

# Annual Professionals' Conference Programme

13 March 2025

## Exploring the principles of neuroaffirmative practice

- 9am **Welcome by the Chairs**  
**Dr Carly Danesh-Jones**, Autism Consultant and Advocate  
**Tim Nicholls**, Assistant Director of Policy, Research and Strategy, National Autistic Society
- 9.10am **Welcome address**  
**Carrie and David Grant**, National Autistic Society Ambassadors, Vocal coaches and Broadcasters
- 9.20am **Plenary session - What is neuroaffirmative practice? Panel discussion and Q&A**  
**Holly Sprake-Hill**, autistic Specialist Occupational Therapist and parent  
**Davida Hartman**, Adjunct Professor, University College Dublin; Clinical Director, The Adult Autism Practice  
**Dr Holly E.A. Sutherland**, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Edinburgh
- 10.10am **Short break**
- 10.20am **Plenary session - Autism in the Black Community: Intersectionality and access barriers**  
**Marsha Martin**, Founder of Black SEN Mamas
- 11.10am **Morning break**
- 11.30am

### Stream A: Education and young people

Chairs:  
**Dr Carly Danesh-Jones**  
and **Tim Nicholls**

#### If not social skills training, then what?

**Hat Richardson**, AuDHD  
(autistic and ADHD) Speech  
and Language Therapist  
and Neurodevelopmental  
Practitioner, Hat.Talks

### Stream B: Mental health and clinical services

Chair: **Peter Watt**

#### Eating disorders and autism

**Dr Rachel Loomes**, Principal  
Clinical Psychologist,  
South West London and  
St. George's Mental Health  
NHS Trust

### Stream C: Supportive approaches

Chair: **Fenella Cannings-Jurd**

#### Self-advocacy and inclusivity: A non-speaker's perspective

**Tim Chan**, adult autistic  
non-speaker

12.15pm **Lunch break**

# Conference Programme



1.15pm

## Stream A

**Neuroaffirming research into practice - monotropism in the classroom and beyond**

**Tanya Adkin**, autistic Education Consultant and **Helen Edgar**, Teacher and Consultant

## Stream B

**The landscape of autism diagnosis**

**Claire Dowling and Tom Cahill**, NHS England, **Mohammad Mohit, Dr Manjari Tanwar and Dr Hilary Toulmin**, North East London NHS Foundation Trust

## Stream C

**Understanding and supporting AuDHD**

**Dr Annie Clements**, Founder/CEO - Autism and ADHD

2pm

**Short break**

2.10pm

## Stream A

**The NEurodivergent peer Support Toolkit (NEST): Co-designed and research-informed materials for mainstream secondary schools**

**Dr Catherine Crompton**, University of Edinburgh

## Stream B

**Identification and treatment of PTSD in autistic people: Navigating the unknown in the absence of robust evidence**

**Dr Freya Rumball**, Principal Clinical Psychologist and Researcher, Queen Mary's Hospital

## Stream C

**Autism and allyship: Moving from awareness to action**

**Lee Chambers**, Business Psychologist, male allyship specialist and speaker

2.55pm

**Afternoon break**

3.10pm

## Stream A

**AI, Industry 4.0 and autistic students: Hype, hope and what actually works!**

**Caroline Keep**, Doctoral Researcher in Digitalisation in Education, University of Central Lancashire

## Stream B

**Supporting autistic people with sensory needs**

**Holly Sprake-Hill**, autistic Specialist Occupational Therapist and parent

## Stream C

**Hopeful optimism in the university - supports and specialist mentoring in HE**

**Dr Brian Irvine**, Research Fellow and Comms and Engagement Officer, CRAE

3.55pm

**Short break**

4.05pm

**Plenary session - Creating restriction-free lives: Applying low arousal approaches**  
**Professor Andrew McDonnell**, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Director of Studio III Clinical Services

4.50pm

**Closing remarks from the Chairs**

5pm

**Conference ends**

# Conference Programme



## Additional on-demand sessions

Alongside the live programme on 13 March, we have six additional sessions that can be watched at a time that suits you. These will be available to view from Monday 17 March.

- 1 **Untangling autism and chronic illness**  
**Charli Clement**, autistic author
- 2 **Health and healthcare support needs in older autistic people**  
**Dr Liz O'Nions**, Epidemiologist at Bradford Institute for Health Research  
**Professor Joshua Stott**, Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Ageing and Clinical Psychology at UCL
- 3 **Interoception, the eighth sense: The science of how we each uniquely feel**  
**Kelly Mahler**, Occupational Therapist
- 4 **Self-advocacy and inclusivity: A non-speaker's perspective**  
**Tim Chan**, adult autistic non-speaker
- 5 **Successful transitions: Transdisciplinary working to support children and young people and their families**  
**Dr Irina Roncaglia, Corinna Laurie and Joanne Neill Smith**, National Autistic Society Clinical Leads
- 6 **Understanding how autistic people experience trauma**  
**Caroline van Diest**, CBT and EMDR Therapist