

A Different Perspective CIC August 2023 Issue 11



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Autism Resources and Information.

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Quote:

*"If your world's become
a prison, then the
person with the key is
the one who put you in
there and that's the one
who will set you free" –
Donna Williams.*

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

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the latest edition of our company newsletter. We hope you are enjoying the summer break.

This year has been one of restoration, processing, and healing. I have learnt a lot about myself – my capabilities, my strengths, challenges, and limits. We all need to take time out for ourselves and reflect on our life experiences and values.

I'm looking forward to supporting more autistic young people and their families. I am also in preparation for moving to Scotland to begin a PhD in Education, with an autism specialism. Please send all the cookies!



Authenticity.

It takes courage to be yourself in a world
where you are constantly told that who
you are isn't enough. Being yourself is the
biggest gift you can offer yourself and
others. Be brave enough to show the world
who you are without an apology.

-Ash Alves

Our Turn to Talk Podcast:

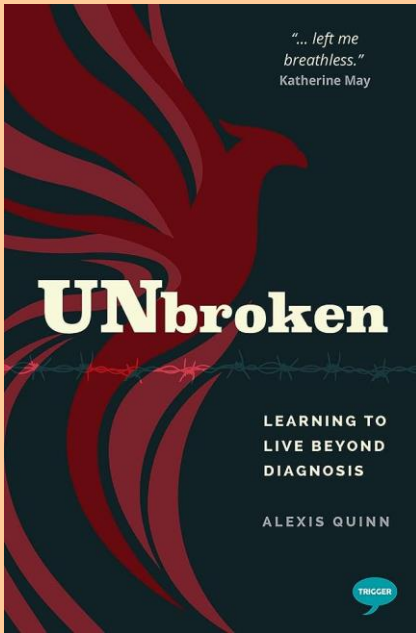
Recently, Aaron, a young person who accesses our social group and I created a podcast with the National Children's Bureau. We discussed our educational experiences as young autistic people. We focused on social challenges and sensory issues. We include a variety of strategies to support other autistic people in schools. Please have a listen.

"I use the term 'surviving, not thriving' which is the best way I can describe my social experience during my time at school."

[Experiences of Education as an Autistic Person | Our Turn to Talk
\(zencast.website\)](#)

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**Book
Recommendation:**



Unbroken – Learning to Live Beyond Diagnosis by Alexis Quinn.



All behaviour is a form of communication!

Autism Understood – a website designed by and for autistic people.
[Autism Understood](https://www.autismunderstood.com)

Reflection Questions:
What would your ideal day be? Who would you spend it with?
What would you do if you were the only person in the universe?

I'M BORED!

Could actually mean.....

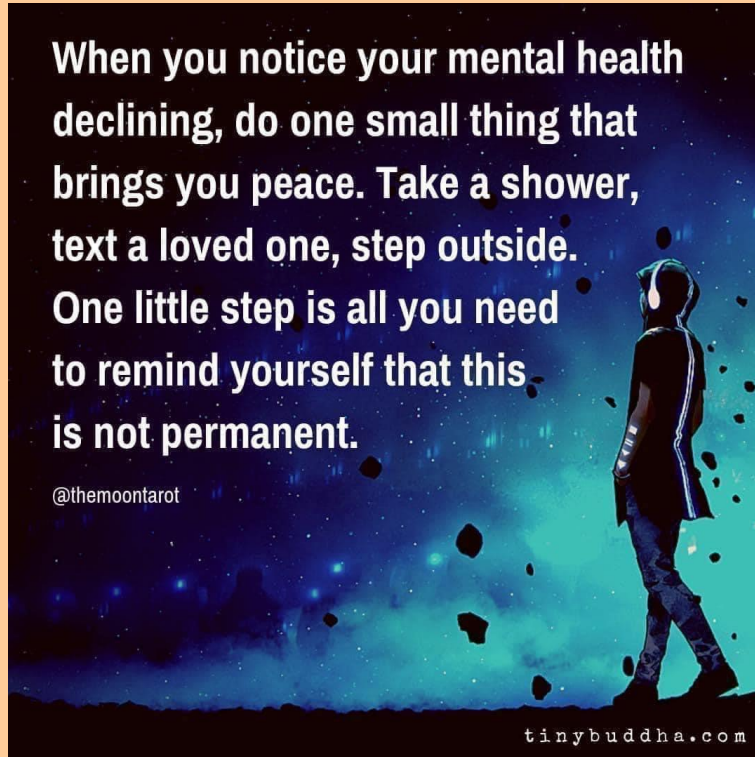
- My anxiety is high and I need something to block it out.
- I'm too overwhelmed to focus on a task.
- I'm in need of some sensory input in order to function.
- I'm too low on energy/dopamine to initiate a activity/task.
- I'm feeling disconnected and need you.
- My head is too busy and I need help making it stop.
- I'm not sure what I am feeling but I'm hoping by saying 'I'm bored' you can help me.

www.jodiesmitten.co.uk

Neurodiverse Connection

This neurodiverse community interest company offer consultations, individual support and training workshops. They aim to promote understanding and flexible ways of working. They have a variety of blogs and resources on different topics.

