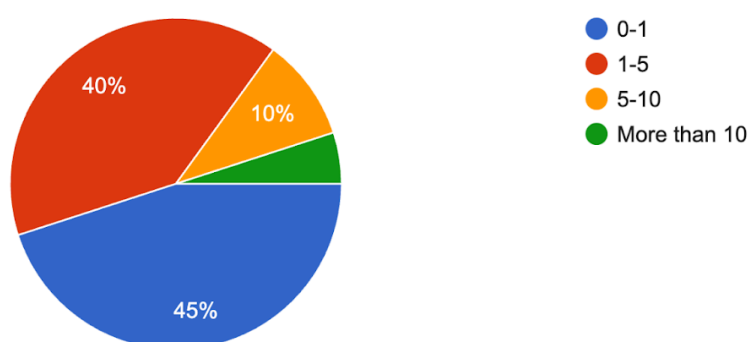
3.6. Ireland

Duration of living independently among the participants

The data shows that a significant portion of respondents have experience living alone, with 40% having lived independently for 1-5 years, and 5% for over 5 years. This indicates that independent living is a reality for many autistic adults, though it comes with varying levels of experience and associated challenges. The most significant portion had never or had just started living independently (0-1 years), which may be consistent with the standard rates of independent living for mainstream young adults.

Years of Living Alone

20 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of duration of living independently among the participants

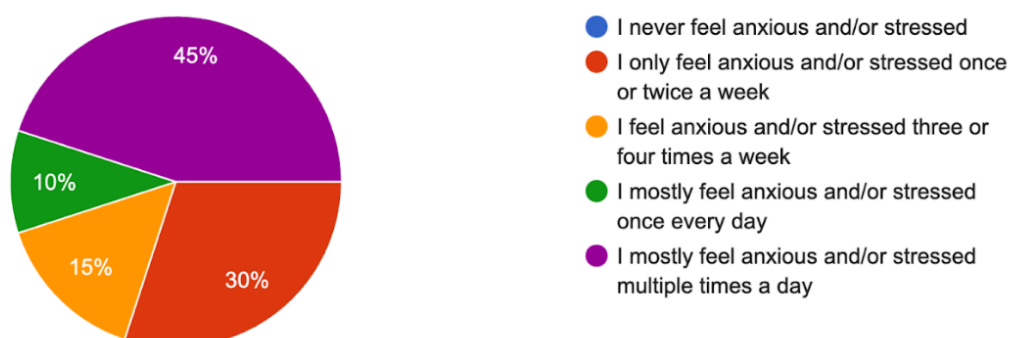
3.6.2. Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

This data shows that nearly half of the respondents (45%) experience stress and anxiety multiple times a day, indicating a high level of daily distress. Another significant portion (30%) experiences stress or anxiety less frequently, about once or twice a week. The remaining respondents fall somewhere in between, with 15% feeling stressed three or four times a week and 10% feeling anxious or stressed once a day.

Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

20 responses



Graph 6: Visual Representation of duration of participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

3.6. Ireland

This data shows that while a significant portion of respondents (45%) feel only a little stressed about the prospect of living independently, there is still a substantial group (25%) who feel much stressed about it. Additionally, 30% of respondents do not feel stressed about living alone, which may indicate confidence in their ability to manage or existing support structures that they rely on.

How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

20 responses



Graph 7: Visual Representation of anxiety levels of participants

Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Help from family, friends, or other support groups was the most commonly cited strategy, with 85% of respondents identifying it as a potential means to deal with stress and anxiety. This highlights the significant role that close personal relationships and support networks play in helping individuals manage their mental health. Social support can improve the ability of adults with autism to live independently by providing a coping mechanism for stress and anxiety. Feeling more confident was identified by 65% of respondents as a key factor in managing stress and anxiety. This suggests that building self-esteem and self-efficacy should be an important part of any support program. Confidence helps individuals feel more in control of their lives, which can mitigate the impact of stressors.

