



# Tigger Pritchard

Neuroaffirming Advocate, Consultant  
and Trainer






 tiggertraining@gmail.com       www.tiggerpritchard.com

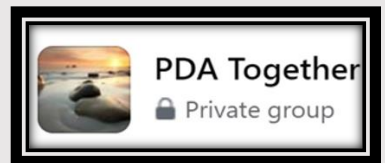
 Tigger Pritchard

    Autistic Coffee Shop/Tigger Pritchard/Coffee with Tigger

 Makaton Regional Tutor

 Founder/Co-Director: The Autistic Community of Cornwall CIC

   Winner BAP's Award 2022/Cornwall Inclusion Award 2024  
National Diversity Award Finalist 2024



# Why are Neurodivergent children venerable to online abuse?

A Neuroaffirming Approach to understanding



Tigger Pritchard Au-He/Him  
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# Today

- Housekeeping, Being Neurospicy
- Neuroaffirming (Thank You!)
- Why are Neurodivergent Children so vulnerable? (with a bit of help from Penny Chapman)
- Thoughts on reducing this
- Links to Further Resources



# This Session is:



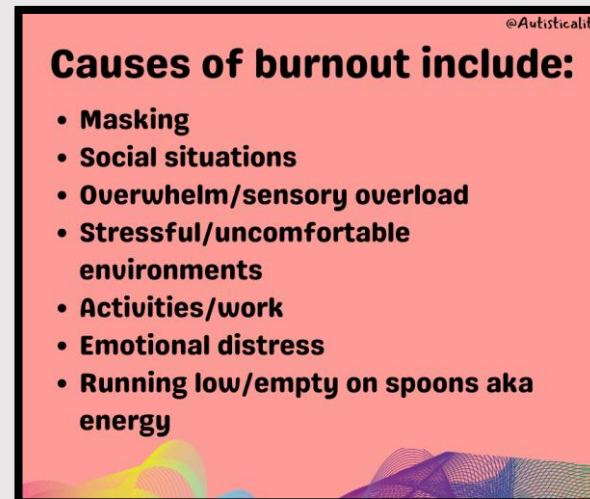
- Neuroaffirming and pro-Autistic/ADHD/AuDHD/PDA/Neurotypical☺
- Neurodivergent led and informed, I live it, I am AuDHD, Neurospicy, Multiply Neurodivergent
- Challenging assumptions, myths, out of date training and reframing the current narrative
- Delivered with a passion to change the environment for all☺
- Some of you may understand, some of you may not, but this is the future.
- So please, be awesome, lead, be game changers, work alongside us for real change

# Difference not Disorder?

- We need to reframe our understanding of what it is to be Neurodivergent: Autistic, ADHD and PDA
- We need to move away from disorder to difference, from medical model to culture
- We need to understand what makes us Neurodivergent and why we experience the world around us in different ways, why we are us and why we need to be us
- We are diagnosed, seen only with deficits
- We must move away from any training, approach or strategy that actively forces a Neurodivergent Individual change to someone who is seen as “normal”
- If we don't.....

