

SMT Open House: Social Care practice with autistic people

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Part One Recap

Overview:

- What is autism?
- Autistic experiences

Outcomes:

- Reflected on and developed our understanding of autism
- Began to reflect on the role of the social care worker with autistic people

Part Two

Overview:

- Social care practice with autistic people: communication and reflection

Aims:

- Continue to reflect on the role of the social care practitioner with autistic people
- Consider how you will apply your learning on autism in your practice

NB: Slides will be circulated. The session will be recorded and uploaded on the L&D hub for you to refer to in future.

Recap: Identity-first language

LANGUAGE MATTERS!
WHY DO WE CALL OURSELVES AUTISTIC?

MANY AUTISTIC PEOPLE PREFER
IDENTITY FIRST LANGUAGE.

AUTISM IMPACTS THE WAY WE SEE, EXPERIENCE AND
NAVIGATE THIS WORLD.
IT CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM WHO WE ARE AS PEOPLE.
CALLING OURSELVES AUTISTIC IS A DECLARATION OF PRIDE!



WHETHER A PERSON WANTS YOU TO REFER TO
THEM AS AUTISTIC OR A PERSON WITH AUTISM,
IT'S NOT UP TO YOU, IT'S UP TO THEM!

neurodiversitylibrary.org

Principles of practice with autistic people

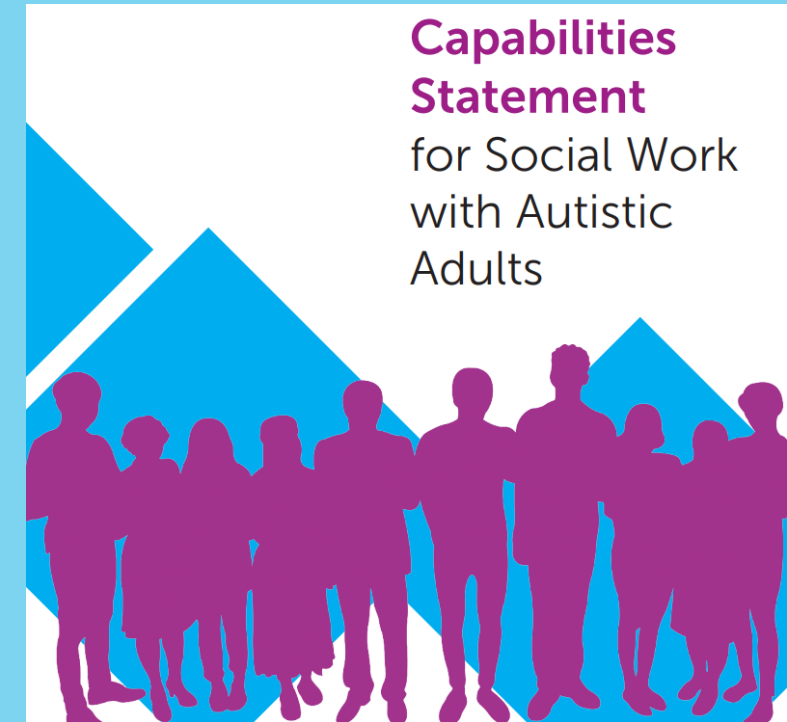
- Social care practice with autistic people is **not** primarily about whether they are diagnosed. It is about addressing **needs**.
- Ensuring that people are **not excluded** from services – they may self-identify, or may have a diagnosis they do not accept.
- **Relationship-based** and **trauma-informed practice** is fundamental. Many autistic people lack trust in services due to past experience of **institutional abuse/neglect**.
- Risk they will be **retraumatised** if we get things wrong.

BASW Capabilities Statement and Toolkit

The **British Association of Social Workers** has a **Capabilities Statement**, specifically aimed at Social Work with Autistic Adults.

Alongside this are a range of resources, including:

- a **practice toolkit** for social workers: including reflection tools, top tips, plus easy read material
- a **toolkit for autistic adults**: including resources that explain the role of the social worker, a feedback tool and easy read material
- a **self-evaluation tool** for organisations



Social care practice with autistic people

- Sylvia Stanway is an autistic adult and parent. She was involved in co-producing the Capabilities Statement for social work with autistic adults.
- In this video Sylvia talks about the importance of the **Capabilities Statement** and about using this in practice to **communicate** effectively, build **relationships**, develop an understanding of **needs**, **advocate** for and support family life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QafdCRpnH08>





How do you feel after watching Sylvia's video?

How will you promote Sylvia's key messages?

Reflections about your own practice?



A model of relationship-based practice with autistic adults



Communication – some principles

The Equality Act 2010 enshrines a duty for service providers to make **reasonable adjustments** to ensure that disabled people are not denied access to the same services, as far as this is possible, as someone who is not disabled.

There is a huge range of types of reasonable adjustment.

Today let's focus on communication.



Equality Act 2010

Communication – setting the tone

- Lots of **relationship breakdown** between practitioners and autistic people at the very **early stages** of contact.
- It is important for practitioners to build **trust** and show the person that they are able to **work with them effectively**.
- This means **getting communication right** from the beginning.



Communication – setting the precedent


When you are first allocated to work with an autistic person, it is important to ask their **communication preferences**.

This might include: preferred name and pronouns, calls/texts/emails, if they need written information presented in a certain way etc.

Make people aware of their **legal right to an advocate**, to help them communicate.

Please flag people's communication preferences on their Mosaic profile so Duty/other workers can see!

Warning
Change

 Please contact initially via email not phone. Please do not make unannounced phone calls.

Camden Communication Passport

- We have developed a Communication Passport to ensure we capture all this information for new referrals of autistic adults, and ensure we are **getting communication right from the start**.
- People can complete the passport themselves, or with the help of a practitioner.
- We have developed **guidance** on how to complete the passport.

