

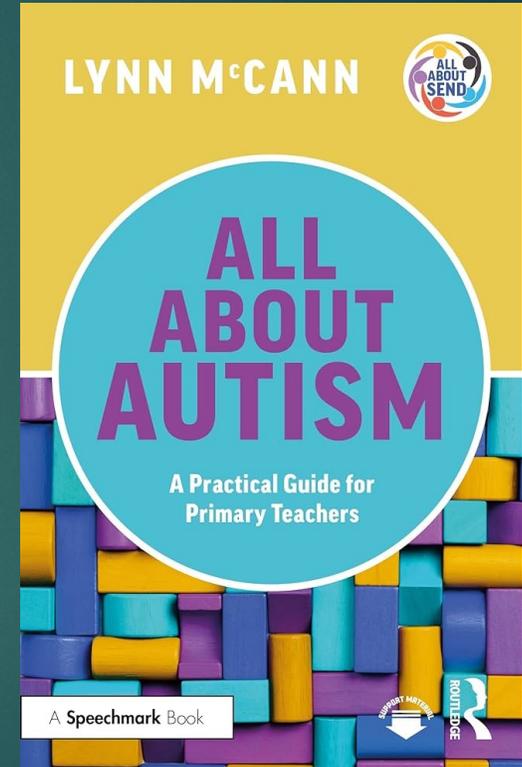


Getting it right for autistic pupils

DEAN BEADLE

MASKING

There will be times in your teaching career when you will hear from parents that their child is having meltdowns at home almost every day after school and they will want to know what is happening at school to cause these. However, to your eyes there will not be a problem at school. The child seems a little quiet perhaps, but they are well behaved in class and have friends to play with at playtimes. To you they are 'fine in school' and therefore it is easy to assume that the problem is that the parents are doing something wrong. This is a common problem for autistic children who have learned early on to **mask** their difficulties and autistic characteristics. It's more than just trying to fit in. It's often driven by huge anxiety and rejection sensitivity that causes panic and trauma at the hint of getting anything wrong, or being 'found out.' If undetected this strategy can seem to be working far into the primary years. But often it begins to unravel in the pre-teen years as the other children start to develop socially more complex relationships and the autistic child is left floundering. **Masking** is more than trying to fit in; it is a denial of their own identity and character, so much so that the autistic child is very vulnerable to disassociating from themselves and taking on the character and personality of others. The stress of holding this all in and keeping up the act at school all day becomes intolerable by the time the child reaches their safe place at home. And then the emotional explosion happens.





**What are the
biggest myths
about autistic
people?**

Autistic people
lack social skills



So what does all this mean?