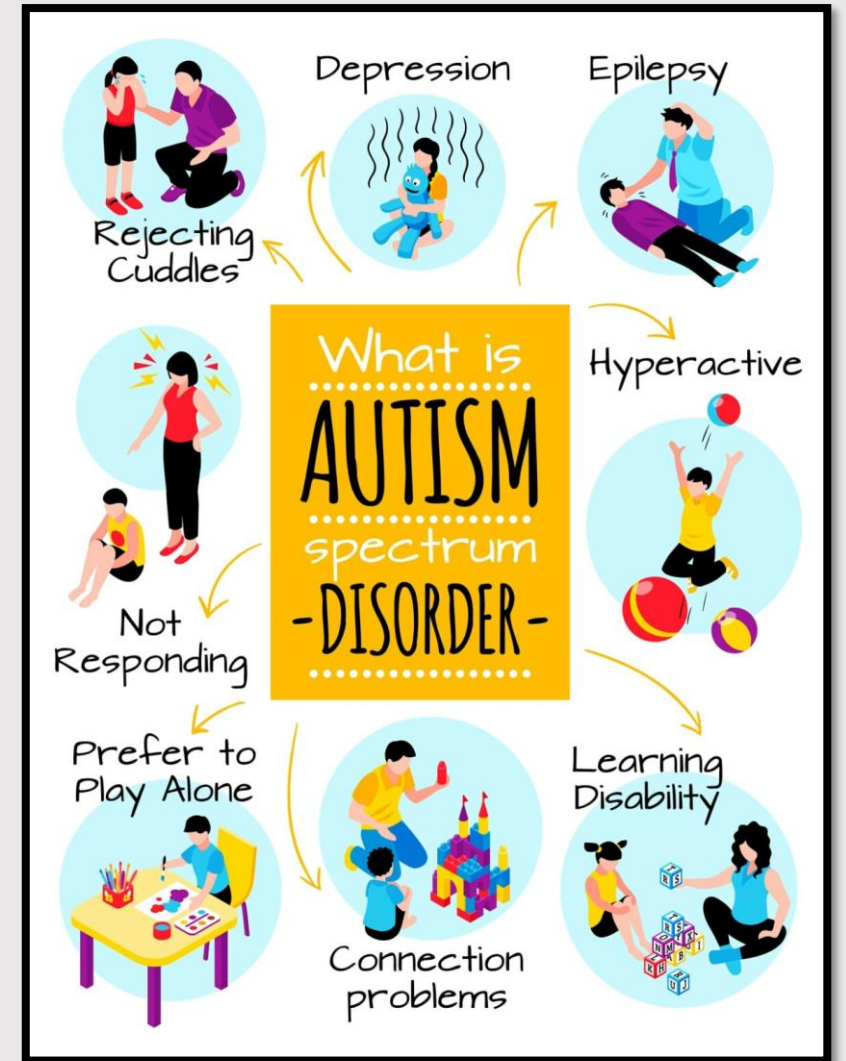
# Neurodivergent Life (TW)

- Anxiety
- Mental Health
- Life Expectancy
- Self-worth
- Vulnerability
- Suicidal idealisation
- Abuse
- **We can change this😊**



# What Children see, hear and are told

- You need to fit in
- You need better social skills
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Diagnosed
- Suffering from Autism/Symptoms of Autism
- Forced eye contact
- Media representations
- Almost all approaches and strategies are designed by Neurotypicals for neurotypicals





# Why are Neurodivergent Children at risk?

- We desperately want to fit in
- We desperately want friends
- We desperately want to be normal, because its continually reinforced that we are not
- Some of us are desperately lonely
- So, some of us will do anything to “fit in”, to be a part of something
- We become people pleasing, family pleasing, teacher pleasing, peer pleasing
- We become adults too

# Who tells Neurodivergent children about:

- Stimming
- Routine and Structure
- Self-worth/Self respect
- Neurodivergent Culture/Neurokin
- Regulation/Spoon Theory
- Sensory Differences
- Communication Differences
- Literal interpretation
- Role Models
- Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria
- Social Skills for All
- Double Empathy Problem
- Screen Time and Neurodivergent Individuals
- Monotropism/Flow/Interests
- Autistic Pride
- Alexithymia



## The Nature of Rejective Sensitive Dysphoria

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria commonly known as RSD is a complex emotional response characterised by an intense & overwhelming reaction to rejection or perceived rejection.

The term “Dysphoria” originates from Greek, meaning “unbearable”, which aptly describes the severe emotional & physical distress experienced by those grappling with RSD.

This condition goes beyond mere disappointment or sadness; it’s a profound & often debilitating emotional & physical state that can significantly impact an individuals quality of life.

## The Neurodivergent Connection

While RSD can affect anyone, it is particularly prevalent among neurodivergent individuals, especially those who are ADHD or Autistic.

The heightened emotional sensitivity often associated with these differences can amplify the emotional impact of rejection or perceived rejection, creating a complex interplay between their neurodivergence and emotional responses.