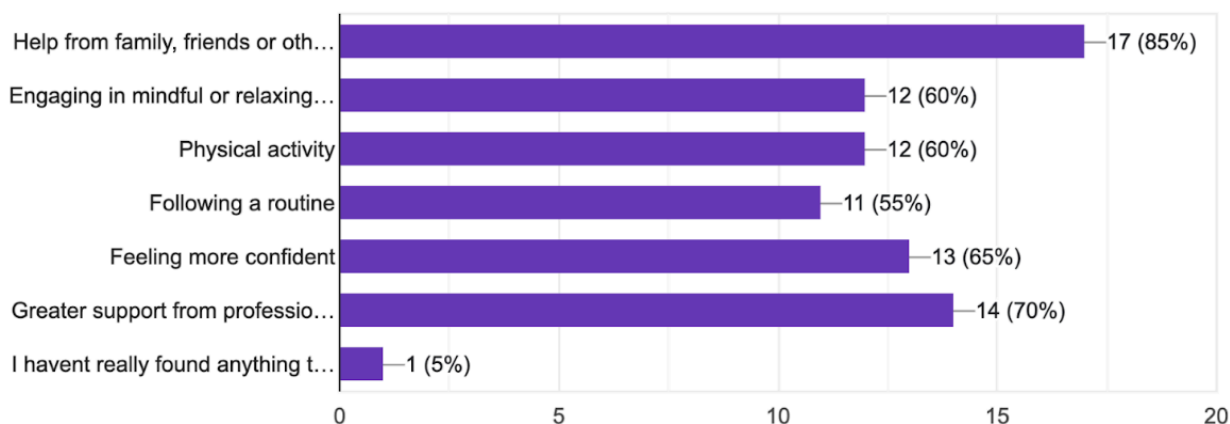
Engaging in mindful or relaxing activities and physical activity were each cited by 60% of respondents. These strategies are well-known for their effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety. Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, help in grounding and calming the mind, while physical exercise is beneficial in reducing stress hormones and boosting mood through the release of endorphins.

Following a routine was highlighted by 55% of respondents. The structure and predictability that routines provide can be particularly comforting for autistic individuals, helping to reduce anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. Routines also help in organizing daily tasks, making them more manageable and less overwhelming.

3.6. Ireland

Which of the following do you feel would help you to deal with stress/anxiety?

20 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

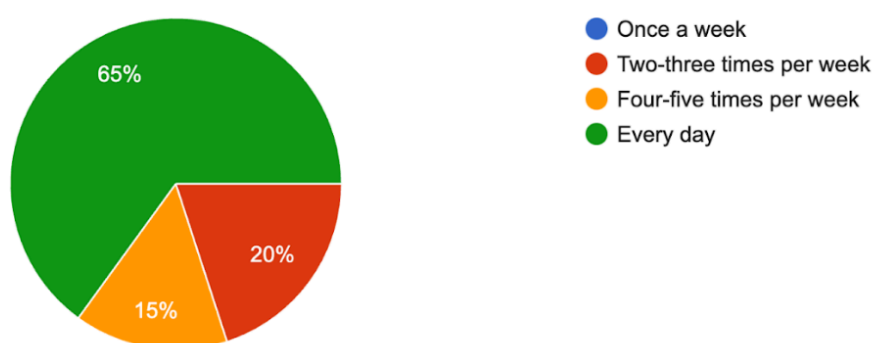
3.6.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

Frequency of Social Interactions Among the Participants

The data reveals a strong inclination toward daily social interactions, with 65% of respondents engaging with others every day. This frequent social engagement highlights the importance of regular social contact for maintaining mental well-being among autistic individuals. However, despite this frequent interaction, there is still a significant concern about loneliness when living

How often do you interact with others (in person)?

20 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of frequency of social interactions among the participants

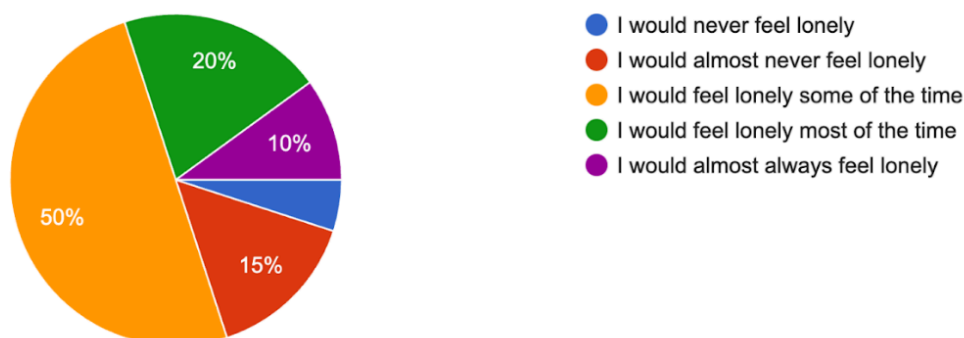
Perceived Isolation and Loneliness in Independent Living

