



South West London
Clinical Commissioning Group

Autism and Language

Kingston SEND Partnership Board

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Bringing together Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth

Thank you to KJay

autistic
diagnosis
severity
with
autism
spectrum
ASD
neurodiversity
condition
treatment
disorder
person



Challenge and Opportunity

- Diagnostic criteria
- Medical vs social model
- Debate about person first vs disability first language
- Opportunity for discussion across the system
- Highlights the need to consider individual difference/preference



First hand views.

- Autism is a part of who I am, it is a core part of my personality. I do not “have” autism. I am an autistic person.” – Olivia.
- “Autism is a way of being. It is pervasive; it colours every experience, every sensation, perception ,thought ,emotion and encounter, every aspect of existence. It is not possible to separate the autism from the person – and if it were possible, the person you’d have left would not be the same person you started with.” Sinclair 93.
- “In describing someone who’s autistic as a person with autism/ person who has autism (or worst of all) person who suffers from autism you imply that autism is separate from a person, and being their autism is a “normal” person “. Autistic woman quoted by Liz Pellicano et al.



www.identityfirstautistic.org

Person
with
autism



Autistic
person



Neurology is not an accessory
www.identityfirstautistic.org



Autism Spectrum Condition.

“Use of the term ASC acknowledges that people with the condition have particular and unique strengths and abilities despite their range of disabilities requiring a medical diagnosis.”

(Baron Cohen et al (2009)Prevalence of ASC; UK based population study. The British Journal of Psychiatry [online] 194,500-509.)



NHS England; Learning Disability and Autism Programme. Top tips.

- Talk about autism positively. Many autistic people see autism as part of who they are, rather than something separate and prefer to be described as “autistic” or “on the autism spectrum”.
- Do not use negative language like suffering from autism, symptoms, treatment.
- Every autistic person is different.
- Autism is not a learning disability or mental illness. But some autistic people also have a learning disability and many people have a mental health problem



NHSE Advice.

Use	Avoid	The reason
Autism or Autism Spectrum	ASD , Autism Spectrum Disorder	Don't use abbreviations. "Autism Spectrum Disorder is the official way of describing autism but many autistic people and families feel this is too negative. Autism is a difference not a disorder.
Autistic adult/ people	Adult/ person with autism	Many autistic people see autism as a part of who they are – rather than something separate
Children on the autism spectrum	Children with autism	Less agreement about describing children.
Autistic or on the autism spectrum or talk about autism as a condition or disability	Suffering from Use of mild, moderate, severe	Reference to "suffering from" and severity measure can cause strong reactions as many people feels this is devaluing.



Feedback from Kingston diagnostic teams.

- Diagnostic teams are using DSM 5 criteria for diagnosis and in the assessment report stating that a child meets the criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- In a therapy setting services are talking to parents and children and young people about preferred language.



Resources

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/about/get-involved/involving-people/making-information-and-the-words-we-use-accessible/#autism>

#describingautism

<https://Theconversation.com/watch-your-language>

<https://what0-18.nhs.uk/health-for-young-people/mental-health-and-wellbeing/autistic-spectrum-condition-asc>

https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx?gclid=CjwKCAjw55-HBhAHEiwARMCszulzjFEB0vmgKrutCN0HOqzTSKgKk_hY_bXUHp5nZx5LwqPXkP74CRoCh-sQAvD_BwE

<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/help-and-support/how-to-talk-about-autism>

