Navigating Medline Plus

Let’s take a closer look at MedlinePlus as Della uses it to search for information about autism.

When Della first goes to the site, she sees a search box at the top of the page. She also notices categories that may help her locate information: Health Topics, Drugs & Supplements, and Videos & Tools. She sees that the site is also available in Spanish, which might be helpful for her nephew’s mother.
As she looks at the rest of the page, she sees many other articles and links. Della begins to feel overwhelmed at the amount of information on the page. Della knows that Autism is a common topic, so she decides to start with the link labeled Health Topics. Can you help Della by opening one of the two Health Topic links now?
Della is taken to a page that lists common health topics, sorted by category. She could click one of the category links to be taken to a more detailed list of topics. She isn’t sure which category to choose to find autism. Instead, she chooses to use the alphabetical list **Find Topics A to Z** at the top of the page. Della clicks **A** for autism.
Next, she is taken to an alphabetical list of all health topics. She scrolls down the page to the point where she finds **Autism**. She notices that it directs her to see the term **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. This is the official term used by MedlinePlus to refer to autism.
She clicks one of the two links for **Autism Spectrum Disorder** to continue.
Della begins to read the page for **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. At the top, she notices links to the information included on this page, similar to a table of contents. She sees that there is basic information, which includes treatments and therapies. She also notices sections to learn more, and review research. Since Della doesn’t know much about autism, she starts with the **Summary** and **Start Here** sections.
The Summary provides a few paragraphs that are easy to read, and give her a basic understanding.

Under the Start Here section, Della sees links to four articles. She can see the name of the organization responsible for each article. She can also identify which links are available in Spanish.

Della knows she can trust all of these resources, since they’re included on the MedlinePlus website. She decides to choose the first link in the list, from the National Institute of Mental Health.
The link opens the article on the website of the National Institute of Mental Health. When Della is done reading the article, she can return to MedlinePlus to continue her search.