

NEWSLETTER


Season's Greetings

From everyone at the Centre for Autism

Welcome to the new Centre for Autism Newsletter and thank you for subscribing. We hope that you enjoy receiving these updates.

Centre for Autism Wellbeing Hub Launch Event

With over 600 people joining us in-person and online, our Wellbeing Hub launch event on the 9th November was an evening to remember.

We are very grateful to all of you for your enthusiasm and input.

For those of you who were unable to attend on the evening, a recording of the talks is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/Wellbeing-Hub-Launch>

Community involvement is central to the Wellbeing Hub and as part of our activities on the evening, we asked our attendees to help us get a better sense of what the phrase “autistic thriving” meant to them. We had over 330 responses and after analysing the results, we generated some interesting key themes some of which we are able to share in the image.

We are continuing to expand our analysis of the data, but we'd like to thank everyone who took part in this exercise. The findings will guide us in our planning and development.



"Feeling safe"

"Not feeling judged for being different"

"Living the life I want to live rather than the one society says I should"

"Being happy and content"

"Being able to do the things I like without barriers or difficulty, guilt or shame"

"Being able to truly and fully be my authentic self"

"Being accepted for who I am"

"Being heard and understood"

Centre for Autism 
Wellbeing Hub Monthly Talks
Free online public event

Date: Thursday 11th January, 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.

Speaker: Pete Wharmby: Sensory Comfort for Autistic People

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/CfA-Wellbeing-Hub-Jan-talk>

Pete Wharmby is an autistic speaker, writer, tutor and parent, who is working to improve autism acceptance in society by sharing insights and experiences of autism to the widest possible audience.

Future talk dates @ 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.

8th February 2024: Andy Smith (Spectrum Gaming) – Creating Hope Through Autistic Community

7th March 2024: Sarah-Jane Critchley – Autistic Joy from Why to Wow!

Registration details will be available in early 2024

Centre for Autism 
Termly practitioner Special Interest Group

Date: Wednesday 21st February, 4.00 – 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: Dr Mairi Evans: “This is a big ship – it takes a while to turn it around”: Culture shifts in organisations – Developing a neurodiversity strategy to change practice narratives and to promote neuro-inclusivity

The termly **practitioner special interest group** is an opportunity for professionals who work with autistic children and young people to come together in-person to network with other local practitioners, share their understanding of neurodiversity-affirming approaches and hear talks from a range of academics and practitioners working across health, education and social care.

If you are a professional interested in attending this session please email cfaevents@reading.ac.uk

Available places are limited

Neurodiversity-affirming parent-carer support groups: pilot study

In the new year, we will be running a pilot study to develop and evaluate a new approach to supporting parents and carers of autistic children and young people.

Designed to complement existing support services in the local area, we will initially be running the pilot for parents and carers of school-age children who have received a clinical diagnosis of autism within the past 12 months.

The study is currently being reviewed by the University ethics committee and we will begin recruitment as soon as we can.

Please look out for an update in next month's newsletter or email us at autism@reading.ac.uk to receive an information pack as soon as it is available.

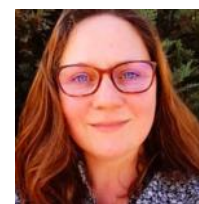
Wellbeing Hub Mission and Team

The Wellbeing Hub is a new initiative, funded by University of Reading Alumni. The aim of the Hub is to bring together autistic children and young people, their families, practitioners and researchers to co-produce and deliver neurodiversity-affirming activities that support autistic young people and their families to lead their best lives. Our initial plans for 2024 include a series of free online talks by autistic adults about thriving, the development of parenting support groups and a practitioner Special Interest Group. Please note that we do not plan to offer mental health interventions, though we anticipate that our future work will include activities that autistic young people tell us will enhance their wellbeing.

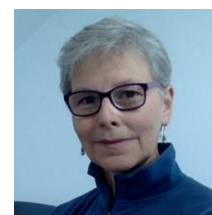
We are a small part time team assisted by a fantastic group of placement students who are studying on the MSc Theory and Practice in Clinical Psychology programme



Dr Fiona Knott
Clinical Director



Dr Jo Billington
Researcher



Hazel McCarroll
Wellbeing Hub Administrator

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

We are investigating the effects of viewing soothing images on the mood and wellbeing of autistic and neurotypical adults. We're looking for participants who are over the age of 18, have access to a computer or mobile device and have 30 minutes to spare. You will be asked to complete a few questionnaires on your wellbeing, view some soothing images and explain which ones were your favourite. This study will take place entirely online.

To participate please click the link below:

<https://uor-redcap.reading.ac.uk/surveys/?s=FM4WWHAL7TT9AED9>

If you have any questions, please contact the researchers:

- Charlotte: vy002056@student.reading.ac.uk
- Isobel: zs001838@student.reading.ac.uk
- Teresa: t.tavassoli@reading.ac.uk

This study has been granted ethical approval by the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee

If you have any feedback for the newsletter including anything you would like to hear about then please get in touch autism@reading.ac.uk

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