

A Different Perspective CIC December 2025 Issue 18



In This Issue

Sincerity School.

Everybody Thriving Event.

Autism Europe Congress.

Social Group Update.

Trauma Geek Course.

Top Tips for Christmas.



Please get in touch:
[differentperspectives
98@gmail.com](mailto:differentperspectives98@gmail.com)

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the latest edition of our company newsletter.

I have spent the last couple of months focusing on my health and reflecting on my progress. Over the festive period, please do take the time to reflect and rejuvenate ~ do what feels right for your soul.

We wish you a wonderful Christmas and New Year!



The Formation of Sincerity School ~ Where it's Safe to Shine

I recently became involved in a new venture close to my heart. A team of dedicated, creative and neurodivergent individuals are working to promote inclusive practices in education. We are striving to set up a school model which supports AuDHD children and young people to thrive. The model will include the polyvagal theory, evolutionary psychology, and the best parts from Steiner, Montessori, Living Schools and others, to form something revolutionary. The model will be based on neuroscience research and will incorporate the doctrine of autonomic space, nature, play, the arts and child-led learning. Currently, we are developing projects and units of work for infants and children.

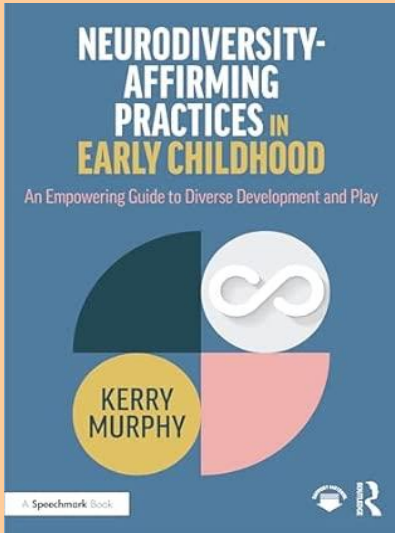
This is a collaborative effort, and we work in a low-pressure environment. Discussions are informal and suit our individual needs and pace. Although Sincerity School will be based in Sussex, all discussions are remote.

We are always looking for passionate people, including those with lived experience, researchers, educators and parents to join the conversation about revamping the education system for AuDHD children and young people. For more information or to get involved, please see Sincerity School and CIC on Facebook/email:

seaninafriel@gmail.com

Book

Recommendation



*Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices
in Early Childhood. An
Empowering Guide to Diverse
Development and Play by Kerry
Murphy.*

Insightful Podcast:

“How to Find Happiness,
Peace and Purpose
Even When Life Feels
Hard with Mo Gawdat” ~
Dr Ranjan Chatterjee.



Everybody Thriving: How Can We Promote Well-being and a Love of Learning?

Below is a selection of the fantastic responses from delegates at this event in October. Delegates offered their views on how to overcome barriers to thriving. Responses were based on education however ideas can be applied to any setting.

“Truly listening to young people and what is important for them. Having neurodivergent guest speakers to share their experience”.

“Being curious about the reasons behind behaviour. All behaviour is communication”.

“Providing autonomy and trauma-informed practice”.

“Applying low-cost universal adjustments. Reducing expectations”. Allowing time for people to spend time with their interests and nature.

“Mental health support, reasonable workloads, and time to build relationships are not extras. They are the foundations of a thriving learning community”.

“A truly modern education should balance knowledge with creativity, well-being, and life skills. This means stripping back unnecessary density and making space for curiosity, critical thinking, and joy in learning. When students can see the relevance of what they study, engagement soars — and learning becomes a source of empowerment, not exhaustion”.

“Promoting more good stories and platforming the people who are doing good”.

“More time to think, breathe and be creative”.

14th Autism Europe Congress ~ By Lauren Smith

I was pleased to attend this year's Autism Europe Congress in Dublin. It was a privilege to share my insights at Europe's largest autism conference with nearly 2,000 delegates. I presented my PhD research on autistic people's views and experiences of alternative provision (AP) settings in England (not yet published). For the nine autistic young people and four autistic adults who took part in my study, movement breaks and one to one support in AP was valued alongside staff nurturing their interests. Hands-on learning was also appreciated by one participant. Some recommendations yielded from my research include the importance of prioritising relational safety and building children's sense of belonging before learning can occur, having greater teaching training and person-centred support and providing quiet areas in schools. Additionally, my participants wanted greater learning opportunities in AP, extra support for developing friendships and self-understanding, well-being, life skills and employability skills to be embedded in the curriculum. Extra flexibility was desired, for example, the option of a reduced timetable, having frequent breaks and staff removing the expectation of wearing school uniform. For more information on my research project, please see: www.gla.ac.uk/pgrs/laurensmith/

During the Congress, I listened to a range of talks including one by my supervisor Dr Rebecca Wood, which focused on parent's understanding of autistic school staff. Other talks included energy accounting, designing sensory-friendly spaces, the implications of flexible working for neurodivergent people and understanding neurodiversity. Below are some of the key points from these presentations.

