



autism
oxford uk

NDC POST DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHOP

Chloe and Morwenna

Week 2

RECAP / CHECK IN

- **Week 1 – ASD / ADHD**
- **How is everyone feeling?**
- **Any positives or learning points in the last week?**

Diagnosis

Autism spectrum *disorder*

Disorder often implies that there is something ‘wrong’. Something that needs ‘fixing’ or ‘treating’. It does not naturally illicit many thoughts of **strengths**.

Whilst autism is defined by the equality act as a disability, we see it as a *condition*. Something that makes someone different, but not ‘wrong’. There are many strengths associated with ASC.

So why are strengths not always recognised?

1. Medical Model of disability
2. Media portrayal of autism
3. Lack of knowledge and understanding about the condition, different profiles and cooccurring conditions.

Medical model

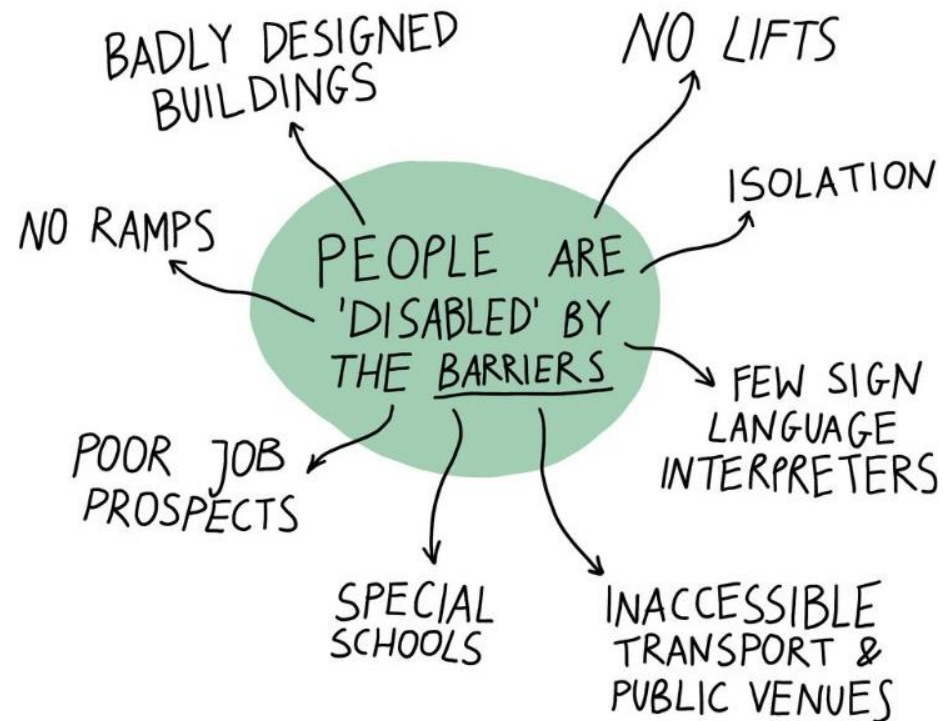
Where the medical model asks questions such as “what is wrong with the individual?”, the social model of disability asks questions such as “what are the barriers to accessibility and inclusion?”

In terms of being Autistic and ADHD, the medical model sees them only as “disorders” which can lead to harmful behavioural approaches, in which the individual is expected to adapt and change — sometimes suppress the very essence of who they are — in order to please the neurotypical majority.

Medical model vs social model of disability

The Social Model

VS The Medical Model



Social model

Using the social model, we are more likely to recognise neurodivergent people as a benefit to our society in many ways, including — *but not exclusively* — innovation, creativity, divergent thinking, and artistic talents, among many others.

When an individual encounters difficulties, the social model does not ask what is wrong with the person. Instead, it evaluates the context and surrounding environment and expectations, and how they may be negatively impacting that person.

Strengths Based Approach

Everyone has strengths!

- Incorporate young people's interests and hobbies into their support - you might learn something yourself.
- Get to understand the profile of someone autism, and the benefits, strengths this brings for the autistic person.
- Using a strength-based approach will improve outcomes for everyone.

