

NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year! Welcome to the 1st issue of Centre for Autism Newsletter of 2024.

Wellbeing Hub January talk

On the 11th January, we were delighted to welcome Pete Wharmby as our first guest speaker in our new series of monthly talks on the theme of autistic thriving.



Pete's talk focused on the importance of sensory comfort for autistic people and was very well received by the 120 attendees who joined us on the night. A recording of Pete's talk is available here <https://vimeo.com/903674855>

Neurodiversity student training

One of the Hub's aims is to support practitioners of the future to develop neurodiversity-affirming practices. We've rolled out our first training packages to psychology undergraduates and Master's students and feedback has been positive. We are delighted to have four Master's students working alongside us on placement this year.

Development of a new parent/carer support programme

We are looking for parents and carers of recently diagnosed autistic children (5-16 years) to participant in a study to develop a new neurodiversity-affirming post-diagnostic support programme.

The study is currently being reviewed by the University of Reading Ethics Committee and recruitment will begin once approval has been given.

If you are interested in taking part in the study and would like to receive an information sheet when the recruitment process starts, please email autism@reading.ac.uk

Centre for Autism
Wellbeing Hub Monthly Talks
Free online public event



Date: Thursday 8th February, 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.
Speaker: Andy Smith (Spectrum Gaming): Creating Hope Through Autistic Community
Register: <http://tinyurl.com/CfA-Wellbeing-Hub-Feb-talk>

Andy is an autistic adult and the founder of Spectrum Gaming, a charity that supports over 1,600 autistic young people across the UK.

Future talk dates @ 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.

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

16th May 2024: Nic King - Young autistic people and the importance of self-understanding.

Registration details will be available soon

Centre for Autism
Special Interest Group
Free in person event for professionals



Date: Wednesday 21st February, 4.00 – 6.00 p.m. Tea and coffee provided.
Speaker: Dr Mairi Evans Director; Children, Family and All-Age Services BHFT
Title: Developing a neurodiversity strategy to change practice narratives and to promote neuro-inclusivity
Venue: School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, Earley Gate, University of Reading. Satnav Postcode RG6 7BE
<http://tinyurl.com/SIG-21st-Feb-2024>

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 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

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

All studies have been granted ethical approval by the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee

Investigating speech processing

We are looking for:

- Autistic participants, with a clinical diagnosis of autism spectrum condition
- Aged 16-40
- Native English speaker
- No speech/hearing problems

The study consists of **three sessions**.

Cognitive tasks (~2 hours with breaks)	Auditory attention task (~1 hour with breaks)	Speech listening tasks (~2 hours with breaks)
Standardised tasks to assess your cognitive abilities.	You will be distinguishing the target speaker from other speakers and background music.	You will be assessed on your sensitivity to a range of language processing components. Electroencephalographic (EEG) data will be collected in this task. EEG is a non-invasive way to record the electrical activity of your brain. Find more info about EEG here

Compensation: £10 per hour plus travel expenses

If you are interested, please click the link to register <https://reading.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/registration-form>

If you have any questions, please contact caasd@reading.ac.uk

Investigating the effect of sensory world experience and sleep

Have you ever wondered if how you experience the sensory world around you affects your sleep? Or how your sleep may affect how you perceive the world around you? We would like to understand the sensory experiences of autistic adults better and if and how these may affect sleep and vice versa.

Who are we looking for: Autistic adults aged 18 and above

What will the study involve: The study would involve taking part in a one hour long online discussion about sensory differences upon sleep.

If you are interested, please contact: S.taylorjones@student.reading.ac.uk or f.bolwer@student.reading.ac.uk

Investigating sensory experiences and preferences in daily life

Who are we looking for: Children aged 7-15 years and their parents/caregivers needed for a short questionnaire study

We are gathering responses from children about what sensory experiences they prefer in their daily lives, and comparing this to what parents/caregivers perceive as the child's sensory preferences. Some children can have difficulties with understanding and labelling emotions, so we are interested in how this affects their ability to report on their sensory preferences.

You will have the option to enter a draw for one of 2 £25 Amazon vouchers after taking part.

To participate please click the link [Links between Self- and Caregiver-Reported Sensory Questionnaires and Alexithymia Traits \(Page 1 of 10\) \(office.com\)](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the researchers:

- Jody King: j.a.king@student.reading.ac.uk
- Katie Taylor: katie.taylor@student.reading.ac.uk
- Dr Cathy Manning: c.a.manning@reading.ac.uk Tel: 0118 378 3454

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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