The impulsivity & intensity associated with ADHD can lead to:

- Rapid mood swings and aggression
- Difficulty in contextualising social interactions
- Heightened emotional responses that may seem disproportionate to others

## The Vulnerability Factor

The heightened emotional sensitivity associated with RSD can unfortunately make neurodivergent children more vulnerable to various forms of abuse & exploitation.

RSD can significantly impact how children view themselves leading to masking behaviours to fit in & lowered self-esteem.

Understanding the increased risk is crucial towards creating safer environments & more effective support strategies

## The Risks

- Heightened fear of rejection can be exploited
- Engage in people pleasing or approval seeking behaviour
- Difficulty trusting one's own perceptions can make gaslighting more effective
- An intense need for approval can result in accepting things despite knowing their negative consequences
- Difficulty setting boundaries for fear of rejection
- Increased susceptibility to online grooming tactics & cyberbullying

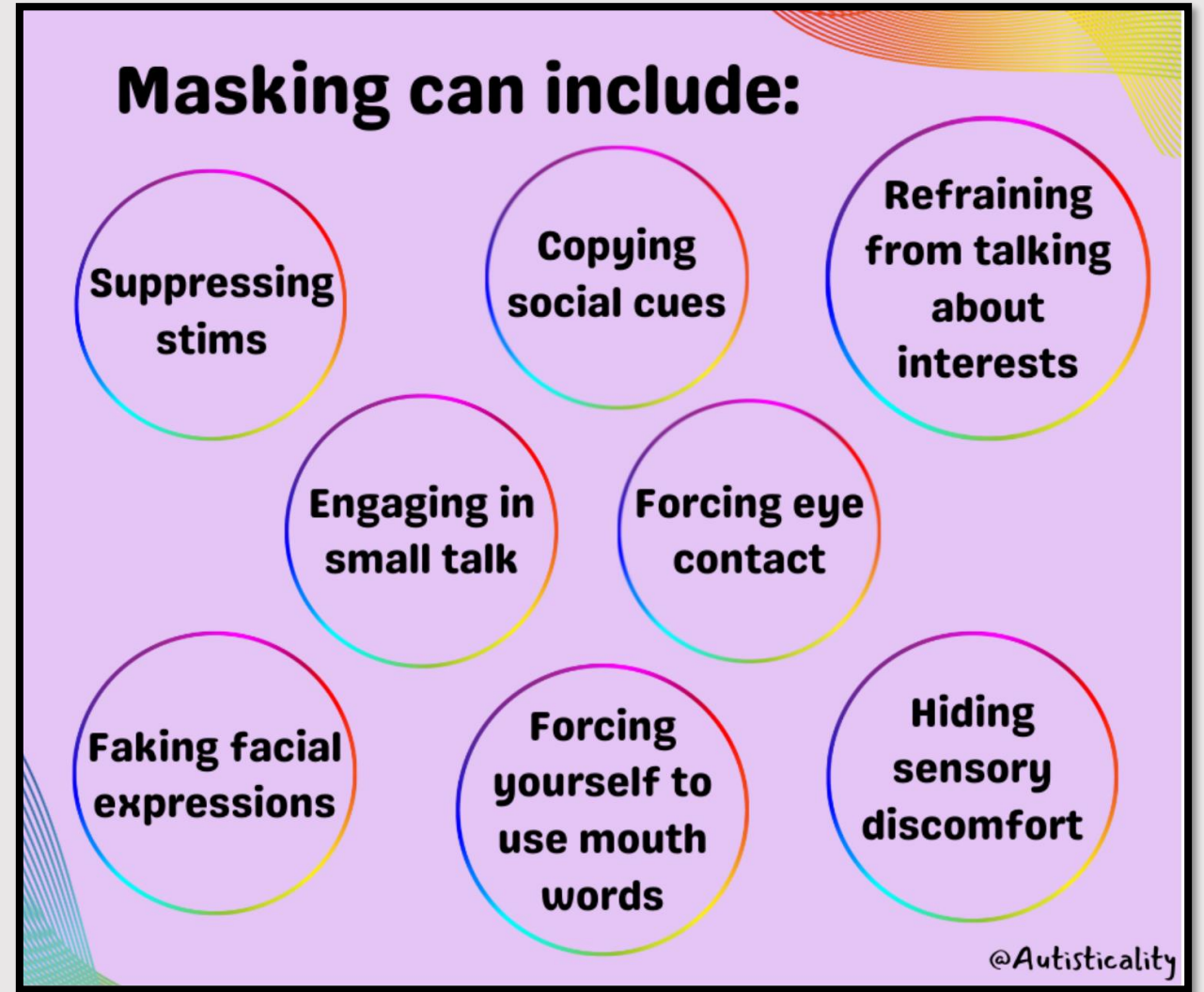


## The Risks

- Risk of oversharing personal information for fear of rejection
- Hypersensitivity to rejection will often cause individuals to distort or misinterpret the actions of others
- Difficulty seeking help due to fear of rejection or judgement

Remember, behavior is a form of communication; we should focus on understanding its cause, not just addressing the unwanted behavior

# Masking

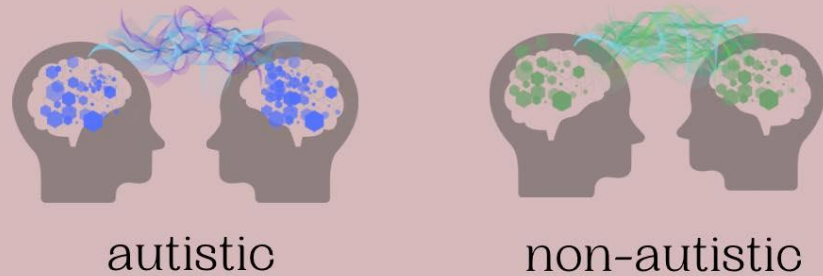
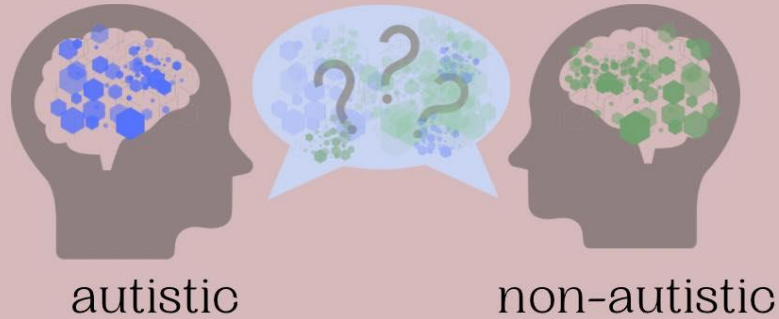