Common autistic strengths



PASSIONATE
INTERESTS



INTENSE
FOCUS



ATTENTION TO
DETAIL



MEMORY



CURIOSITY



INTEGRITY



FAIRNESS



SINCERITY



LOYALTY



HELPFULNESS

Autistic strengths

Visual strengths: Autistic people can have extraordinary vision; on average they can see from 6 m what a non-autistic can see at 2 m. They are also better at pattern recognition and see visual details that non-autistics don't tend to register.

Researchers have found changes in the rods and cones in autistic children's eyes; 85% saw colours with greater intensity than neurotypical children.

Synesthesia is a condition in which multiple senses are perceived simultaneously. A study from 2013 suggests that synaesthesia occurs in 18.9% of autistic people, compared to just 7.22% in the general population.

Autistic strengths

Due to their special interests and fixations, people with high-functioning autism tend to be autodidacts, and can have encyclopedic knowledge in a particular area, and are often considered experts in particular subjects.

Research indicates autistic people are less likely to make irrational decisions, and are less influenced by gut instincts. Consistency in pattern of choices and attention to detail helps them avoid being swayed by their emotions.

Research found that women—in contrast with men—showed increased adaptive coding of face identity in correlation with the levels of autistic traits related to social interaction, making them better at discriminating between many faces.

THE ADHD STRENGTHS ICEBERG

WHAT PEOPLE
THINK ADHDERS
ARE GOOD AT:

creativity
talking fast

WHAT ADHDERS
ARE ACTUALLY
GOOD AT:

literally anything
they find
interesting

problem solving
working under pressure

learning

changing the world
empathy

brainstorming

getting a lot
done in a short
amount of time

crisis situations
risk-taking
forgiveness

competitive
challenges

optimism

entrepreneurship

mastering
new hobbies

creating
something
beautiful

tackling new
challenges

sense of
humor

authenticity

imagination

hyperfocus

https://www.reddit.com/r/ADHD_memes/comments/pov6oh/adhd_strengths_iceberg/



ADHD strengths

Hyperfocus, resilience, willing to take risks that others wont, and creativity are all strengths of ADHD. Many successful artists, scientists and writers have made successful careers utilising their ADHD strengths.

Generosity, great sense of humour and excellent conversational skills, spontaneity, and problem solving are also common strengths of those with ADHD.

Development of self-identity

Autism and trauma

Impact of age at time of diagnosis

Positive role models

Acceptance of diagnosis of family, friends, education and teaching staff etc.



Influencing factors

“You don’t look autistic”

This is often said as a compliment to tell you that you do not look like you act differently, need support or have given any indication you are autistic at first glance.

This is not a compliment and is in fact harmful and offensive as it undermines being autistic all together.



My experience

- Discovered I was Autistic at the age of 30
- Then diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 33
- Achieved average grades at school
- HR Career
- Things I am often told.....



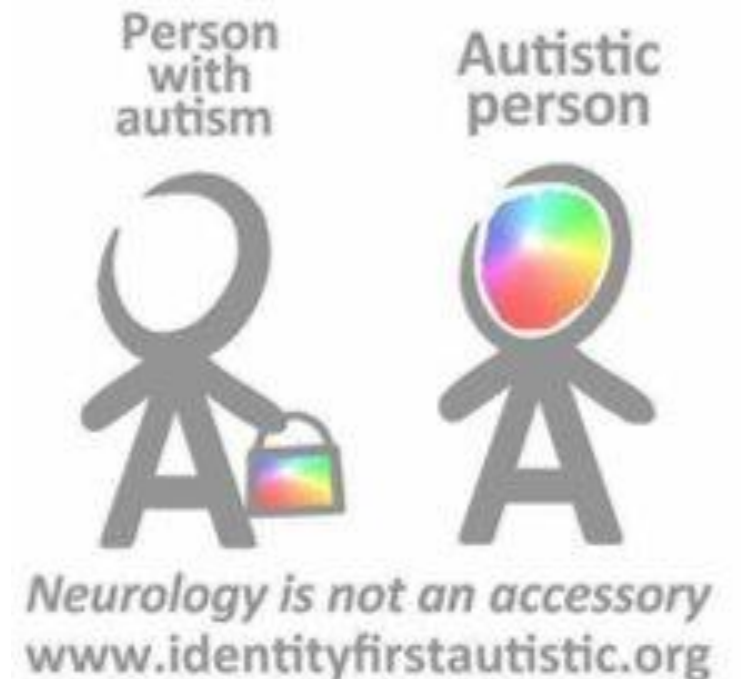
Language is important

“Autistic person” / “I am autistic”

Person first language implies that we have something and can put that away.

