

Meta Title: Autism Support & Psychiatric Care in Manchester, NH

Meta Description: Compassionate psychiatric care for autistic children, teens, and adults in Manchester, NH. Screening, co-occurring condition treatment, and coordinated care from a board-certified team.

Autism Spectrum Support in Manchester, NH: Children, Adolescents, and Adults

A formal autism diagnosis is only the beginning of the story, not the end of it.

Many of the families and adults who come to us already have a diagnosis in hand and are looking for someone who can help with what comes next: the anxiety that often rides alongside autism, the sleep struggles, the meltdowns that seem to come out of nowhere, or a psychiatric medication plan that actually fits how their brain works.

Others come to us with a suspicion but no diagnosis yet, unsure of where to even start. Both paths lead through our door.

Your Care Team

I am Dr. Lionel Pereira, a Board Certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and the founder of Serene Behavioral Healthcare. Our practice supports autistic patients across every stage of life, from young children through adulthood, through a team that includes board-certified nurse practitioners seeing patients in person and via telehealth.

[Meet our full team](#) for complete provider bios and credentials.

What We Support

- Co-Occurring Anxiety and Autism
- Co-Occurring ADHD and Autism
- Irritability, Meltdowns, and Emotional Dysregulation
- Sleep Disruption in Autistic Patients
- Psychiatric Care for Newly Diagnosed and Previously Diagnosed Patients
- Support for Autistic Adults, Including Late-Identified Autism

How We Support Autistic Patients and Their Families

Autism itself is not something medication treats, and we are direct about that from the start. What we focus on is the psychiatric care that surrounds an autism diagnosis: identifying co-occurring conditions, managing symptoms that affect daily life, and coordinating with the specialists who provide formal diagnostic testing and therapy services.

Our approach typically includes:

- **Developmental screening and clinical evaluation.** If autism is suspected but not yet formally diagnosed, we conduct an initial clinical evaluation and, when appropriate, refer for comprehensive diagnostic testing with a specialist who performs formal autism assessments.
- **Identifying co-occurring conditions.** Anxiety, ADHD, depression, OCD, and sleep disorders are common alongside autism, and they are often what is most disruptive to daily life. We evaluate for these directly.
- **Medication management when appropriate.** We do not medicate autism itself, but we can help manage specific symptoms such as severe anxiety, irritability, aggression, or sleep disruption when they are significantly affecting the patient or family.
- **Family guidance and behavioral strategies.** We help parents and caregivers understand what they are seeing and build practical, sustainable approaches at home.
- **Coordinated care.** We regularly collaborate with ABA therapists, speech and occupational therapists, developmental pediatricians, and schools, so psychiatric care fits into the bigger picture rather than operating in isolation.
- **Ongoing follow-up.** Needs change as autistic patients grow and move through different life stages. We reassess regularly rather than setting a plan once and stepping away.

Signs That May Prompt an Evaluation

Every autistic person is different, and presentation varies widely by age. These are patterns that often prompt a family, or an adult, to seek an evaluation.

In young children, families often notice:

- Limited eye contact or reduced interest in shared attention with others
- Delayed language development or unusual speech patterns
- Strong preference for routines and distress when routines change
- Intense, narrow interests or repetitive movements
- Sensory sensitivities to sound, texture, light, or touch

In school-age children and adolescents, families often notice:

- Difficulty reading social cues or navigating peer relationships
- Meltdowns or shutdowns that seem disproportionate to the trigger, often tied to sensory or social overload

- Rigid thinking or significant distress with unexpected changes
- Intense, highly focused interests
- In many girls and some children who have learned to mask, symptoms can look like anxiety, shyness, or perfectionism rather than the more commonly recognized signs, which is a major reason autism in these patients is identified later

In adults, this often looks like:

- A lifelong pattern of feeling socially "out of step" without fully understanding why
- Strong need for routine and difficulty with unstructured or unpredictable environments
- Sensory sensitivities that others do not seem to share
- A history of anxiety or depression that has never fully resolved, which sometimes turns out to be connected to undiagnosed autism
- Many adults seek an evaluation after recognizing similar traits in a diagnosed child

If these patterns sound familiar, an evaluation can help clarify what is happening and what kind of support will actually help, whether that leads toward a diagnosis or toward treatment for what has been identified along the way.

Why Patients Choose Serene Behavioral Healthcare

Families and autistic adults come to us because they want a psychiatric provider who understands autism specifically, rather than applying a generic approach to a condition that requires real familiarity.

Here is what sets our care apart:

- Board certified providers with specialized training across the full age spectrum, from early childhood through adulthood
- Honest, direct communication about what psychiatric care can and cannot address for autism
- A coordinated approach that works alongside your child's broader care team rather than in isolation
- Both in-person and telehealth options, so care fits your schedule and location
- A calm, predictable environment, which we recognize matters more for autistic patients than for most

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you diagnose autism?

We conduct an initial clinical evaluation and can identify signs that warrant further assessment. For a formal autism diagnosis, we coordinate referrals to specialists who perform

comprehensive diagnostic testing. Once a diagnosis is in place, or while it is pending, we provide the psychiatric care around it, including treatment for co-occurring conditions.

Is there medication for autism itself?

No medication treats autism itself. What medication can help with are specific symptoms that sometimes accompany autism, such as severe anxiety, irritability, aggression, or significant sleep disruption, when those symptoms are significantly affecting daily life. We are always clear about what a medication is, and is not, expected to do.

My child was just diagnosed. What happens now?

A diagnosis is a starting point for building the right support team, which often includes therapy services like ABA, speech, or occupational therapy, alongside psychiatric care if co-occurring conditions are present. We can help you understand where psychiatric support fits into that picture and coordinate with the other providers involved in your child's care.

Can autism be identified in adulthood?

Yes. Many autistic adults were never identified in childhood, particularly those who learned to mask their traits or whose presentation did not match commonly recognized patterns. An adult evaluation follows a similar process, adapted to adult history and experience.

My child is autistic and also seems anxious or has trouble sleeping. Is that related?

Very often, yes. Anxiety, sleep disruption, and emotional dysregulation are extremely common alongside autism, and they are frequently what causes the most day-to-day difficulty. These are exactly the areas where psychiatric care can make a meaningful difference, even when autism itself is not something we are treating directly.

Schedule an Evaluation

Whether you are just starting to ask questions or have a diagnosis already in hand, our team is here to help you find the right next step.

Book an Appointment or Contact Our Office to get started.

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