Half of the respondents (50%) expect to feel lonely some of the time when living alone, indicating that even with regular social interactions, the risk of isolation remains high. A further 20% fear feeling lonely most of the time, which underscores the emotional challenges that come with independent living. Only 5% of participants would never feel lonely when living independently, highlighting that social support is critical for adults with autism.

3.6. Ireland

Do you or would you feel isolated/lonely when living alone without support?

20 responses



Graph 10: Visual Representation of frequency of Perceived Isolation and Loneliness in Independent Living

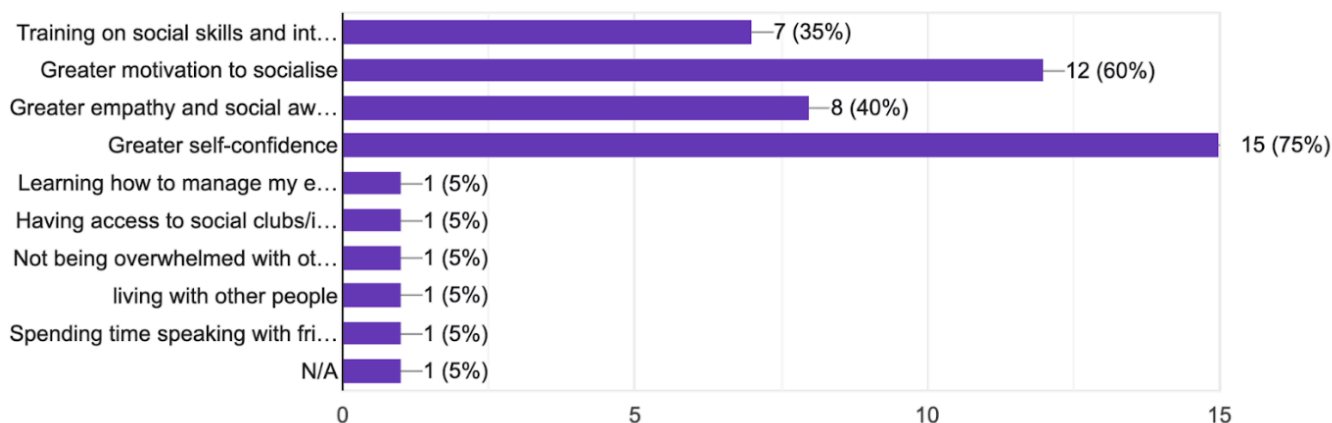
Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

In terms of mitigating loneliness, the most effective strategies identified by respondents include increasing self-confidence (75%) and motivation to socialize (60%). These responses suggest that internal factors, such as self-esteem and the drive to engage with others, play crucial roles in reducing feelings of isolation. Additionally, the need for greater empathy and social awareness (40%) and social skills training (35%) indicates that external support and skill-building are also vital.

Interestingly, 20% of respondents mentioned practical solutions like access to social clubs or living with others, which may indicate that these are seen as less effective compared to psychological and social skill improvements. However, most of these focused on having access to support groups.

Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?

20 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of frequency of social interactions among the participants