Camden Autism Communication Passport

Personal Information	
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
I like to be called	Click or tap here to enter text.
My pronouns	Click or tap here to enter text.

How I would like you to communicate with me	
I like to talk <input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer easy read <input type="checkbox"/>
I can talk, and need time to give my answers <input type="checkbox"/>	I cannot read and write <input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer written communication to <u>be</u> by letter <input type="checkbox"/> by email <input type="checkbox"/> by text <input type="checkbox"/>	I can talk, but only to people I know <input type="checkbox"/>
I need another form of communication, which <u>is</u> Click or tap here to enter text.	I am nonspeaking <input type="checkbox"/>
I would like you to contact another person before contacting me <input type="checkbox"/> Their name is Click or tap here to enter text. Their relationship to me is Click or tap here to enter text. Their contact details are Click or tap here to enter text.	

More information about how I like people to communicate with me

Click or tap here to enter text.

More information about how I communicate

Click or tap here to enter text.

I have sensory needs to consider when communicating with me

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please note: If you would like, you have a legal right to bring a trusted person with you to meetings to help you communicate. If you do not have anyone to bring, you can have an independent advocate. Please tell us if you would like to be referred for an advocate.

Camden Autism Passport – Guidance

This passport is designed to help you explain how you like to communicate. It will help staff give you the right communication and support.

Please complete this form yourself, or you can ask for help to complete it with a member of staff.

The passport will be saved on your file. Staff will review it before they contact you.

You can review and update the passport whenever you want. You might want to make a copy of it for yourself.

Use these guidance notes to help you, or your carer, to complete the passport. The questions given below are prompts to help you think. Please don't just answer yes or no, but give detail about your needs.

More information about how I like people to communicate with me

- Do questions need to be short and specific?
- Do you prefer phone calls and meetings to be scheduled in advance?
- Would you like to be sent information/an agenda in advance of meetings?
- Would you prefer text to be written in bullet points?
- Would you prefer pictures or symbols?
- Would you prefer a particular font size or colour?
- Will it help if people point at things or demonstrate things?
- Do you need extra time for meetings?
- Should people ask your advocate/carer to help explain things to you?

More information about how I communicate

- Will you talk back to people?
- Will you need to write your answers down?
- Would you prefer to use pictures or symbols?
- Will you be able to point at or demonstrate things?
- Would you prefer that your carer/advocate answers questions?

I have sensory needs to consider when communicating with me

- Do you dislike strong smells?
 - Do you dislike bright lights?
 - Do you dislike loud noise, or background noise?
 - Can you cope with certain sensory situations if you have time to prepare?
-



What are some reasonable adjustments you could make to your verbal communication?



Verbal Communication adjustments

- Say **less** and say it **slowly**
- Leave **time** after questions
- Use **specific** key words, **repeating** and stressing them
- **Pause** between words and phrases to give the person time to process what you've said, and to give them a chance to think of a response
- Don't use too many questions
- Use **less non-verbal communication** (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language)
- Use **visual supports** (e.g. symbols, timetables, Social Stories) if appropriate
- Be aware of the **environment** (noisy/crowded) that you are in. **Sensory differences** may be affecting how much someone can process.
- Tailor **length of session** to person's preference
- Keep questions short /structure your questions, e.g. you could offer options or choices/ use open ended questions where possible?
- Be **specific**.
- Be aware of using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms or exaggeration. If you do use these, explain what you have said and **be clear about what you really mean** to say.



What are some reasonable adjustments you could make to your written communication?



Written Communication adjustments

- Some autistic people might struggle to pick out important points in long letters/leaflets/posters etc. and as a result **might miss key information**.
- Some autistic may need **written communication** in particular formats to help them process and interpret. It is important to **find out what they prefer**.
- You don't have to reinvent things. Build on the resources you have by:
 - **enlarging** text or **changing colour** text for key information
 - writing in **short sentences**/with **bullet points**.
 - adding **staff pictures** on emails, letters or service information
 - adding a **venue map/pictures** to posters and invites for activities and meetings.
- Lots of autistic people find telephone calls stressful – could **texting** or **whatsapp** work?

What is happening in Camden?



Autism Lead Practitioner Drop-In and Team Meetings

We are holding a weekly one-on-one information and advice service for any practitioner working with autistic people.

The sessions will be held both online (Tuesdays) and in-person in 5PS (Wednesdays) every alternate week.

To book a space, email Isabel (Lead Practitioner – Autism): Isabel.lowe-zinola@camden.gov.uk

Isabel will be coming to your team meetings to discuss casework with autistic people.

Camden Autism Partnership Board

Camden Autism Partnership Board is an equal partnership group made up of autistic people, family members, carers and friends and a range of service representatives from health, social care, police, and voluntary and community services.

We meet as a large group 4 times a year in March, June, September, and December. If you would like to attend, **please contact Rachael Bond at Rachael.bond@camden.gov.uk or 0207 974 3405.**

What is happening in Camden?



Adult Social Care Practice Guide and L&D Hub A-Z What Matters

We have been working to update our Autism content and resources on the Practice Guide and L&D Hub, which can be found here:

[What is autism? | Practice Guide \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

[Course: Autism Awareness: Introduction \(learningpool.com\)](#)

Oliver McGowan Training

An NHS **e-learning** module to help health and social care staff to have better skills, knowledge and understanding of the needs for autistic people and people with a learning disability. It takes about 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete, and can be found on the L&D Hub, here:

<https://camden.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=1600>

Bonus – TV show!

A 2-part BBC documentary all about what it means to be autistic. It is hosted by Chris Packham, who was diagnosed with autism as an adult. [BBC iPlayer - Inside Our Autistic Minds](#)

**Thank you for your participation!
Any questions?**

