Autism Awareness

High Speed Training™

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This course will help anyone to understand how to best support autistic children, young people, and adults, in a variety of contexts. The course will deepen your understanding of what autism is, and what it means to be autistic. It will address some common misconceptions, and explore how autism should be viewed as a difference rather than a disorder or deficit.

You will learn that autistic people share common areas of difference, but that each autistic person will have their own individual strengths and challenges. The course explores how those areas of difference might impact an autistic person, and how individualised support should be provided, based on their actual needs. It offers a range of practical strategies to support autistic individuals. The final module allows you to tailor your learning to the most relevant material for you, depending on the context in which you are providing support. There will be opportunities to reflect on and apply your learning throughout the modules and downloadable resources are provided.

Module One – Introduction to Autism

This module provides an overview of what autism is and why it is important to understand autism. It gives a brief history of research and thought regarding autism, looks at how we should describe autism, and considers the concepts of the autism spectrum and neurodiversity.

• Functionality tour
• Foreword by Tigger Pritchard
• What is autism?
• Why is understanding autism important?
• Inclusivity and equity
• Autism timeline
• Common misconceptions
• The autism spectrum
• Describing autism
• Medical vs Social Models
• Neurodiversity and neurodivergence

Module 2 - Areas of Difference

This module looks at common strengths that autistic people often share, and considers the key areas of difference, and how these might impact a person's experience. It also explores meltdowns, shutdowns and autistic fatigue, and looks at mental health.

• Areas of strength
• Communication and language
• Differences in social interaction
• Repetitive interests, behaviours, and activities
• Monotropism
• Sensory differences
• Scenario exercises
• Meltdowns, shutdowns, and autistic fatigue
• Potentially co-occurring challenges
• Autism and mental health

Module 3 -Identifying Autism

This module gives an overview of the diagnostic process, considers the current diagnostic criteria and what an autism assessment might include. It also looks at masking, autism in girls and women, and considers cultural differences that might impact diagnoses.

• Pre-diagnosis - children and young people
• Pre-diagnosis - adults
• Diagnostic criteria
• Autism assessments
• Masking
• Autistic girls and women
• Cultural differences and diagnosis
• Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)
• Education, health, and care (EHC) plans

Module 4 - Supporting Autistic Individuals

In this module, you will learn about taking an individualised approach to supporting autistic people. The module looks at ways to help reduce anxiety, and considers ways to support the areas of difference, whilst acknowledging that your support will need to be personalised to meet the needs of the individual.

• An individualised approach
• Specialist input
• General strategies
• Managing uncertainty, anxiety, and overwhelm
• Recognising and expressing emotion
• Managing uncertainty
• Supporting transitions
• Calming strategies
• Supporting communication differences
• Supporting social interaction
• Bullying
• Supporting sensory differences

Module 5 - Supportive Strategies (Choose Your Path)

The majority of this module is optional Choose Your Path content, giving you an opportunity to access the information that is most relevant to your needs. Learners can view as many of these sections as they wish. At the end of these sections, there is a short section on advocacy for all learners.

Choose Your Path sections:

- Supporting autistic individuals as parents or carers
    - Supporting education, health, and care needs
    - Supporting educational needs
    - The Graduated Approach
    - Home school communication
    - Embracing autistic identity
    - Food issues
    - Sleep issues
    - Online safety
    - Support for parents and carers

- Supporting individuals with PDA
- Supporting autistic individuals as health and social care professionals
    - Guidance
    - The Oliver McGowan mandatory training

- Supporting autistic individuals in the workplace
    - Reasonable adjustments
    - The recruitment process
    - The working environment
    - Communication in the workplace
    - Workplace culture

- What is advocacy?

Aims of the training

By the end of this course, learners will:

- Understand what autism is, and the terminology associated with it.
- Understand the need to approach autism as a difference, rather than a disorder or impairment.
- Understand how autism may be identified and diagnosed.
- Understand the areas of difference and how these may affect an individual.
- Understand that every autistic individual experiences autism differently and that an individual's strengths, aspirations, and needs should drive any provision.
- Understand what is meant by advocacy and ways in which autistic individuals can be supported.
- Understand and identify some strategies that can help to support autistic individuals in a range of contexts.