3.6. Ireland

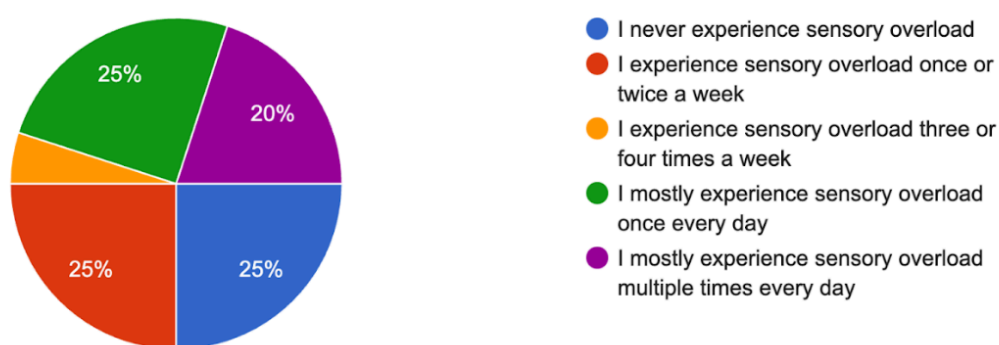
3.6.4. Measurement of Sensory Overload

Incidents of sensory overload in daily life

The responses to the experience of incidences of sensory overload are mixed, with 50% of participants experiencing sensory overload once or more a day. This may indicate that autistic adults could be better equipped to make changes in their environment to reduce the likelihood of experiencing sensory overload. 25% expressed that they never experience sensory overload, and 45% experience it 1-4 times per week. It is important to note that sensory overload can be particularly difficult to recognise among people with autism (>>>).

Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?

20 responses



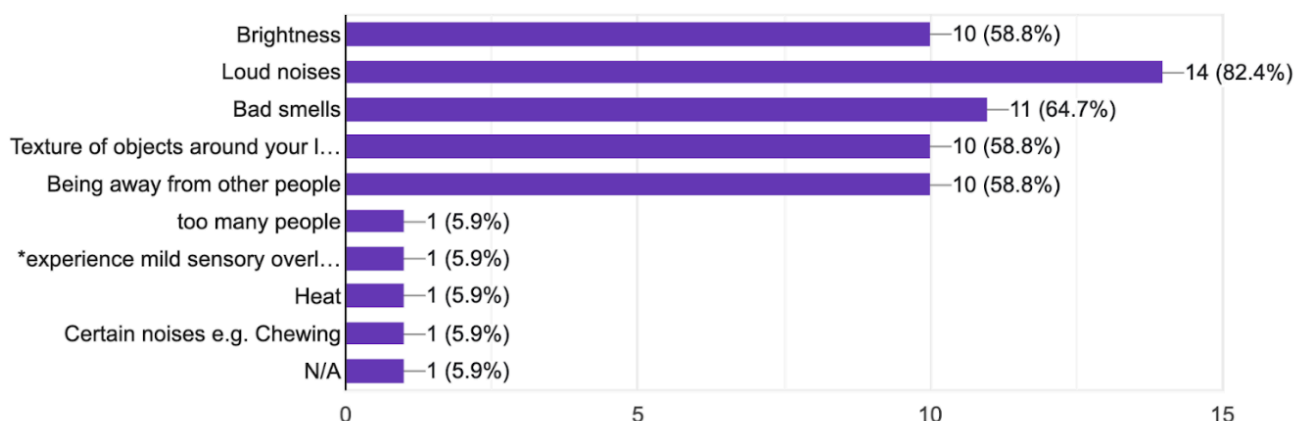
Graph 12: Visual Representation of incidents of sensory overload in daily life

Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

The responses highlight that loud noises and bad smells are the two most significant triggers for sensory overload among the survey participants. This suggests that environmental control measures focusing on reducing or mitigating these sensory inputs could greatly improve their ability to manage daily tasks independently. Moreover, brightness, texture, and being away from other people are also prominent concerns, indicating that personal space and environmental customisation are critical for creating a comfortable living environment.

If you answered that you experience sensory overload in the last question, would it be improved by being able to control the following? (Tick all that apply)

17 responses



Graph 13: Visual Representation of preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