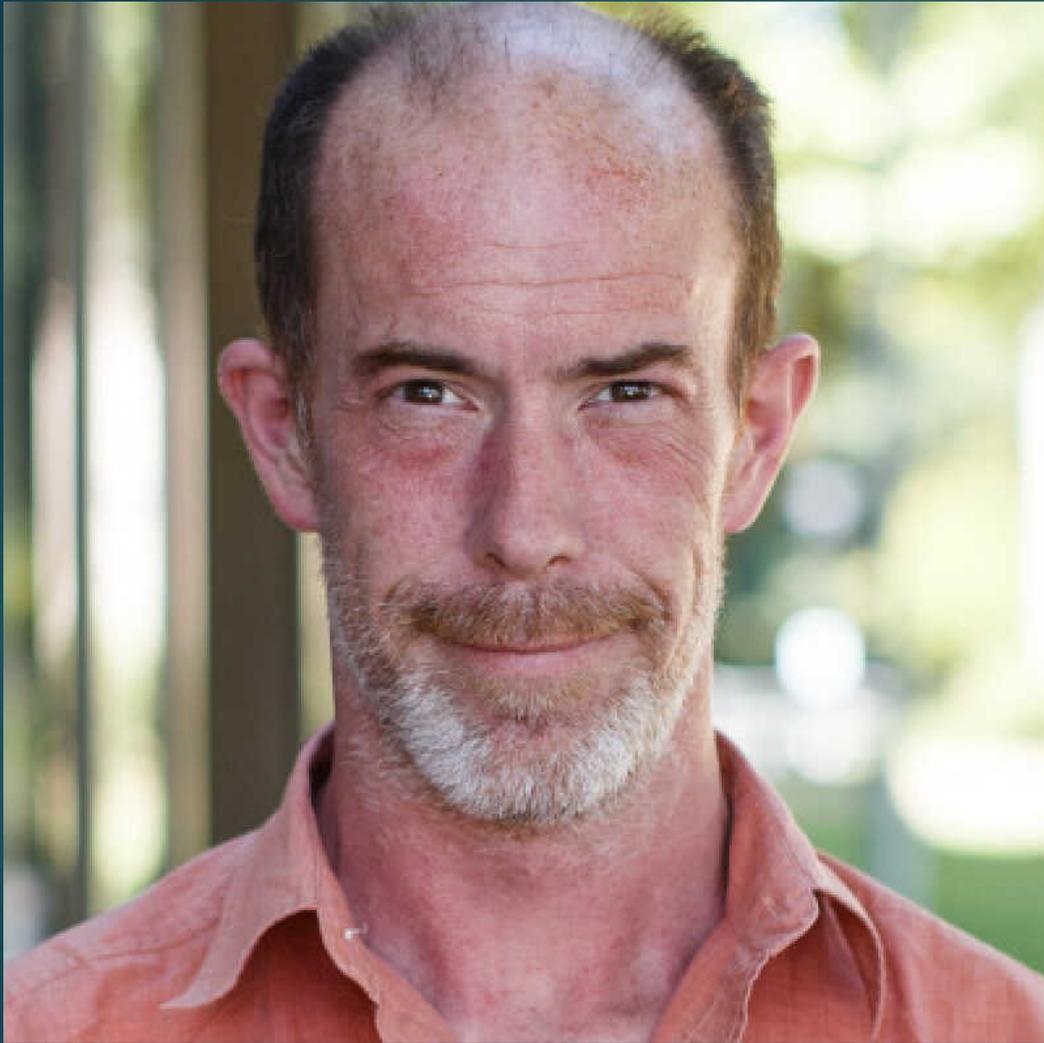
Our interim findings can be summarised as follows

- 1. Autistic people share information with other autistic people as effectively as non-autistic people do.*
- 2. Information sharing can break down when pairs are from different neurotypes - when there is an autistic and a non-autistic person.*
- 3. Feelings of rapport between people of the same neurotype accompany these information-sharing benefits - autistic people have higher rapport with other autistic people, and non-autistic people have higher rapport with non-autistic people.*
- 4. External observers can detect the lack of rapport apparent in mixed autistic/non-autistic interactions.*

