



Function Junction: Behavior Matters January 2023 Research Recap

Autism knowledge. Experience of stigma in Autism Identify by **Simon Bury and others**

Happy New Year!

Sometimes as professionals and podcasters in the areas of autism and behavior, we struggle with using personal identity related language, such as whether to use using “person-first” language or the term “autistic” when describing people. Why individuals might choose identity- or person-first language is an important addition to the current conversation about respecting differences. Research has noted that here is no clear agreement on preferred terminology, highlighting that what is appropriate to one person is offensive to another.

One reason some people might prefer person-first language depends on when they got diagnosed. If someone received the diagnosis younger, they might be more likely to prefer this language (“person with autism”) as opposed to being diagnosed later in life. People with lower levels of experienced/internalized stigma also reported more favorable preferences towards the label *Autistic*. Also, a stronger sense one's self-concept can impact their preference. A sense of social identity is associated with better well-being across the broader population and in autism, in-group self-esteem is linked to well-being. Therefore, efforts to support development of a positive autism identity may be important. This integration of ‘being autistic’ as central to one's identity might be more available to those who have been less impacted by stigma.

Cissy and Susan really appreciated this article, *Understanding language preference: Autism knowledge. experience of stigma of Autism Identify* by Simon Bury and others in the recent article in [Autism](#), a Sage Publication.