

4th Autism and Systemic Practice Conference

Re-Visioning Neuro-Inclusive Services with and by Autistic People

Thursday 6th and Friday 7th July 2023 - ONLINE

<https://4systemicautism.eventbrite.co.uk>

Some context

Therapeutic theory about autism was in the main created by non-autistic people but has influenced what support is offered. Most services have been designed by non-autistic people. Furthermore, therapists train in programmes with extremely limited attention to autism let alone neurodiversity. In traditional professional narratives, autism is often understood as a disability, a deficit or disorder within a person. The autistic person is not always seen as able, contributing and living an intersectional life with many parts to themselves.

At this conference, this online event, we will hear some examples of how services have developed that draw on the experience, expertise and leadership of autistic people. And we will re-imagine theory and practice to inform future service design.

We will have time to listen and talk in small groups to discuss:

- What theories do therapists need to work with autistic people - when autistic people can be so different from each other?
- Which systemic ideas about context and identity could be useful?
- How should and could autistic people influence training programmes and service design?

Who is the conference for?

- Therapists (this includes Counsellors, Psychotherapists, Systemic Practitioners, Psychologists, Social Workers, Mental Health Workers, Carers, Psychiatrists)
- Policy makers and Managers
- Autistic people, neurodivergent families and networks

Keynote Speakers

- **Conor Eldred-Earl. Principles of co-production and participation in NHS England and beyond.** *NHS England.*
- **Georgia Pavlopoulou & Ruth Moyse. Rewriting the narrative: mental health services with and for autistic people.** *At-Autism and Anna Freud Centre.*

- **Tara O'Donnell-Killen. Post-Assessment Support** - from the book "Adult Autism Assessment Handbook. A neurodiversity affirmative approach". *Thriving Autistic*.

Presentations

- Culture Shift in Organisations. Part 1: Neurodiversity Strategies. Dr Mairi Evans.
- Culture Shift in Organisations. Part 2: The myth of the autism specialist. Dr Mairi Evans
- From Autistic Spectrum to Multi-Spectra Living. Gail Simon and Fran Urbistondo Cano
- Multimedia communication in therapy. Sue Swan
- "Frozen" - Not at all. Living metaphors. Lynsey Waterhouse
- Self-medicating in a Difficult World. Monica Whyte
- Crash the clinic. David Steare and Amanda
- Incarcerated. Systemic Therapists Resisting Pathologising Institutions. A conversation. Dawn Thibert and Sophie Cockell
- Listening beyond words. Engaging with and including non speaking autistic individuals in psychotherapeutic practice. Keri Delpont

Elevator Pitch Sessions

Five minute talks *by any conference participant(s)* on what you think is important for people to know about setting up a Neuro-Inclusive Therapy Service.

Tips on doing a five minute presentation:

- Main your main point first so people hear what you're focusing on.
- Aim to make 3 - 5 points max.
- Stick to time.
- Speak clearly.

Example subjects: sensory environment; sound; information; things to do; rules; race and autism; queer and autistic; trans and autistic... Your decide...

Book yourself/selves in to present with a title, your name(s) and email address to systemicautism@gmail.com

What impacts could come out of the conference?

- Ideas for neuro-inclusive services and practice
- Re-design of therapeutic delivery
- Re-thinking what training means in the context of neuro-inclusivity
- New theory-practice relationships
- Getting beyond the colonial practice of pathologising
- A manifesto or campaign for change in therapeutic service delivery

Some philosophy for this event

The Autism and Systemic Practice movement encourages that

- i) Autistic people and their families should not be defined by pathologising or restrictive gendered, racial, heteronormative and biomedical narratives which have the power to name and separate people into single hierarchical normalcies.
- ii) Holistic views of the diversity between autistic people need hearing through their stories so people's identities, lifestyle and relationship choices are described *by* them and not only filtered through professional narratives *about* them.
- iii) First person narratives need foregrounding so that autistic people's unique and varied experiences are heard and validated.
- iv) New ways of seeing, talking and being in professional contexts are needed to honour neuro-inclusivity and intersectionality in order to enhance the lives of autistic people, their families and their networks.
- v) Critical evaluation of the way in which identity is constructed within health and social care. How come some identities are foregrounded over others? Why is there a hierarchy of single identities? Who decides what services are useful and why?

Some Watching and Reading...

Look at some presentations from the last Autism and Systemic Practice Conference on **Autism and Intersectionality** at <https://systemicautism.com> and on the [Systemic Autism YouTube Channel](#).

Read some brilliant papers in a Special Issue on Autism and Intersectionality on *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice* here: <https://murmurations.cloud>

Booking

There are two fees for the ticket.

Professionals pay £90.

Experts by experience, their friends and family, systemic trainees: enter the promo code **autism123** at the checkout for free entry.

The URL for booking is <https://4systemicautism.eventbrite.co.uk>