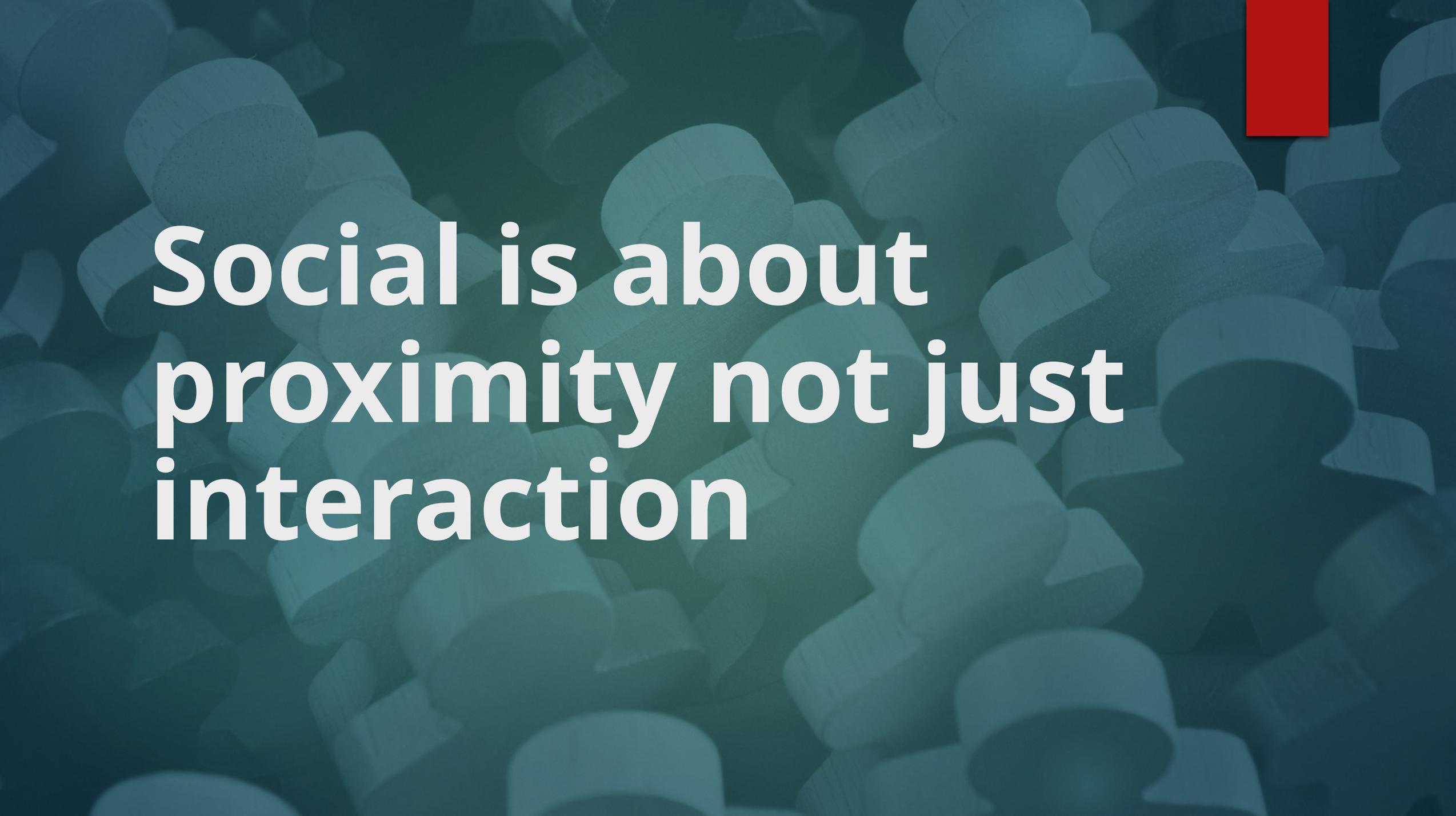
In essence, what we are demonstrating for the first time is that autistic people's social behaviour includes effective communication and effective social interaction, in direct contradiction of the diagnostic criteria for autism. We have, for the first time, uncovered empirical evidence that there is a form of social intelligence that is specific to autistic people.

**Department Of Autism
Research and Technology-
Edinburgh University-
Diversity In Social
Intelligence Project- led by
Catherine Crompton**

<http://dart.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Diversity-in-Social-Intelligence-Participant-Summary-.pdf>



**DR DAMIAN
MILTON'S
WORK ON
DOUBLE
EMPATHY**



**Social is about
proximity not just
interaction**



How can non-autistics make their communication easier to understand for autistic young people?

Autistic people, WITHOUT forced eye contact:



Today, we're going to go to the park, have lunch with Mr and Mrs Hawkins, and go shopping on the way home.



Autistic people, WITH forced eye contact:



Today, we're going to go to the park, have lunch with Mr and Mrs Hawkins, and go shopping on the way home.



Autisticnotweird.com
www.facebook.com/autisticnotweird

Forcing eye contact does not help us listen. It literally does the opposite.

How can non-autistics make their communication easier to understand for autistic young people?

- ▶ Don't just rely on verbal instructions
- ▶ Having variations on the welcome is great- but they are still social demands
- ▶ Be CLEAR- say what you mean
- ▶ We know when we're being patronised
- ▶ WHERE do you want me to look? Plan displays carefully
- ▶ Say less- fewer words, maximum meaning
- ▶ Don't hide your meaning then be surprised when we don't respond- be direct
- ▶ Don't TOUCH me!
- ▶ Does everything have to be in a group?
- ▶ Processing Time

The Importance Of Processing Time

Our Brains Are Actually Doing More

Did you know that autistic brains produce a whopping 42% more information at rest compared to neurotypical brains (Velázquez and Galan, 2013)? That's not a small difference—it's massive!

When autistic people say we See More, Hear More, Smell More, Taste More, and Feel More, we're not being dramatic or speaking metaphorically. We are literally experiencing the world at a higher definition than most people. It's like everyone else has a standard TV while we've got 8K Ultra HD with the volume cranked up and the contrast set to maximum.

