

Guidelines for therapists working with autistic people



connect with autistic adults

Connect with autistic adults to grow your understanding of what autistic adults have to say about the experience of autism and therapy. Autistic adults highlight the damaging effects of behavioural therapies (such as ABA), the importance of using Identity First language and the need for autistic people to be involved in evidence based research on therapeutic interventions:

<http://autisticfamilies.org/resources/therapy>

<https://unstrangemind.wordpress.com/2014/10/07/aba/>

educate yourself

Educate yourself about the neurodiversity paradigm so that you are not pathologizing autistic people. Autism is a naturally occurring genetic neurological variation and not a disorder or a disease:

<http://autisticfamilies.org/welcome-to-autism/neurodiversity>

challenge yourself

Challenge yourself to explore how many of the myths about autism you continue to hold. Ableism is deeply entrenched in our society and as a result, most of us have underlying ableist beliefs that inform our thoughts and behaviors. Therapists working with autistic people need to critically reflect on the beliefs that inform their practice:

<http://autisticfamilies.org/Myths-about-Autism.pdf>

understand

Understand that because autism is genetic, if you're supporting autistic children, you're likely meeting at least one neurodivergent parent, often undiagnosed. Consider this in all your interactions with parents and when developing workshops, conferences or other events so that they are sensory friendly and autism positive:

<http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/neurotypical-psychotherapists-and-neurodivergent-clients>