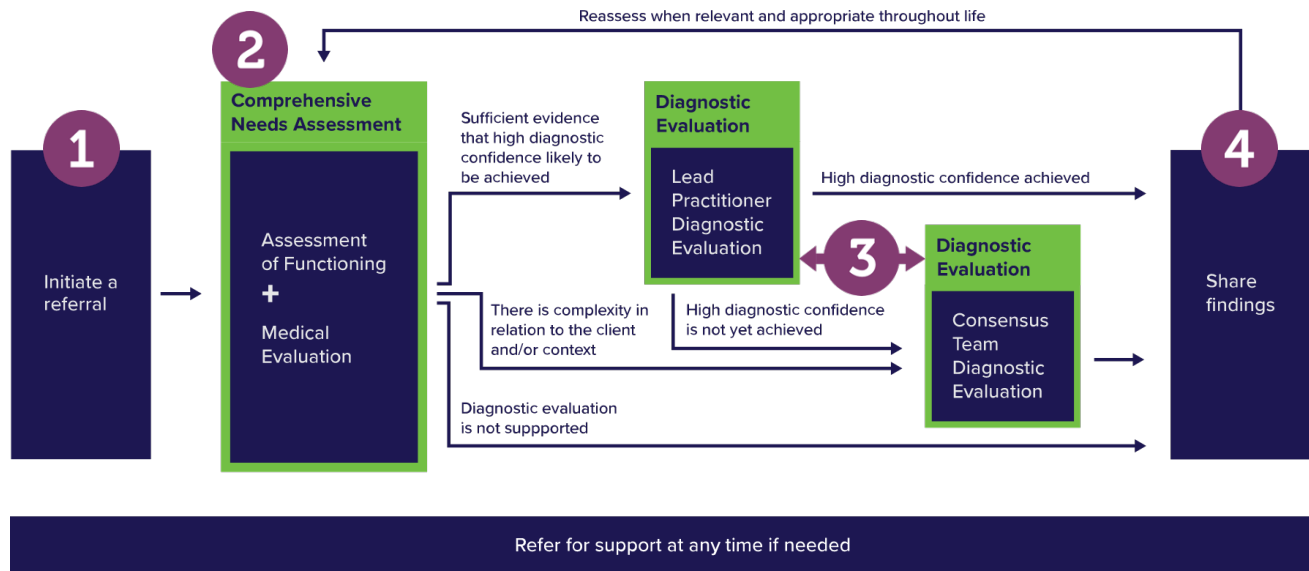


Assessment and diagnosis process



1

The process starts with **Initiating a referral** for assessment typically by a General Practitioner or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner (*note that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers, Health Workers, and Health Workers with Isolated Practice Authorisation can also refer*). However, another health professional who is already working with the client may also make a referral.

2

The next step within the process is a **Comprehensive Needs Assessment** which comprises an **Assessment of Functioning** and a **Medical Evaluation**. *If the findings of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment suggest a possible diagnosis of autism, the Diagnostic Evaluation should be started.*

3

The **Diagnostic Evaluation** should commence with a **Lead Practitioner Diagnostic Evaluation** or a **Consensus Team Diagnostic Evaluation**, depending on which is likely to result in a more timely and accurate evaluation.

- a **Lead Practitioner Diagnostic Evaluation** is recommended when there is sufficient evidence on which a diagnosis of autism and/or other conditions can be confirmed or ruled out with high confidence. *Although one practitioner leads the process, it is recommended that at least one other relevant practitioner should be consulted.*
- a **Consensus Team Diagnostic Evaluation** is recommended when it is apparent that a client has a complex history or clinical presentation (e.g., subtle characteristics, indications that multiple diagnoses may be relevant) or when a Lead Practitioner Diagnostic Evaluation is unavailable or unable to lead to a diagnostic decision with high confidence.

4

Share findings throughout the process, at the final step in the process, or when it is determined that diagnostic evaluation is not supported. Findings should be shared with the client in a way that is accurate, understandable, and neurodiversity-affirming.

*It is important to make **referrals for support** at any stage throughout the process, and as early as possible. Assessments can be repeated **when relevant and appropriate throughout a client's lifetime**.*