<https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/brilliant-autistic-brains-seeing-the-world-in-hd/>

When your walking along talking to your other half and realise he's no longer there then you look behind you and see this [Dean Beadle](#) 😞



PLAY

- Not too many options- makes choosing too difficult
- Sharing- some items are more important to child than perhaps others realise- not everything is 'shareable'- what's mine, what's everyone's?
- Does everything have to be social?
- Parallel play
- Alone and lonely are different things
- What can we do to make activities inviting- teacher on the train discussing 'inviting boy back in'
- Unstructured times can be challenging

Things Worth Looking Up

- Joining child where they are- intensive interaction
- Sensory Stories (Lynn McCann/ReachOut ASC)

WHOSE PLAY IS IT?



If it's determined by adults, organised by adults and controlled by adults- then that's a lesson, not play!

That's a lovely
dinosaur



Does Dino have
any brothers and
sisters?

What's Dino's name?

Myths and misconceptions

“Autistic people just WONT...”



TRANSITIONS



*Charlene Tait,
Former Deputy CEO,
Scottish Autism*

“From the outside we see “stuck”, but what that person is experiencing is SAFETY and FAMILIARITY”

Scottish Autism Transitions Facebook Live Q+A, Jun 15th 2021

What stays the same?



**What can we
do/what
ARE we doing to
create safety
and familiarity?**

Myths And Misconceptions

They just need to
build resilience...





AUTISM + ENVIRONMENT = OUTCOME

Dr Luke Beardon, Sheffield Hallam
University

Avoiding
Anxiety
in Autistic
Children

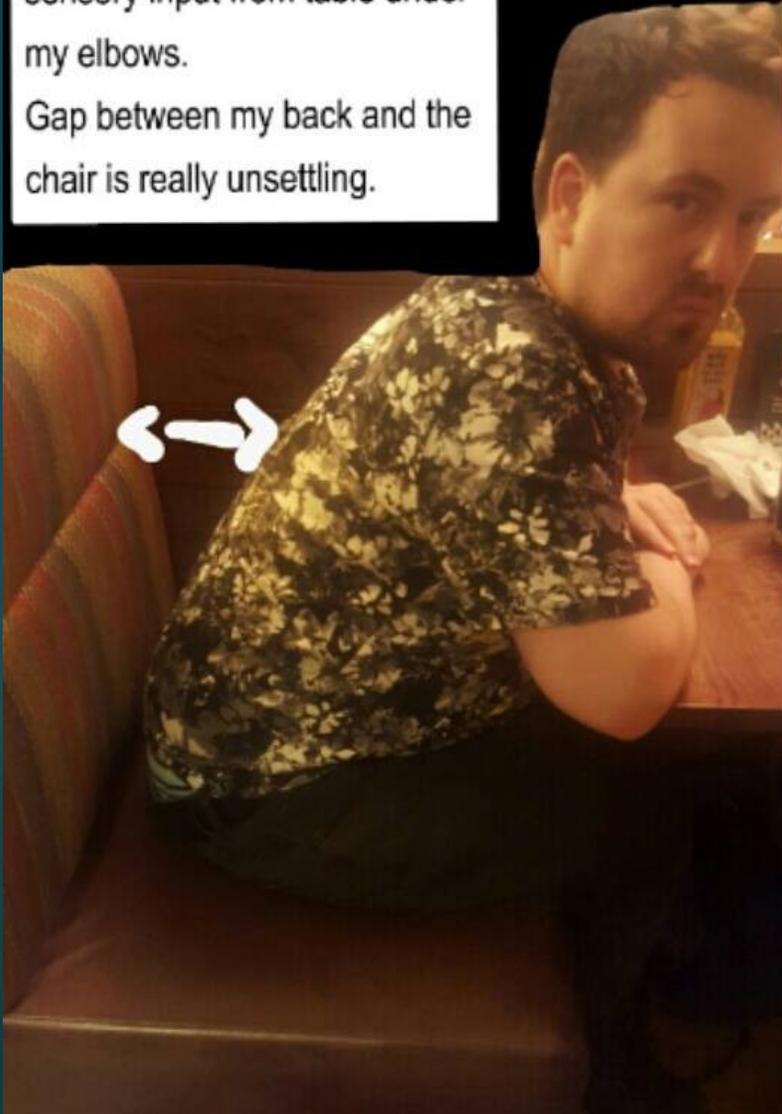
A Guide for Autistic Wellbeing



DR LUKE BEARDON

Thoughts on sitting/carpet time

No back support but some sensory input from table under my elbows.
Gap between my back and the chair is really unsettling.



Some back support but not close enough to table to get sensory input on front of body.
Gap between body and table feels like a canyon.