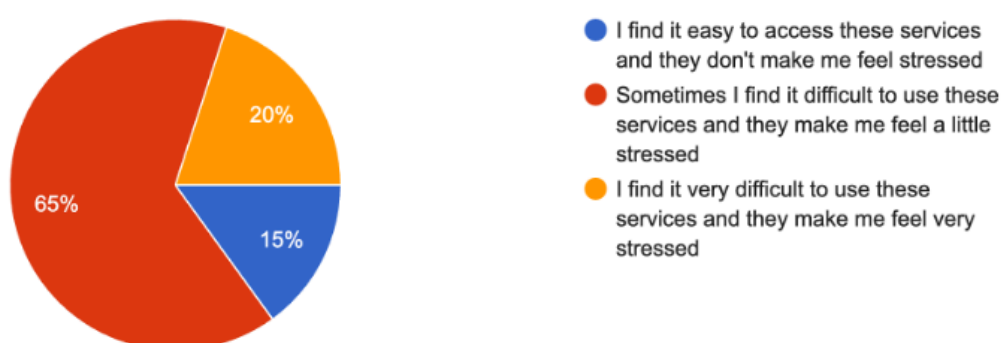
3.6. Ireland

Difficulties in accessing public services

The results suggest that accessing essential public services is a significant source of difficulty and stress for autistic adults. The majority of respondents (65%) face considerable challenges, which suggests a gap in the accessibility or user-friendliness of these services for individuals with autism. This might point to barriers such as complex communication methods, overwhelming sensory environments, or difficulties in understanding bureaucratic processes. Meanwhile, a smaller portion of the population finds the process somewhat easier, indicating a possible variation in personal coping mechanisms or external support available.

Do you find it challenging to navigate essential public services (healthcare, bank and financial services, insurance, etc.)?

20 responses



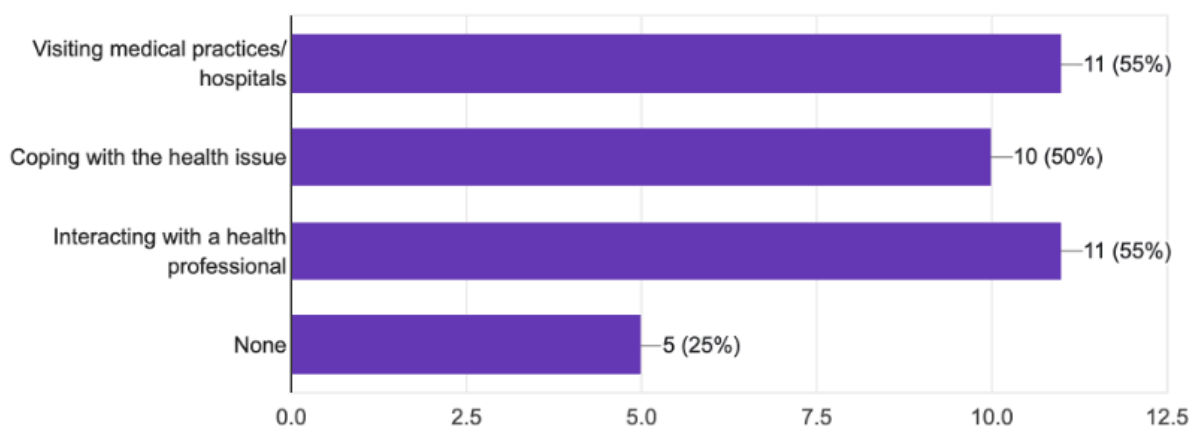
Graph 14: Visual Representation of Difficulties in accessing public services

Common issues encountered during health crises

The results suggest that visiting medical practices/hospitals and interacting with health professionals are the two most challenging aspects for autistic adults when dealing with health issues. This could be due to sensory overload, communication difficulties, or anxiety in clinical environments. Additionally, coping with the health issue itself is also a significant challenge, indicating that managing the symptoms and stress of illness is a barrier. A smaller proportion (25%) of respondents reported no difficulties, which may reflect either individual resilience or the presence of adequate support systems.

Which of the following scenarios do you find difficult to deal with when you experience a health issue? (tick all that apply)

20 responses



Graph 15: Visual Representation of Common issues encountered during health crises