- For autistic people, quality of life (QoL) is broader than employment, romantic relationships and independent living. For autistic people, QoL can include engagement with their interests, being able to express themselves and be understood, feelings of safety and having coping strategies ~ Maja Toudal.
- Employment considerations for autistic people may include flexible working arrangements, access to ergonomic support, being in a safe environment with open communication and a culture of acceptance being fostered ~ Elinda Lee.
- Strengths of autistic staff can include them having strong values and a structured approach, being perceptive, passionate and good at problem solving ~ Dr Rebecca Wood.
- Autistic people needing additional support does not mean they are 'less than' ~ Sue Fletcher-Watson.
- For change to happen, one must be willing to make a difference ~ Gareth Morewood.

Please follow me at 'A Different Perspective CIC' on Facebook and X/email me at:

differentperspectives98@gmail.com



A Different Perspective Community Interest Company
A Limited Company. Reg No: 12369485 © 2025
Registered in England & Wales.



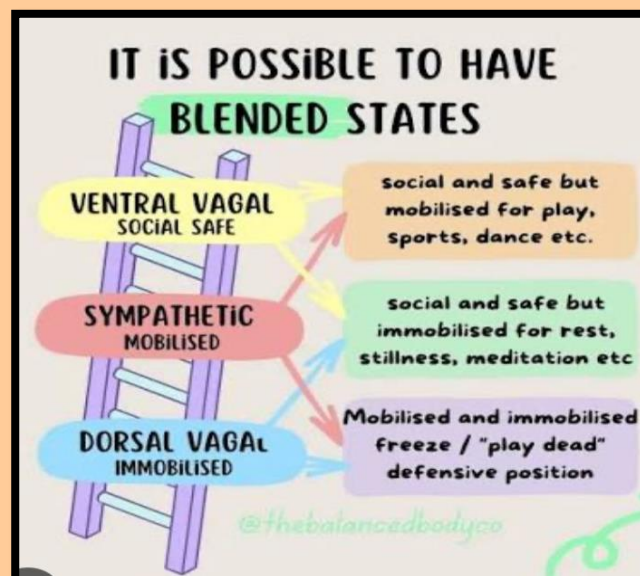
Update on our Social Group for Autistic People

Recently, our social group have enjoyed glow-in-the-dark golf and lunch. We were also invited to participate in a community tree planting event with the National Trust. We contributed to creating a thriving woodland, providing a vital habitat for species like the purple hairstreak butterfly. We welcome new members who would benefit from some additional support to develop friendships.

Trauma Geek Course

I am currently working through an eight-week course run by Janae Elisabeth (The Trauma Geek), an autistic researcher and advocate. Insights on the polyvagal theory, trauma and healing strategies are shared. For me, the aim of this course is to develop self-understanding and provide a space for reflection on my experiences. Below, I will introduce key ideas from the course particularly in relation to understanding of our nervous systems.

- ❖ We all have three neural circuits in our nervous system. These neural circuits have protective purposes and are a response to perceived safety or threat. Based on the polyvagal theory, these neural circuits include the ventral vagus (social engagement mode). Sympathetic activation is our fight or flight response. We may be constantly scanning the environment for threats. The dorsal vagal is the shutdown or freeze response (in this state, we may disconnect from ourselves. The dorsal vagus response can cause inflammation and lead to depression).
- ❖ Neurodivergent people can experience sensory, attachment and social trauma. If autistic people have too much or too little sensory stimulation, they may become overwhelmed. Having experiences invalidated and being isolated can be traumatic for autistic people. Attachment patterns are a result of life experiences.
- ❖ Co-regulation is vital. Learning about nervous systems can also be helpful. In addition, honouring individual experiences and connecting with a likeminded community is important.



Top Tips for Christmas

- ❖ Allow yourself extra time to rest when needed. Have a dedicated quiet area of the house (for me, this is my bedroom).
- ❖ Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable (my pink, fluffy oodie is my favourite!)
- ❖ If needed, keep decorations to a minimum or only decorate a specific area of the house to reduce overwhelm.
- ❖ Attend Christmas events at a quieter time of the day or attend sensory-friendly sessions.
- ❖ Set boundaries with family and friends (I prefer having only one or two people round at a time. I do not mind surprises however you may prefer to ask family and friends not to wrap your gift/s).
- ❖ Discuss/use a visual timetable to show what will happen on Christmas day. Plan to spend time doing something you enjoy and include an activity that is part of your “normal” daily routine (for me, this is a walk on the beach).



Photography by Lauren Smith



Please get in touch with our team if you would like more information about our work or would like to get involved with our projects. We would love to hear from you!