- ▶ Proprioception- your body's position in relation to your environment- spatial awareness- felt in the muscles and joints
- ▶ Being still isn't an indicator of engagement

**ROSIE
RABBIT**



A short story by
Leanne Thompson

Practical tip: do a sensory checklist with students to assess what sensory challenges the school environment provides and how we can adjust environment to meet need

Sensory Checklist

VISUAL 

Pointer	Evidence to look for	Current Situation	Possible action (if needed)
What is the light like in the classroom?	Flickering lights.		
	Light coming in through the window or blinds.		
	Light on shiny surfaces or objects.		
Is the classroom is neat and tidy?	Wall displays.		
	Different areas for different activities.		
	Is there a workstation to go to if I need some space?		



Myths and Misconceptions

It's just
BEHAVIOUR





Pete Wharmby's 'Worst Possible Interpretation Problem'

www.petewharmby.com

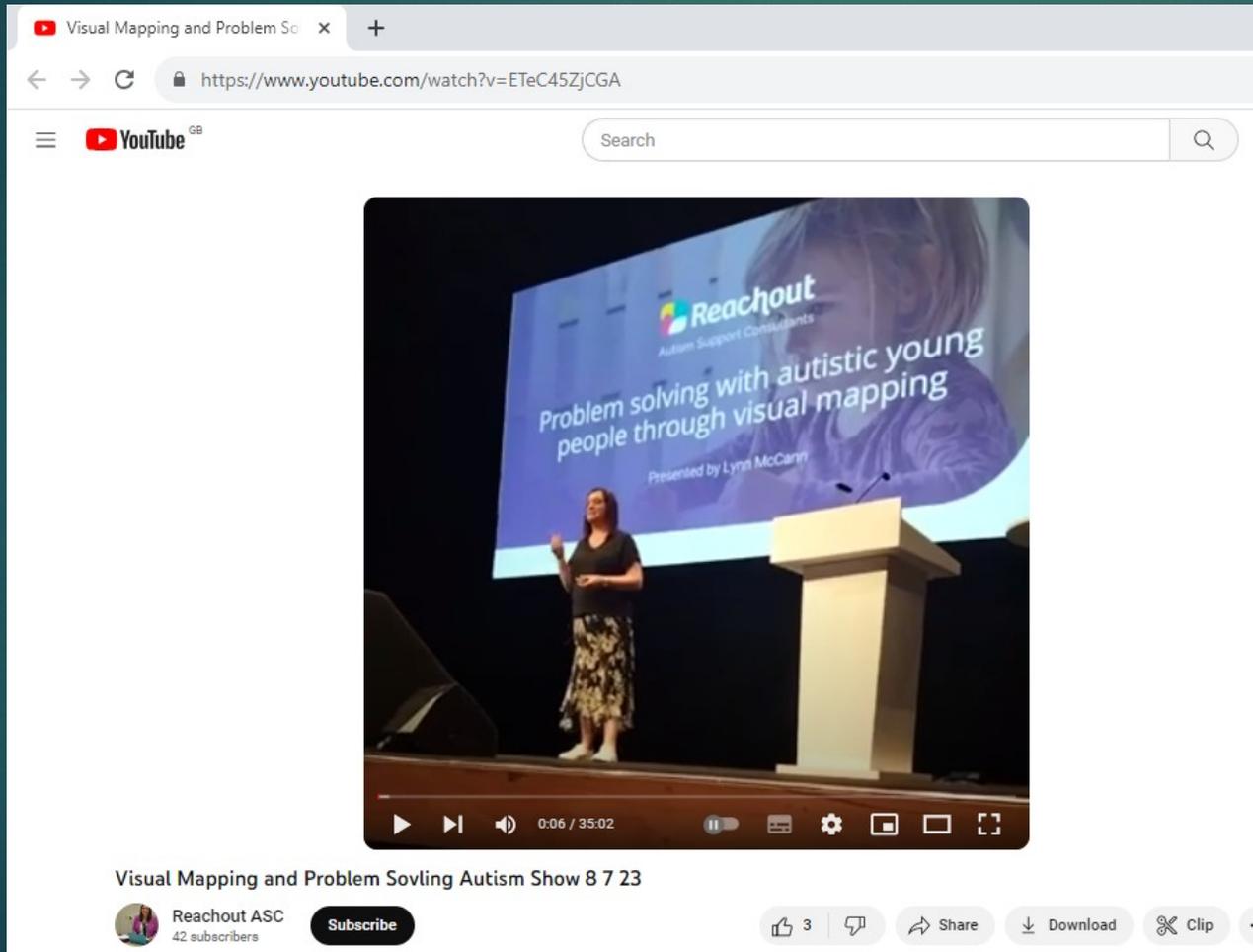


**“I don’t need you to understand
(though that’s always nice), I just
need you to believe me”**

Supporting expression of emotion

Resources

Lynn McCann's Visual Mapping (a way of helping learners to feel that their concerns are heard)



