


Helping with understanding neurodiversity

User guide:
Autism, Identity, and Me

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| <p>The intervention</p> | <p>Autism, Identity, and Me</p>  |
| <p>Where to find it? How much does it cost?</p> | <p>https://www.routledge.com/</p> <p>The cost of the resource is £30, which includes a practical workbook for students and a professional guide.</p> |
| <p>What does it target?</p> | <p>The resource is based on the evidence that children and young people who have a positive understanding of their autistic identity have higher self-esteem and wellbeing as adults.</p> <p>It uses a social model interpretation of autism to help children and young people to understand their diagnosis. This means that it focuses on helping students to identify their unique strengths and to identify the barriers that might be encountered due to the way in which society currently functions.</p> <p>There are two books included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A guidebook to help build the adults' (parents, carers, school staff, therapists) understanding of autism and autistic identity. 2. A workbook to support children and young people as they develop a positive understanding of their autistic identity. <p>Each of these can also be ordered separately.</p> |

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| <p>Who is it for?</p> | <p>Autistic children and young people aged 10+ (and their adults) may benefit from this resource if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have been diagnosed as autistic (recently or in the past). - Want to find out more about autism. - Want to understand what being autistic means to them. - Are struggling with a lack of sense of 'self' or self-esteem. - Are struggling with the barriers that they face as an autistic person in society. <p>The children and young people will need some language skills:</p> <p>The programme uses a lot of vocabulary that might be new to some students – words such as 'attention', 'communication', 'energy' and 'anxiety'. The content can be simplified (and there are lots of visuals in the resource), but adults will need to build in lots of time if students struggle with vocabulary.</p> <p>The programme encourages children to use language to reflect on themselves and their experiences. For example, being able to think about what they enjoy, what their sensory preferences are, and how they experience different emotions.</p> |
| <p>What is it?</p> | <p>A workbook that students work through at their own pace with a supportive adult. The adult can use the guidebook to help inform the conversations that they have with the student. (It is best to read the guidebook in advance of the session).</p> <p>The topics covered are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My physical identity 2. My personality and interests 3. Feeling different 4. What autism is 5. My autistic identity 6. Other autistic individuals 7. My toolkit 8. My personal passport 9. My autistic identity statement 10. Self-advocacy <p>The Autistic Society have some information about the programme on their website: Helping young people to understand their autistic identity (autism.org.uk)</p> |
| <p>How does it work?</p> | <p>The programme involves some vulnerability because students are exploring their autistic identity. Therefore, it is essential that the student feels regulated, connected, and safe.</p> <p>It works well delivered on a one-to-one basis so that students can work through the exercises at their own pace, spending more time to explore topics that feel important, for example by seeking out further articles or videos.</p> |

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| | It could work for a small group (2-3 students) if the above requirements can be satisfied. |
| Who can deliver it? | A parent, carer, member of school staff or therapist who has a positive understanding of autism and is willing to guide the child or young person sensitively through the workbook. It is beneficial if the adult knows the student well. |
| How long does it take? | <p>The programme can be used flexibly depending on the child or young person's needs and available resources.</p> <p>Each of the ten topics takes at least one hour to complete, and sometimes more. The authors also recommend that time and space is given to enable children and young people to further explore topics if they are of particular interest.</p> <p>You will also need time for summing up and reflection at the end.</p> |
| What resources do I need? | The programme provides session plans and all resources required to run the intervention (downloadable PDFs of the worksheets are also provided). A laptop or tablet connected to the internet is also useful for further exploration if required. |
| How do I show progress? | The student is guided through completing a toolkit, a personal passport, and an autistic identity statement. |
| Top tips | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read each section of the workbook in advance of the session, so that you understand what is covered. • Have an open mind to the child or young person's thoughts and experiences • Encourage others around the child or young person to build a positive understanding of autism. |
| Additional resources | <p>Neurobears is a course about the autistic experience. It has been created by autistic adults in collaboration with autistic young people: Pandas (pandasonline.org)</p> <p>Autism Understood is a website about autism for autistic young people. It encourages a positive understanding of autism.</p> <p>If you use social media, you can find lots more positive resources about autism by searching using #actuallyautistic</p> |
| Evidence base | The programme was developed by Rebecca Duffus who is an Advisory Teacher with a special interest in autism. It was developed in collaboration with autistic individuals. |