[Neurodiverse Connection \(ndconnection.co.uk\)](http://ndconnection.co.uk)



An Extract of the Poem 'Confusion.'

Is it my autistic tendencies?

Overwhelmed, struggling to read social cues, find it hard to cope with routine changes, difficult to cope with unpredictability, struggling to put a name to how I feel. Desperately need a plan, but I can't decide what to do.

My emotions are too intense, I can easily go from 0-100 in a matter of seconds without warning. Takes hours to calm down.

Wanting to connect with people but scared of putting myself out there for fear of attachment and fear of rejection.

Obsessive, impulsive thoughts.

Listening to loud music just to drown out the voices in my head. I resent my mind.

Burnt out, exhausted of living in my mind.

(Written by Lauren Smith).

Oliver McGowan Article

Hello everyone! I hope you're all well!

I've now successfully completed my Level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning course at Weston College, and I've recently received my certificate. A few weeks ago, I had my last day of placement at a local primary school whilst studying the course and I am so humbled and appreciative to receive these thank you cards from my teacher and the children in the class! I enjoyed every moment studying the course and completing my school placement and I've learnt a great deal!

I was planning on studying Level 3 next year, however an exciting opportunity came up and I knew I had to apply for this job role as I have always wanted to have a paid opportunity to raise awareness of autism.

In the middle of July, I went for an interview in Bristol, and I accepted the exciting offer of a newly introduced part time job role under the NHS to provide and deliver mandatory autism training to health care colleagues across the regions of North Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire. NHS staff will receive training from myself, as a person with an autism diagnosis and they will gain knowledge and understanding about caring for patients living with learning difficulties and health conditions such as epilepsy.

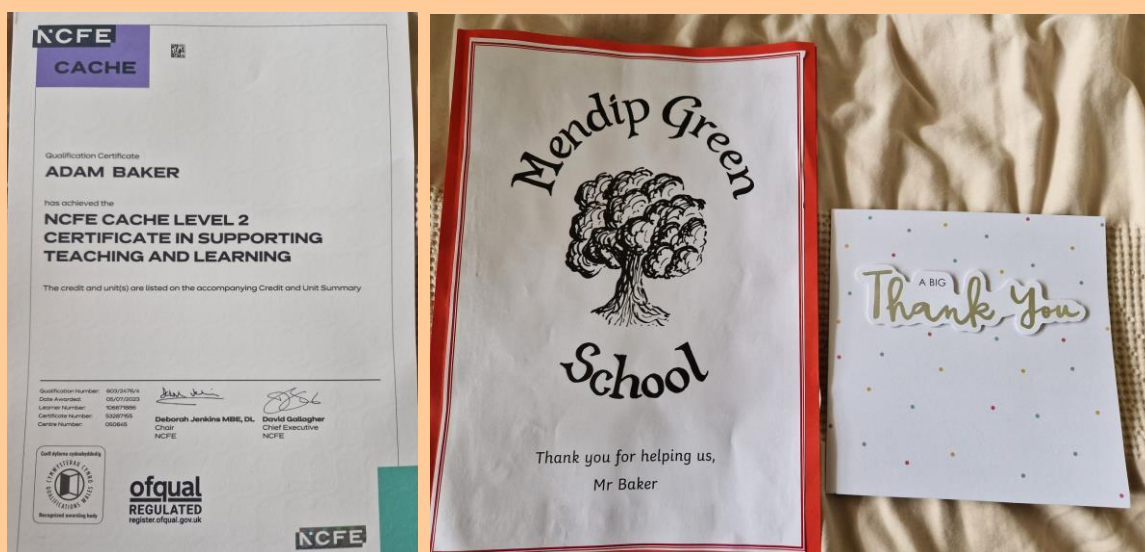
The mandatory training is being rolled out to NHS health and care staff across the country, after a patient sadly passed away due to an epileptic seizure and medical negligence in 2016.