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The browser address bar displays the URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETeC45ZjCGA>. The video player shows a woman, Lynn McCann, standing on a stage next to a podium. Behind her is a large screen displaying the following text: "Reachout Autism Support Consultants", "Problem solving with autistic young people through visual mapping", and "Presented by Lynn McCann". The video player controls at the bottom show a progress bar at 0:06 / 35:02, along with icons for play, volume, settings, and other video controls. Below the video player, the video title "Visual Mapping and Problem Solving Autism Show 8 7 23" is visible, along with the channel name "Reachout ASC" and "42 subscribers". There are also buttons for "Subscribe", "Like" (3), "Share", "Download", and "Clip".

<https://youtu.be/ETeC45ZjCGA>



Safespaces



Safespeak

Working with parents

- BELIEVE them
- If someone tells us they are autistic then they are autistic
- A good number of parents realise they are autistic result of their child's diagnosis
- They may well have been mistreated themselves and want better for their child
- Previous professionals are likely (sadly) to have negative about their child
- The tyranny of phonecalls



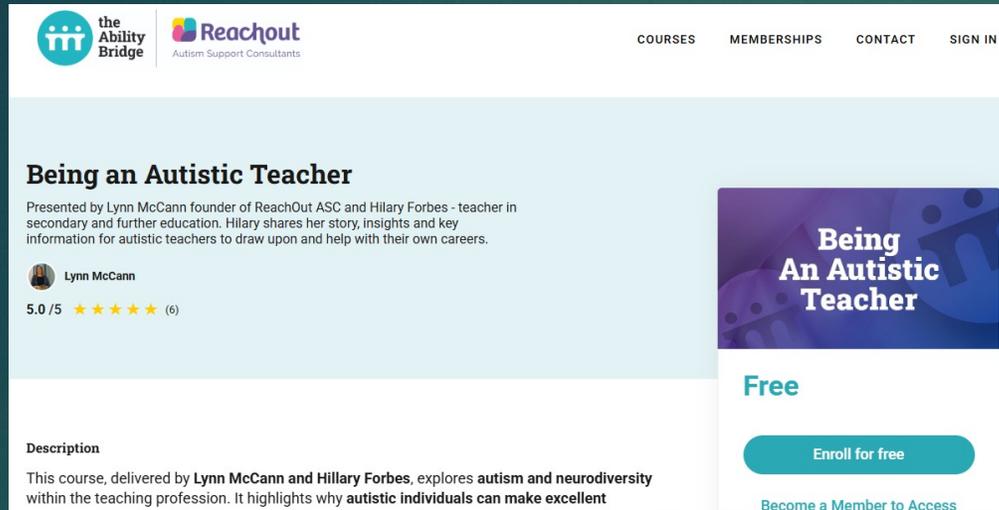
**What brings you/
your loved
one/your student
autistic joy?**