# Double Empathy Problem

## Autistic Realms

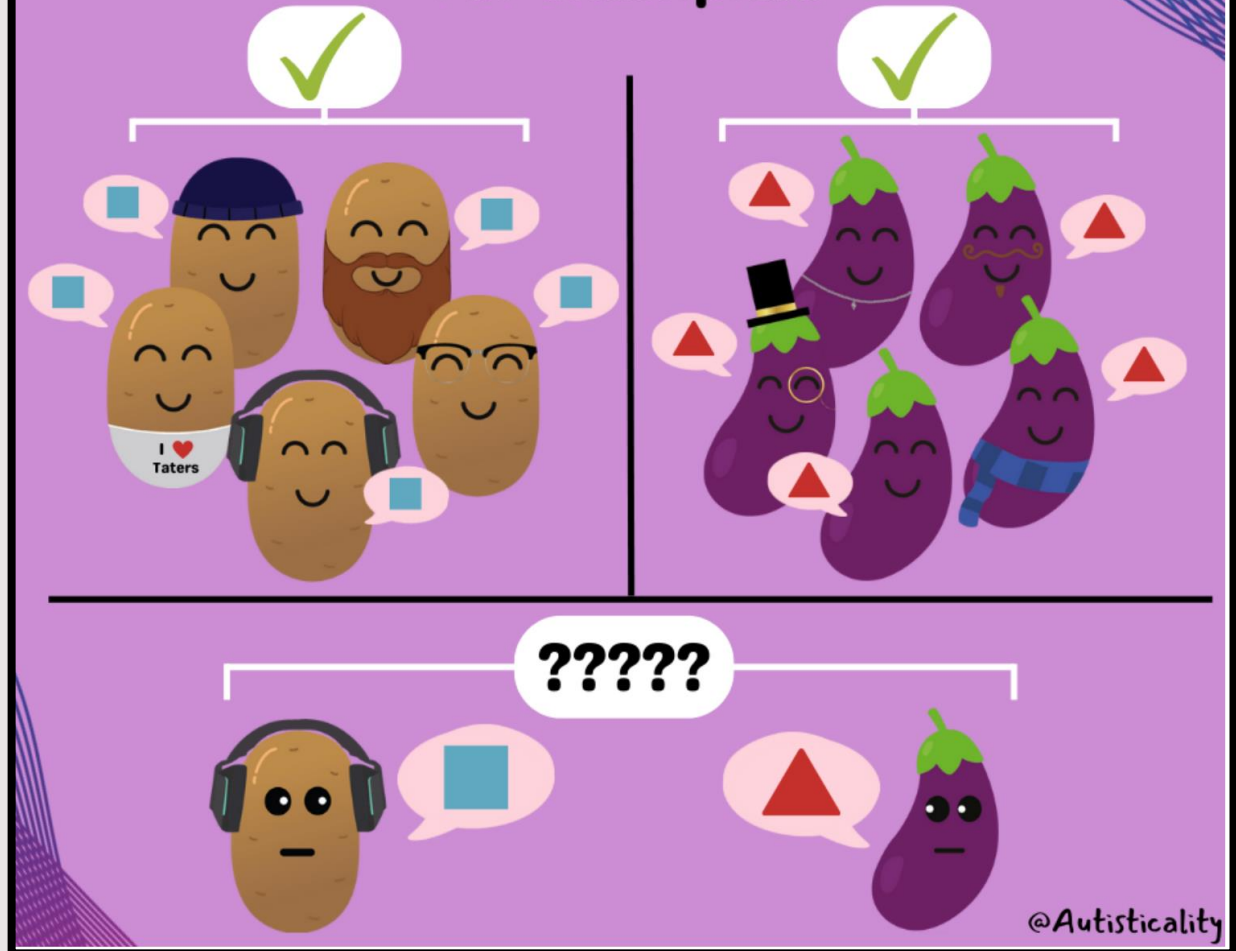
Double Empathy Problem  
a difference not a deficit



Follow @autisticrealms

Based on the theory by Damian Milton

For example...



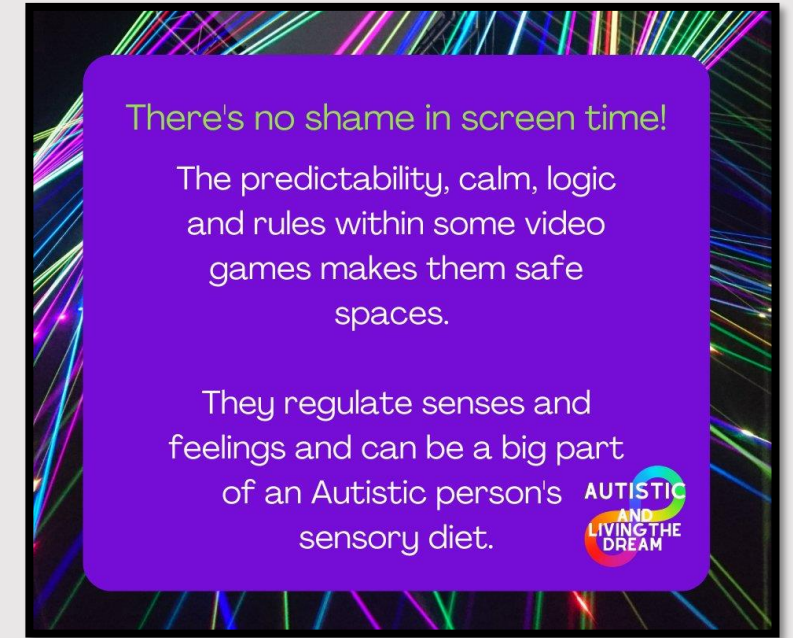
# How we process language

- Autistic people process language differently to non-autistic people due to a variety of factors.
- Literal interpretation: “Only flush toilet paper down this toilet” and more!
- Transmission of language can sometimes come across as blunt, but it's not supposed to be! (Double Empathy)
- We believe