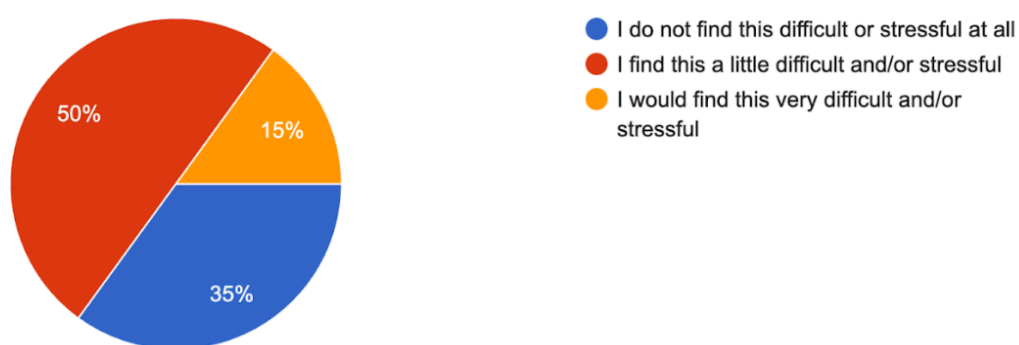
3.6. Ireland

Stress and difficulty in daily home management

The responses suggest that while a significant portion of respondents (35%) do not struggle with managing daily activities, the majority (65%) experience varying degrees of difficulty. Half of the participants find it somewhat challenging, which may point to specific obstacles such as executive functioning issues, sensory sensitivities, or a lack of external support. The 15% who find these activities very difficult likely face more profound barriers in maintaining independent living without additional assistance or accommodations.

Do you feel that managing every day home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.) is/would be difficult or stressful?

20 responses



Graph 17: Visual Representation of Stress and difficulty levels in daily home management

Impact of support from professionals on well-being

The responses show that a majority (60%) of participants find support from educators, therapists, and other professionals to be either essential or to have a substantial positive effect on their well-being. This underscores the critical role that professional support plays in improving the lives of autistic adults, potentially helping them navigate everyday challenges, manage sensory overload, and achieve better mental health. However, 40% of respondents find that this support has only minor or no effect on their well-being, which could point to gaps in the effectiveness or relevance of the services they are receiving.

Please indicate how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals is to your overall well-being?

20 responses



Graph 18: Visual Representation of the Impact of support from professionals on well-being

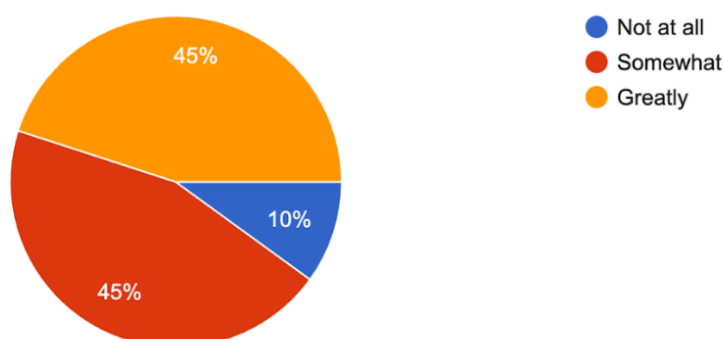
3.6. Ireland

Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

The results reveal that the majority of respondents (90%) believe they would benefit, either somewhat or greatly, from increased support to live independently. This highlights a significant need for expanded or more personalized services to help autistic adults manage the challenges of independent living. The equal split between "greatly" and "somewhat" suggests that while some individuals need extensive assistance, others may require more moderate levels of support. Only a small percentage (10%) do not feel that additional support is necessary, possibly due to already effective coping mechanisms or adequate support systems in place.

Do you feel you would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently?

20 responses



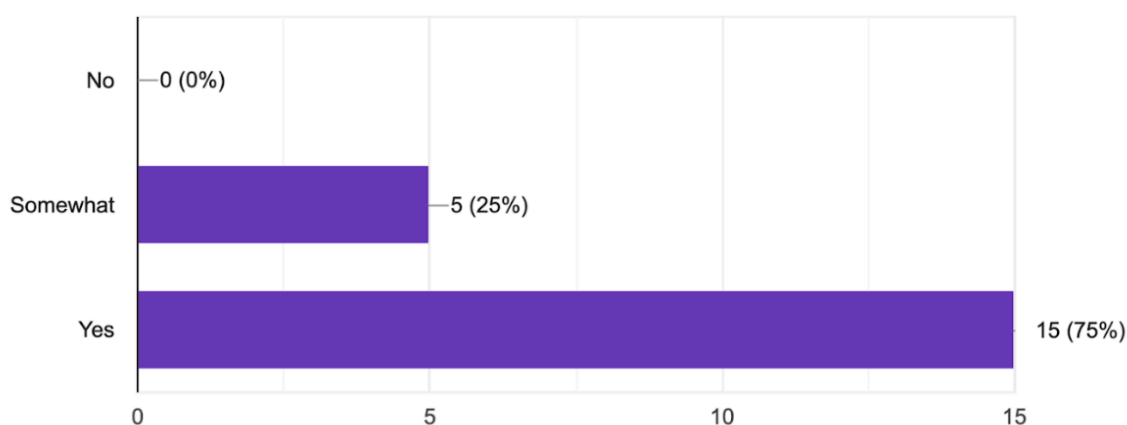
Graph 19: Visual Representation of the Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