BBC





Resources for Autistic Teachers



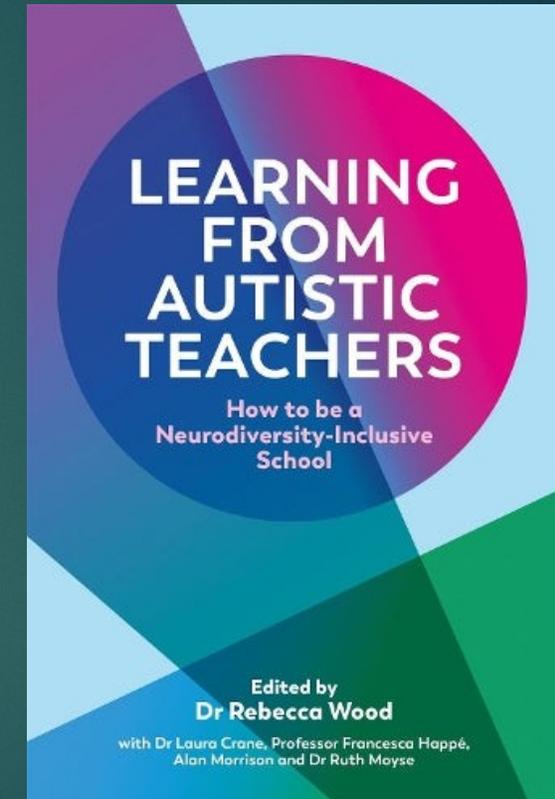
The screenshot shows the course page for 'Being an Autistic Teacher' on the Ability Bridge website. The page features the logos for 'the Ability Bridge' and 'Reachout Autism Support Consultants' in the top left. A navigation menu in the top right includes 'COURSES', 'MEMBERSHIPS', 'CONTACT', and 'SIGN IN'. The main content area has a title 'Being an Autistic Teacher' followed by a short description: 'Presented by Lynn McCann founder of ReachOut ASC and Hilary Forbes - teacher in secondary and further education. Hilary shares her story, insights and key information for autistic teachers to draw upon and help with their own careers.' Below this is the instructor's name 'Lynn McCann' and a 5.0/5 star rating with 6 reviews. A 'Description' section at the bottom states: 'This course, delivered by Lynn McCann and Hilary Forbes, explores autism and neurodiversity within the teaching profession. It highlights why autistic individuals can make excellent'. On the right side, there is a purple box with the title 'Being An Autistic Teacher', the word 'Free', an 'Enroll for free' button, and a link 'Become a Member to Access'.

<https://www.theabilitybridge.com/courses/being-an-autistic-teacher>



The banner features the Reachout logo (Autism Support Consultants) in the top left. The background is a soft-focus image of a young child. The text 'Supporting Neurodivergent Early Career Teachers' is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font.

<https://reachoutasc.com/resources/downloadable-resources/>



The book cover has a vibrant, abstract geometric design with overlapping circles in shades of purple, blue, and green. The title 'LEARNING FROM AUTISTIC TEACHERS' is prominently displayed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title, the subtitle 'How to be a Neurodiversity-Inclusive School' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the editor's name 'Edited by Dr Rebecca Wood' is listed, followed by the names of the contributors: 'with Dr Laura Crane, Professor Francesca Happé, Alan Morrison and Dr Ruth Moyse'.

Resources

9 REASONS TO USE VISUALS

www.northstarpaths.com

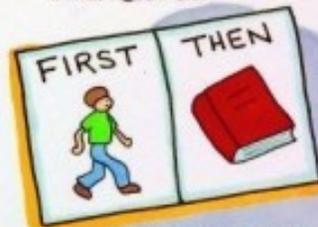
@kwiens62



- VISUALS ARE PERMANENT
(SPOKEN WORDS DISAPPEAR)



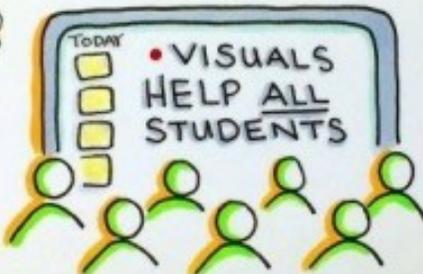
- VISUALS ALLOW TIME
FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING



- VISUALS PREPARE
STUDENTS FOR TRANSITIONS



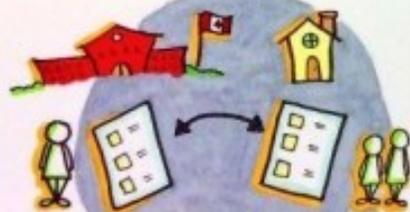
- VISUALS HELP KIDS
SEE WHAT YOU MEAN



- VISUALS HELP ALL
STUDENTS



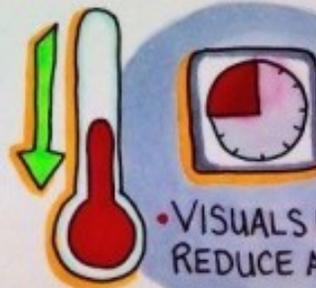
- VISUALS HELP
BUILD INDEPENDENCE



- VISUALS ARE TRANSFERABLE
BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS
AND PEOPLE