# Screen Time

- Self-Regulation
- Routine and Structure
- Stimming
- Safe Place
- Autistic Self
- Monotropic Self



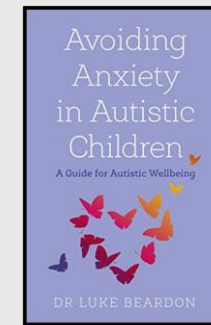
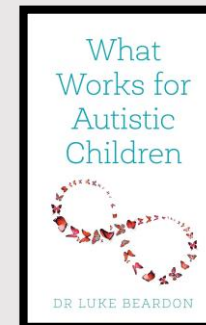
# Says it all 😊

**“Autism (Neurodivergent) plus the environment equals the outcome.**

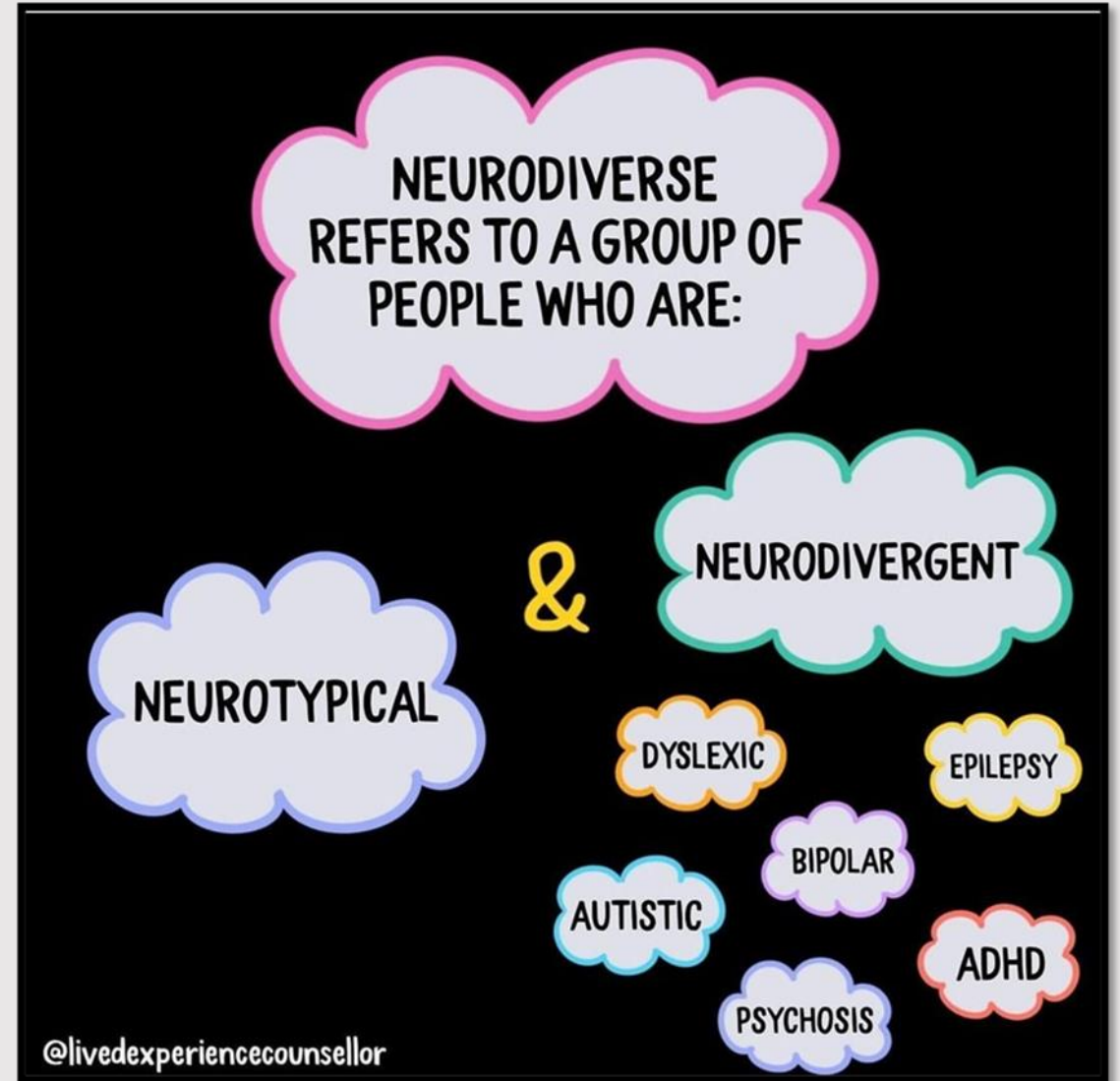
That outcome might be positive or negative, but the person who is autistic remains the same, it is the environment that leads to the outcome”.

