

## **Phasma therapies for Autism, ADHD & AuDHD**

### **Background:**

Autism Spectrum Condition neurological-developmental. An individual will have different perceptions of the world, their experiences and interactions with others. Autism can create difficulties in multiple circumstances, and is often experienced in social, familial and school/work environments. These difficulties include repetitive behaviours and rigidity in lifestyle, factors which impact on all parties unless there is a level of awareness of the need for empathy and practical understanding.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition affecting behaviours. It manifests as restlessness, struggles with concentration and impulsiveness, and may include insomnia and anxiety.

AuDHD (Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a term adopted for individuals with both conditions. Until 2013, it wasn't possible to be diagnosed with both Autism and ADHD. Once thought of as mutually exclusive, these two conditions are more recently evidenced as co-occurring, with individuals presenting with sensory differences, intense focus in certain areas whilst struggling to maintain attention generically. Sensitivities to rejection, sleep issues and emotional dysregulation or difficulties managing emotions and reactions.

### **Research:**

Statistically, the numbers of people with these conditions seems to be growing exponentially – although this is due to many factors, including an increase in general awareness and the increased quality and frequency of diagnosis in both children and adults.

Over 1.2 million people in the UK have Autism Spectrum Condition, 1 in 100 people (1 in 70 people estimated by Autistica), according to UCL & NAS. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) estimates that 3-4% of adults in the UK have ADHD, with ADHDUK putting that at 2.6 million people, however only 600,000 of those are formally diagnosed. There is no definitive number of people diagnosed with AuDHD in the UK, however it has been estimated that somewhere between 40-70/30-80% of people with Autism also have ADHD.

The UK currently spends £32 billion per year in care and lost earnings to support Autistic children and adults, only 30% of UK Autistic adults are in employment.

The American Journal of Public Health has evidenced that Autistic deaths occur 36 years earlier than that of the general population due to poor social and daily life skills.

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2016), Spectrum (2015, 2019) published data showing suicide as the leading cause of early death in Autistic adults, drowning in the case of children with Autism. Communication problems, fatal accidents, Gastrointestinal (GI) distress from poor diet, and bullying (external to, and within families) are all cited as ongoing contributing factors to poor health and early death.

### **Why Phasma Therapies?**

Since 2022, Phasma has worked with Disability Action Haringey to deliver the Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Health and Wellbeing Project (TASC). Delivered over two phases, the project was co-designed and co-produced with The Sickle Cell Warriors and funded in partnership with NHS Whittington Health & NHS North Middlesex University Hospital and Haringey Council.

The project delivered 120 complimentary therapy sessions for Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell patients across Haringey. The project delivered Phasma Hypnotherapy, Reiki, Life Coaching, Health & Nutrition Coaching, Thought Field Therapies and Emotional Freedom Technique sessions to support with pain reduction/management, anxiety, fatigue and depression; and to increase their quality of life.

Hypnotic & Holistic therapies have a proven track record as methods of drug-free pain control and also of psychological self-healing. Once taught, the participants are equipped with a fast and effective pain management system which can be utilised regularly or as and when needed.

The project also delivered a wellbeing lifestyle coaching service which focused on providing lifestyle and exercise recommendations. This incorporates provision of bespoke menus and supplement plans for each client, to compliment the programme with nutritional knowledge and advice.

Sessions were delivered as complete packages for patients, mixing therapies targeted to identified need, and on an ad hoc basis as and when needed most as a fast intervention for the client. Each service user completed an induction session in which they created a self-management plan with service provider support.

Participants cited the TASC project as significantly reducing dependency on over-the-counter painkillers, improved sleep patterns, increased self-confidence, greater self-esteem and new & improved methods for self-managed pain reduction through relaxation, meditation and visualisation techniques.

99.97%\* of users expressed improved quality of life following attendance on the project. (\*1 user disengaged from the project and could not be consulted).

All service users with Sickle Cell Trait (6 service users) presented with symptoms associated with SC and HBSS, including sleeplessness, muscle, joint and back ache, coldness/numbness in extremities and headaches/migraines. They also expressed that symptoms were exacerbated by bad weather, as is the case in SC and HBSS. Predominant issue for the SC Trait group were confidence/self-confidence and life skills/coping strategies.

The success of the project for Sickle Cell patients can translate across to other long-term health conditions whose symptoms can be correlated to those presented during the project timeframe.

Supplemental therapies utilised during project delivery included Neuro-linguistic Programming, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Parts Therapy, Free Association, Acupressure, Regression and Person-centred Therapy.