Role of autism awareness in effective support

The overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) strongly feel that professionals could provide better support with a deeper understanding of autism, suggesting that many current services may lack the necessary insight into autistic needs and challenges. A further 25% believe that greater awareness would somewhat help, highlighting that even incremental improvements in understanding could enhance support. The absence of any "No" responses indicates a consensus among respondents that professionals need to improve their awareness of autism to deliver more effective care and assistance.

Do you feel that a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support?

20 responses



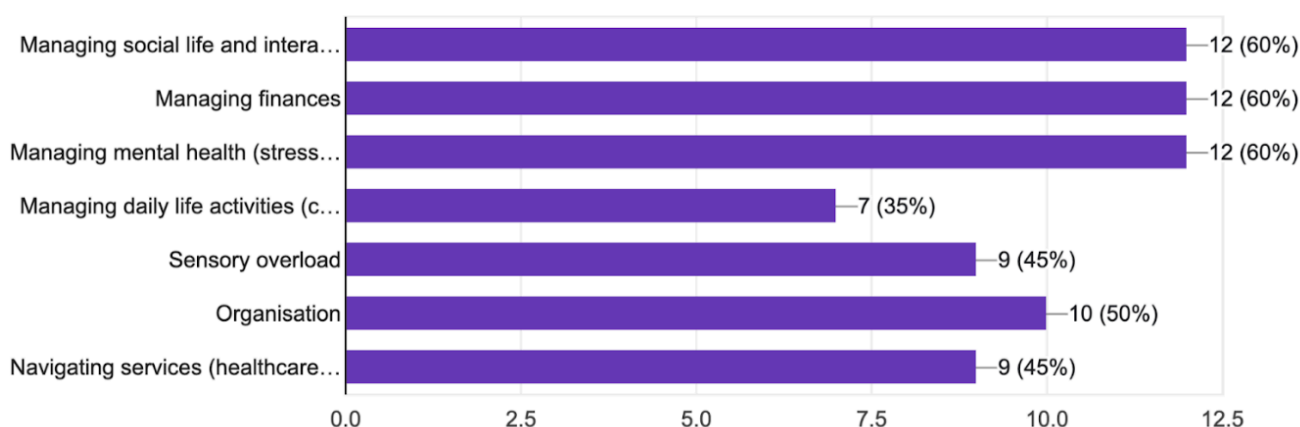
Graph 20: Visual Representation of the Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

3.6. Ireland

Challenges in various aspects of independent living

The top areas of struggle—managing social life, finances, and mental health—are consistent among 60% of respondents, reflecting a widespread challenge in handling social interactions, financial responsibilities, and emotional well-being. Difficulties with organization and sensory overload are also significant, with 45-50% of respondents identifying these as areas of concern. Navigating services, often a complex task due to bureaucratic procedures and communication challenges, is similarly challenging for a large portion of respondents.

Which of the following areas of independent living do you feel you struggle/would struggle with
20 responses