Oliver McGowan, who was autistic, epileptic and had learning difficulties was given an anti-psychotic drug; Oliver and his family disagreed with this treatment and repeatedly told nurses of his negative reactions to the drug. Due to miscommunication, mismanagement, and a total lack of awareness of his personal needs including his learning difficulties and autism, this led to his sorrowful passing. His passing at Southmead Hospital was avoidable, and if there were knowledge and understanding and reasonable adjustments in place, his death could have been prevented.

According to a BBC news article, the first part of the Oliver McGowan training is being rolled out following a two-year trial and a total of over 8,000 health and care staff have received training on understanding autism and learning difficulties. The overall aim of this campaign is to save more lives and to create a better and improved system of care to patients with learning difficulties. This training and campaign have been co-developed by Oliver's family. His mother, Paula McGowan OBE, has worked tremendously hard to ensure all NHS staff will receive mandatory training so that the tragic situations Oliver went through will never be repeated.

I am looking forward to starting this new chapter and career in my life, where I will help develop content and travel across areas of North Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire to train NHS staff to the very best of my ability.

Written by Adam Baker.



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An Introduction to Support at University.

What is Autism?

Autism is a spectrum condition; it is a neurological difference mainly affecting social communication and interaction. Some of the challenges associated with autism can be explained through three theories. The theory of mind explores how autistic people struggle to read and interpret other people's thoughts and intentions, making it harder to predict behaviours. The central coherence theory can explain how autistic people find it hard to understand the context and bigger picture and instead prefer to focus on specific details. The executive functioning theory can explain the non-social aspects of autism, including challenges with self-regulation, impulse control, memory, planning and organisation. Many autistic people have co-occurring diagnoses including anxiety and ADHD. Despite this, autistic people have numerous strengths; these include honesty, loyalty, passion for a particular area and creativity.

The Transition:

Micro and macro transitions can be incredibly daunting and anxiety-provoking for autistic people. Starting university can be a huge leap into the unknown. The unique challenges of independent living, socialising, and taking care of mental health must not be underestimated; these are key areas where autistic people may require additional, targeted support. An autism-specific open day at the university and tours of student accommodation could be helpful so that people can begin to build likeminded connections and familiarise themselves with support available. Sharing of information is crucial. Autistic people should be provided with opportunities to explain their strengths, challenges and needs with university staff; their preferred method of communication must be respected when they are expressing themselves. Additionally, regular meetings with disability and wellbeing teams and one to one mentoring should be offered as part of the Disabled Student's Allowance. It could also be helpful for staff to work with autistic students to create a set of coping cards to help them navigate different situations.

Peer Support at University:

Peer support is vital at university. However, developing and maintaining social relationships can be difficult for many autistic people, particularly when in unfamiliar, busy environments. Due to the nature of the course, I studied, I found friends who truly understand and accept me for who I am. Educators can help facilitate peer support through setting up buddy systems and offering online meetups before students join lectures. This can give students a chance to get to know each other in a safe space. Consideration should be given when planning pair and group work; roles should be clearly assigned, and the groups should be with people the autistic person feels safe with. Neurodiverse spaces could also be set up in the form of societies or virtual spaces. Being surrounded by people who experience similar challenges can help us feel less alone and misunderstood. A buddy could attend initial meetings to help widen social circles. It is important to recognise that for some autistic people, socialising, and masking to fit in can be exhausting and can lead to burnout. Therefore, it is vital that students are encouraged to socialise in their own way, at their own pace and quiet spaces are provided for downtime.

Please follow me at 'A Different Perspective CIC' on Facebook and Twitter/email me at: differentperspectives98@gmail.com

Blog by Lauren Smith.

The Parent Network:

Our Facebook page – The Parent Network - provides autism information, resources, and regular updates on parent meetups in North Somerset. We offer a safe space for parents to meet likeminded people, share experiences and gain support.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/parentnetwork21>

Recently, our social groups have enjoyed a trip to Kaspas Desserts, Puxton Park and Cadbury Hill. We have enjoyed meeting some new faces and are looking forward to upcoming events. We are always looking to welcome autistic children and young people who may benefit from engaging and structured activities in a safe environment, to help build confidence and friendships.



Images by
Lauren Smith

You are
enough.

Change is the
only thing that
is certain.

Trust your
instinct. Trust
the process.

Negative
emotions can be
useful.

Find your
passion – follow
your curiosity.

Please check out our website for autism information, resources, services and more!

www.adifferentperspective.info

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!

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