“So, if you want a successful outcome, and you recognise the Autistic individual cannot change their brain, then the only thing you can change is the environment”.

So, what is the Environment?



# Neuro-what?



# Neuroaffirming Language and Images

## How to talk about Autism

Pathologising Language	Neuro-Affirming Language
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	Autism, Autistic
Person-first language (Person with Autism)	Identity-first language (Autistic Person)
Autism symptoms and impairments	Specific autistic experiences and characteristics
At risk of Autism	May be autistic; increased likelihood of being autistic
Co-morbidity	Co-occurring
Functioning e.g. high/low functioning, mild/moderate or severe labels	Specific support needs
Cure, treatment or intervention	Specific support or service
Restricted interests or obsessions	Specialised, focused or intense interests
Normal person	Allistic or Non Autistic

Shared from @ Reframing Autism  
 f Instagram Speech and Language Sydney

## autism community

Person with autism  
 "Suffers from..."  
 Pathology Paradigm  
 Low-Functioning  
 Treatment  
 Intervention  
 High-Functioning  
 Illness  
 Disorder  
 Masking

Cure  
 Condition  
 Medical Model  
 ABA  
 "Be normal"

## Autistic community

Autistic person #ActuallyAutistic  
 Neurodiversity Paradigm Education  
 Social Model Accessibility  
 Accommodations  
 Acceptance  
 Stimming  
 No normal Autistic Pride  
 Hyper-empathy AAC

# Neurodivergent Experiences




# To be Neurodivergent:

- Autistic (Neurodivergent), experience: “[A] neurodevelopmental difference, where Autistic brains work differently to non-autistic people.
- Differences in our experience of the sensory world, communication, thinking, socialising and moving: Dr Chloe Farahar Aucademy 2021

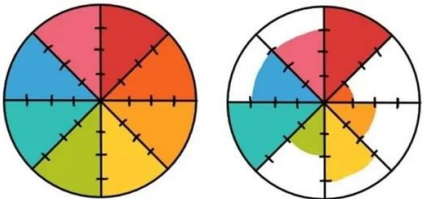
## Autism Spectrum

The Autism Spectrum is NOT linear



less autistic very autistic

The Autism Spectrum looks more like:



- Social differences
- interests
- repetitions
- sensory sensitivities
- emotional regulation
- perception
- executive functioning
- other

Terms like “high functioning”, “low functioning” are harmful and outdated.

Autism\_sketches

## The ADHD Spectrum Wheel

Just like Autistic people, no two ADHD people are exactly alike..