### **Which Phasma Therapies?**

#### **Hypnotherapy**

##### **(For) Autism**

Hypnotherapy can help increase quality of life. Hypnosis can teach Autistic individuals to become calmer and more relaxed – to adopt new techniques for reducing feelings of frustration and managing stress and anxiety. By creating new and improved thought processes and approaches, individuals can experience increased levels of effective communication, resulting in enhanced interactions and coping methods for better everyday living. Individuals will develop new relaxation techniques and increased self-awareness, promoting greater self-confidence and levels of control.

Hypnosis can also provide countermeasures for rigid thought processes, working with internal belief systems to negate some of the previously experienced barriers to achievement, whether they be personal, financial, or vocational.

Successful and confident communication is a key factor in experiencing a fulfilling life, by promoting relaxation and reduced anxiety levels hypnosis can create new skills and understanding of social cues and interactions. Aspects of body language, vocal tone and personal expression can be defined and incorporated within new patterns of communication, leading to more confident and pleasant social and professional interaction.

Hypnotherapy can also work to improve specific aspects of the individual's life experiences by providing dedicated session, such as promoting restful sleep, increasing energy and motivation, providing focus & clarity of purpose, restoring spirituality or faith.

##### **(For) ADHD**

Hypnosis for ADHD addresses impulsiveness, hyperactivity and the attention-regulation challenges faced. It can help to address the underlying emotional factors when experiencing anxiety and frustration by increasing levels of self-esteem and self-worth. Increases in self-confidence will be demonstrable by setting new goals and overcoming previous barriers to achievement.

Hypnosis can help to improve focus and attention and also create new behaviours for managing distractions. By establishing and supporting positive habits and routines, new coping strategies help to manage sensory sensitivities and environmental influences in new and creative ways for change.

Relaxation and creating the safe space of 'the now' will promote a newly appreciated sense of calm, dissuading impulsiveness through self-regulation and self control.

(For) AuDHD

In addition to the cross-populating symptoms across the two conditions, hypnosis can work effectively for the executive dysregulation characterised within AuDHD. These cognitive challenges which make it difficult to control thoughts, behaviours and emotions are targeted and prioritised to the immediate need of the individual. This may include building focus, prioritising and setting tasks or agendas, whilst de-emphasising the sometimes-overwhelming nature of functioning effectively. Attention will be placed on working with memory and enhancing higher executive function by envisaging creative lifestyle choices.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Emotional Freedom Technique/Executive Function Therapy (the EFT's) support emotion-management, improve focus and reduce impulsivity; balancing against utilitarian aspects such as time management, attention control and personal strategic organisation.

## **Reiki**

(For) Generic

Potentially, Reiki may provide multiple benefits to those participating in regular sessions:

- Social connection and interaction within a safe environment. Practitioner/Attendee offers an opportunity to make a new connection and build a unique relationship based on openness and trust.
- Reduced Anxiety and Stress. Exposure to Reiki may help reduce stress and anxiety, in turn having a calming effect to balance against hyperactivity.
- Improvements to sleep patterns, for more restorative sleep patterns. Helping to reduce exacerbation of symptoms due to lower stress levels.
- Restoring elements of control by enabling proactivity in how individuals deal with their symptoms, providing new tools for positive change
- Potentially improve concentration over time, enabling the maintenance of effective focus.

- Mood enhancement to reduce instances of depression or low mood and promote more optimistic thought processes.

## **Life Coaching**

(For) Generic

Life Coaching can help to improve quality of life and manage symptoms through:

- Focus – enabling individuals to formulate and complete a plan.
- Motivation – identify and attain the motivation to set goals.
- Goal Setting – Translate abstract ideas into concrete actions.
- Emotional Regulation – Develop stronger methods to initiate, inhibit and modulate behaviours.
- Increase self-awareness and self-esteem with a deeper understanding of self, condition and social impact. Understanding social preconceptions and norms, and managing multi-level relationships.
- Help to increase positive communication and healthier lifestyle choices through identification and process-to-practice.

## **Enhanced benefits for caregivers**

Parents, siblings and external caregivers are also impacted by the effects of ASD/ADHD and AuDHD, often subjected to feelings of worry, fatigue and emotional distress. These feelings can result in subsequent physical problems as a result of ongoing stress, which will in turn, impact back upon those receiving care. Phasma therapies can also help to reduce stress levels, improve sleep patterns and lower instances of anxiety, enabling the caregiver to improve the longevity and quality of support.