

# 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**, NAS Ambassadors, Vocal coaches and broadcasters
- 9.20am **Plenary session - What is neuroaffirmative practice - Panel discussion and Q&A**  
**Andy Smith**, Founder of Spectrum Gaming;  
**Davida Hartman**, Adjunct Professor, University College Dublin; Clinical Director,  
The Adult Autism Practice;  
**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 Black SEN Mamas
- 11.10am **Morning break**
- 11.30am

### Stream A: Education and young people

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

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

**Hat Richardson**, AuDHD  
(autistic & ADHD) Speech &  
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 &  
St. George's Mental Health  
NHS Trust

### Stream C: Supportive approaches

Chair: **Fenella Cannings-Jurd**

#### 'By us, for us': How autistic- led support transforms self-understanding

**Andy Smith**, Founder of  
Spectrum Gaming

12.15pm **Lunch break**

# Conference Programme

1.15pm

Stream A	Stream B	Stream C
<p><b>Neuro-affirming research into practice - monotropism in the classroom and beyond</b></p> <p><b>Tanya Adkin</b>, Autistic Education Consultant &amp; <b>Helen Edgar</b>, Teacher and Consultant</p>	<p><b>The landscape of autism diagnosis</b></p> <p><b>Claire Dowling &amp; Tom Cahill</b>, NHS England, <b>Dr Mohammad Mohit</b>, <b>Dr Manjari Tanwar &amp; Dr Hilary Toulmin</b>, North East London NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p><b>Understanding &amp; Supporting AuDHD</b></p> <p><b>Dr Annie Clements</b>, Founder/CEO - Autism &amp; ADHD</p>

2pm **Short break**

2.10pm

Stream A	Stream B	Stream C
<p><b>The NEurodivergent peer Support Toolkit (NEST): co-designed and research-informed materials for mainstream secondary schools</b></p> <p><b>Dr Catherine Crompton</b>, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p><b>Identification and treatment of PTSD in autistic people: navigating the unknown in the absence of robust evidence</b></p> <p><b>Dr Freya Rumball</b>, Principal Clinical Psychologist &amp; Researcher, Queen Mary's Hospital</p>	<p><b>Autism and Allyship: Moving from Awareness to Action</b></p> <p><b>Lee Chambers</b>, Business Psychologist, male allyship specialist and speaker</p>

2.55pm **Afternoon break**

3.10pm

Stream A	Stream B	Stream C
<p><b>AI, Industry 4.0 &amp; Autistic Students: Hype, Hope &amp; What Actually Works!</b></p> <p><b>Caroline Keep</b>, Doctoral researcher in Digitalisation in Education, University of Central Lancashire</p>	<p><b>Supporting autistic people with sensory needs</b></p> <p><b>Holly Sprake-Hill</b>, Autistic Specialist OT and parent</p>	<p><b>Hopeful Optimism in the University - supports and specialist mentoring in HE</b></p> <p><b>Dr Brian Irvine</b>, Research Fellow and Comms and Engagement Officer, CRAE</p>

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**

## 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 & Chronic Illness**  
**Charli Clement**, Autistic author
- 2 Health and healthcare support needs in older autistic people**  
**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 8th Sense: The Science of How We Each Uniquely Feel**  
**Kelly Mahler**, Occupational Therapist
- 4 Self-advocacy and Inclusivity: A Nonspeaker’s Perspective**  
**Tim Chan**, Adult autistic non-speaker
- 5 Successful Transitions: Transdisciplinary working to support children and young people and their families**  
**Dr Irina Boncaglia, Corinna Laurie & Joanne Neill Smith**, National Autistic Society Clinical Leads
- 6 Understanding how autistic people experience trauma**  
**Caroline van Diest**, CBT and EMDR therapist