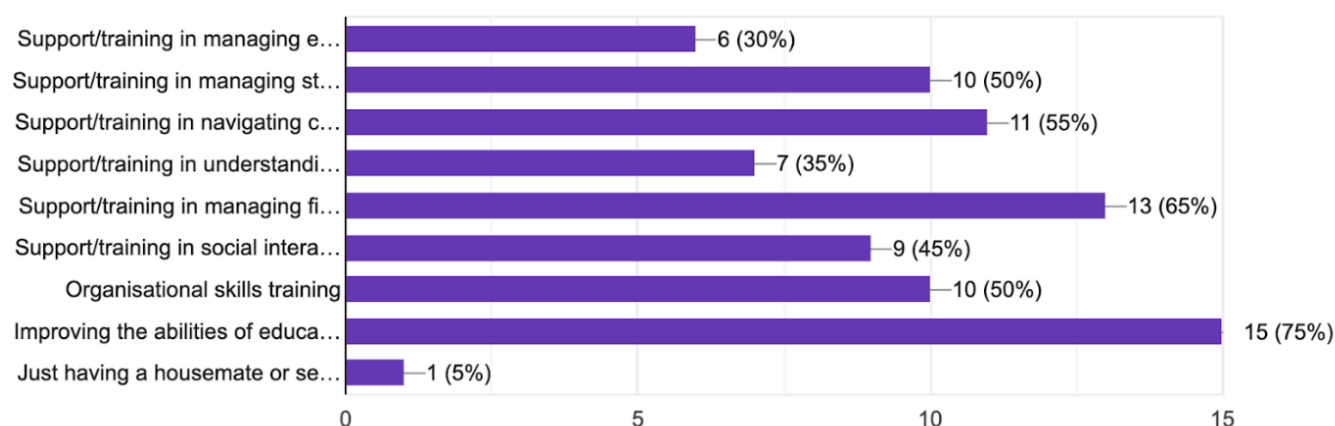


Graph 21: Visual Representation of Challenges in various aspects of independent living

Support systems for independent living

The most significant factor, with 75% of respondents agreeing, is the need to improve the abilities of educators, therapists, and other support professionals. This suggests a perception that better-trained professionals could provide more effective support, highlighting the critical role that professionals play in fostering independent living. Financial management is also a prominent concern, with 65% of respondents needing support in this area. Similarly, navigating services, managing stress, and improving organizational skills are key areas where respondents seek assistance, which aligns with the earlier responses about struggles in independent living.

Which of the following would help you to feel more supported when living independently?
20 responses



Graph 22: Visual Representation of Support systems for independent living



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Years of Independent Living

- Which of the following do you feel would help you to deal with stress/anxiety?
- Help from family, friends or other support groups
Engaging in mindful or relaxing activities
Physical activity
Following a routine
Feeling more confident
Greater support from professionals (educators, therapists, trainers, etc.)
- How often do you interact with others (in person)?
- Once a week
Two-three times per week
Four-five times per week
Every day
- How often do you interact with others (in person)? I would never feel lonely.
I would almost never feel lonely
I would feel lonely some of the time
I would feel lonely most of the time
I would almost always feel lonely
- Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?
Training on social skills and interactions
Greater motivation to socialise
Greater empathy and social awareness
Greater self-confidence
- Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?
- I never experience sensory overload
I experience sensory overload once or twice a week
I experience sensory overload three or four times a week
I mostly experience sensory overload once every day
I mostly experience sensory overload multiple times every day
- If you answered that you experience sensory overload in the last question, would it be improved by being able to control the following? (Tick all that apply)
Brightness
Loud noises
Bad smells
Texture of objects around your living space
Being away from other people
Nothing
- Do you find it challenging to navigate essential public services (healthcare, bank and financial services, insurance, etc.)?
I find it easy to access these services and they don't make me feel stressed
Sometimes I find it difficult to use these services and they make me feel a little stressed
I find it very difficult to use these services and they make me feel very stressed
- Which of the following scenarios do you find difficult to deal with when you experience a health issue? (tick all that apply)
Visiting medical practices/hospitals
Coping with the health issue
Interacting with a health professional
None
- Do you feel that managing everyday home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.) is/would be difficult or stressful?
I do not find this difficult or stressful at all
I find this a little difficult and/or stressful
I would find this very difficult and/or stressful
- Please indicate how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals is to your overall well-being?
This support has no effect on my well-being
This has a minor effect on my well-being
This has a great effect on my well-being
This is essential to my well-being
- Do you feel you would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently? Not at all
Somewhat
Greatly

BIBLIOGRAPHY



- Do you feel that a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support?
NoSomewhatYes
- Which of the following areas of independent living do you feel you struggle/would struggle with?Managing social life and interactionsManaging financesManaging mental health (stress, anxiety, etc.)Managing daily life activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)Sensory overloadOrganisationNavigating services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)
- Which of the following would help you to feel more supported when living independently?Support/training in managing every day home activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)Support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental healthSupport/training in navigating complex services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)Support/training in understanding sensory issues/overload and how to manage themSupport/training in managing financesSupport/training in social interactions and social skillsOrganisational skills trainingImproving the abilities of educators/trainers to train autistic people in the above fields



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