Identity first language shows that being autistic is part of our identity and a big part of who we are.

Most of the autistic community prefer identity first language-
“Autistic person”.



Developing self identity

Forming a self-identity is about **working out who you are and what your values are**. It's an important part of adolescence for all teenagers.

Self-identity can be more challenging for autistic teenagers than it is for typically developing teenagers. They might also find it hard to see themselves as valuable community members with skills and strengths (*think medical model placed upon them*).

How to help

Talk about diversity - Talk with your child about how everybody has their own strengths, interests and challenges – which is what makes us interesting. This can help your child see themselves as valuable and worthwhile.

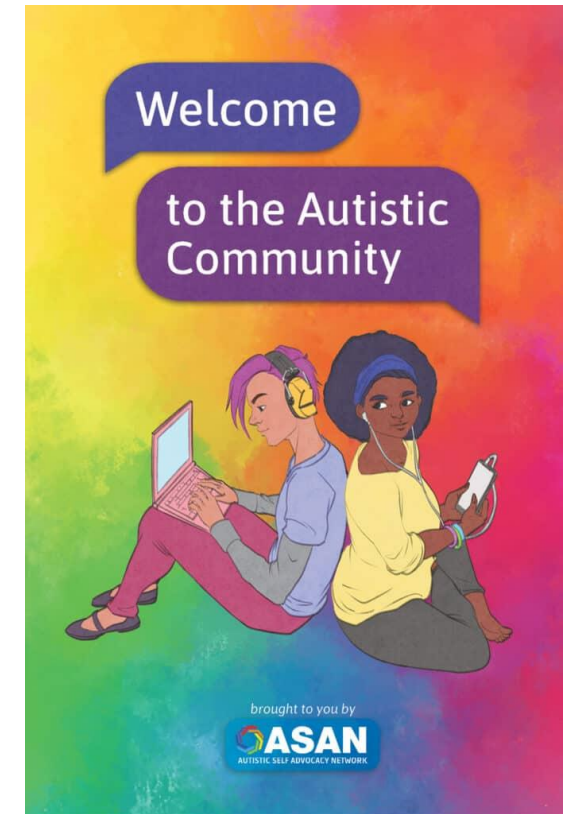
Thinking about ‘me’ - encourage your child to think about:
what they like and don't like
their personality – for example, whether they're generous, artistic, polite and so on
what words they would use to describe themselves to others
An ‘all about me’ book would be a great place to start.

How to help

Meeting others – getting involved with other autistic teenagers can help your child to understand more about autism and how it's part of other people's identities.

Reading and resources – read and learn about autism. Example:

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/book/welcome-to-the-autistic-community/>



The neurodivergent community

Websites- <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/>
<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/> <https://adhduk.co.uk/>

Blogs- Purple Ella – an autistic mum with two autistic children
Autistic Not Weird – a blog by Chris Bonnelo, an autistic ex-teacher
Medecoded – a blog celebrating neurodiversity by autistic blogger
Helen Needham

Social clubs-<http://www.afso.org.uk/children-and-young-people>
<http://oasisonline.org.uk/>

Social media

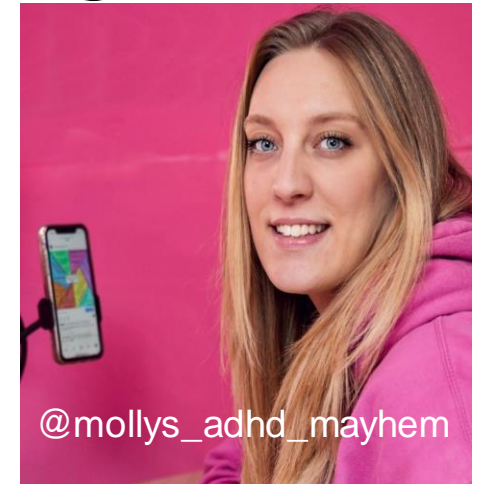
Tik Tok



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter



#ActuallyAutistic
#AskingAutistics
#ADHDlife



Questions?