

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

2pm **Short break**

2.10pm

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

2.55pm **Afternoon break**

3.10pm

Stream A	Stream B	Stream C
<p>AI, Industry 4.0 and autistic students: Hype, hope and what actually works!</p> <p>Caroline Keep, Doctoral Researcher in Digitalisation in Education, University of Central Lancashire</p>	<p>Supporting autistic people with sensory needs</p> <p>Holly Sprake-Hill, autistic Specialist Occupational Therapist and parent</p>	<p>Hopeful optimism in the university - supports and specialist mentoring in HE</p> <p>Dr Brian Irvine, 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 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