- internal hyperactivity
- impulsivity
- external hyperactivity
- executive functioning differences
- sensory and stimulation
- emotional regulation
- differences in time perception
- attention differences



person A's ADHD may look like this: person B's ADHD may look like this:

[www.livedexperienceeducator.com](http://www.livedexperienceeducator.com) @livedexperienceeducator

## What is it?

**PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) is a profile of some Autistic people where demands and expectations can trigger an anxiety-driven need to avoid the demand.**

**A PDA person might avoid tasks or activities if they threaten their autonomy; if that autonomy is attacked, they will react (meltdowns, shutdowns etc.).**

**A less pathologising definition of PDA is a 'Pervasive Drive for Autonomy'**

@Autisticity



# Neurodivergent 2024: Learn about:

- Stimming
- Routine and Structure
- Self-worth/Self respect
- Neurodivergent Culture/Neurokin
- Regulation/Spoon Theory
- Sensory Differences
- Communication Differences
- Literal interpretation
- Masking
- ARFID
- Lack of Role Models
- Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria
- Social Skills for All
- Double Empathy Problem
- Screen Time and Neurodivergent Individuals
- Monotropism/Flow/Interests



# What will this do for Neurodivergent children?

- It will create an environment that will make them feel accepted, understood and valued.
- It will support their journey and that of their families and peers to have a better understanding of all neurotypes
- It will reduce anxiety, Increase self-esteem and self-worth for all!
- It will reduce the “behaviours” we see, reduced masking, reduction in the “Coke Bottle Effect” plus it will have a positive effect upon all
- Less vulnerable

# Survival of the Fittest?

- “Autism is a natural variation of the human experience. It's a different way of perceiving and interacting with the world, and it brings unique strengths and perspectives- Autism is likely been present in humans for tens of thousands of years, if not longer”
- “Some researchers believe that autistic individuals may have played important roles in early human societies, contributing unique skills and talents that were valuable for survival and progress. This perspective highlights how neurodivergent individuals have been a part of human evolution and development throughout history”
- “Autism is a natural and integral part of human diversity. It's not a deviation from humanity but a unique variation within it. Autistic individuals have always been among us, contributing their unique perspectives and strengths to our communities. Recognizing and celebrating this diversity enriches our understanding of what it means to be human.
- “Embracing all forms of neurodiversity is crucial in creating a more inclusive and compassionate world”
- Copilot 2024

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- Consultancy
- Training/Talks
- PDA
- Makaton
- Resources
- Feedback
- Policies

[Full Resource Index](#)

There are over seventy different pages of information here, links, resources, posters etc. Looking at Autistic experiences, ADHD, Pathological Demand Avoidance/Pervasive Drive for Autonomy, (PDA), and more. All from a variety of resource areas which I hope you will find useful. (For the full list click the [Full Resource Index box](#)).

I continually review and add to these pages so do feel free to regularly check here for updates and new sections. (Do also feel free to get in touch if you think I'm missing something that may be useful). Some of the items referenced may include words, phrases and terminology that may have changed since publication. Inclusion here does not indicate an endorsement by myself, but I do try and find peer reviewed content.

I have tried to ensure the suitability of content but please do check yourself, especially if they are to be viewed by younger individuals. I have also tried to ensure that all the original authors and those that have copyright to all resources/links etc are shown. If there are any errors please do let me know so I can rectify them.

- Are you Neurodivergent?
- What is Neurodiversity?
- Sensory Differences
- Autistic Experiences
- Newly Diagnosed/Identified
- School Avoidance
- Autistic Self Profiles
- Neurodivergent: the Basics
- Screen Time
- Books/Publications
- Neurodivergent at Work
- Social Media Sites
- Cornwall Parents/Carers Info
- Parent/Carers Information
- What is Neuroaffirming?
- tiggertraining@gmail.com
- PDA Resources
- Younger Individuals

### Fellow Autistic Advocate Resource Sites/Neuroaffirming Resources

Below are links to organisations, friends and individuals with sites full of Neuroaffirming resources. I'm also continually updating here, so do come back! Do have a look at their pages, there is a wealth of information here. Please feel free to scroll through and to click upon an image to take you to their content.



### National Agencies and Societies in the UK



[www.tiggerpritchard.com](http://www.tiggerpritchard.com)



[www.amneurodiversejersey.co.uk](http://www.amneurodiversejersey.co.uk)