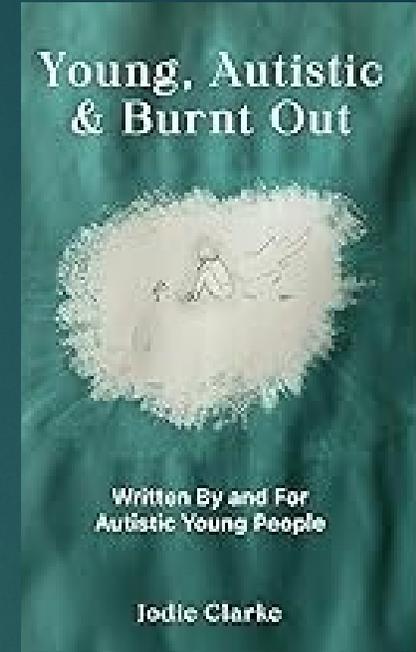
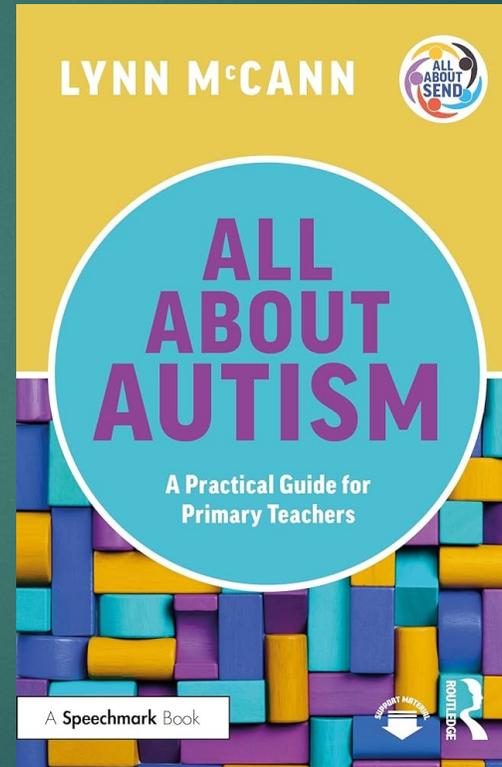
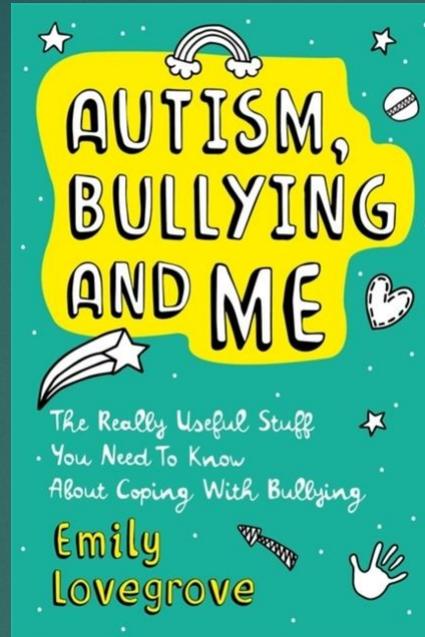
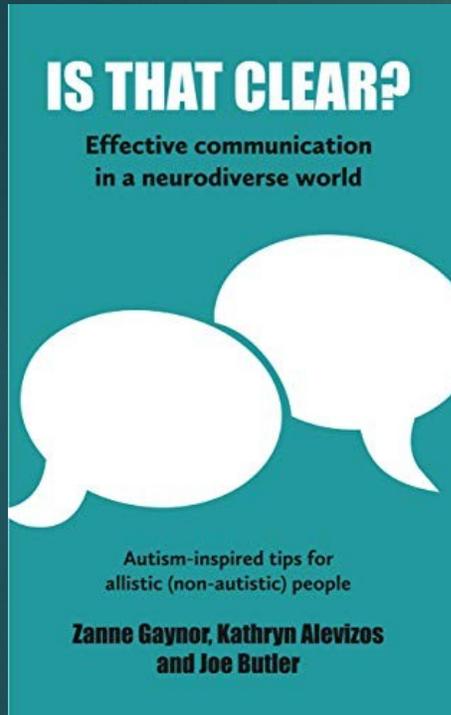


- VISUALS HAVE NO ATTITUDE
• NO TONE • NO FRUSTRATION
• NO DISAPPROVAL



- VISUALS HELP
REDUCE ANXIETY

Kristin Wiens 2017





Instagram: deanbeadlespeaker

TikTok: dean.beadle

Facebook: Dean Beadle Speaker

Twitter: @deanbeadleuk

Youtube.com/deanbeadleuk

deansbeadle@yahoo.com