Autism and Girls Conference
5th November 2019
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<td>Discussion Panel - Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Close</td>
<td>David Colley</td>
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Barry carpenter

Visiting Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University. Chair, National Forum on Girls and Autism.

Barry carpenter is a professor of mental health in education and an author of over 150 articles on a range of learning disabilities/special needs topics. Barry was recently appointed to the UK’s first Professorship in Mental Health in Education, at Oxford Brookes University. He is Honorary Professor at universities in Ireland, Germany and Australia. He has been a Fellow of the University of Oxford.

He has been awarded an OBE and CBE by the Queen for services to children with Special Needs. In 2017 he was entered into "Who's Who" in acknowledgement of his national and international contributions to the field of Special Education.

With a career spanning more than 30 years and holding leadership positions in schools and academia, Barry now lectures nationally and internationally.

Barry has 3 children – one a School Principal, one a Senior Occupational Therapist and a daughter with Down’s Syndrome, who now has a home of her own, published her first book in 2017, and is on an Apprenticeship as a Teaching Assistant.

09.45 - 10.30 | Mental Health and girls on the autism spectrum

Girls with autism are often overlooked for support because their identifying behaviours can be different to those of boys. Without a diagnosis girls on the autism spectrum can struggle with extreme stress, leading to mental health issues, problem behaviours, school refusal or other outcomes which impact on their quality of life.

Traditionally, professionals have worked to a ratio of 1 girl to 4 boys. However, through emerging research, evidence has shown that the diagnostic instruments used are ‘blunt’, male orientated, and do not adequately illuminate the female profile of Autism. Collaborative work across a range of disciplines (education, psychology, neuroscience etc.) with families, and with girls and women with Autism has captured new information which has strengthened the support and interventions we are now able to offer to girls with Autism.

What are the implications of these new findings for evidence based practice in Education? How can practitioners improve their observations and enhance engagement, leading to earlier identification of girls with Autism?

This presentation will be informed by new findings published in


14.00 - 15.00 | Workshops

Option 1 – Mental health and Girls on the Autism spectrum

This presentation will focus upon the profile of Autism in Girls, the risks of mis-diagnosis and of being misunderstood. It will also discuss interventions to support the girls in managing their stress, pressures and anxieties.

This lecture will be based upon new evidence and findings, taken from: ‘Girls and Autism: Educational, Family and Personal Perspectives’: Barry Carpenter, Francesca Happé and Jo Egerton (2019), London: Routledge Publishers
Kate Buckingham
*Founder and Director of Altruist Enterprises*

Katie Buckingham is the Founder and Director of Altruist Enterprises; an experienced provider of Resilience, Stress Management and Mental Health Awareness training to organisations and schools nationally.

Diagnosed with Asperger syndrome at the age of 16 years, Katie sees her autism as an advantage. After completing her A-levels, Katie went on to attend the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy, where she set up Altruist Enterprises in 2013. Since then, she has won various awards, including Birmingham Live’s 30 Under 30 2019, Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 and Birmingham Mail’s Young Achiever of the Year 2017. In 2014, Katie was invited to attend the prestigious ‘Women of the Year Lunch’ in honour of her work raising awareness of and reducing the stigma attached to mental health.

She enjoys public speaking and recently delivered her first TEDx talk titled, ‘I’m fine. Let’s stop masking our mental health issues’ which is available to watch on Youtube.

Katie has been featured in both The Guardian and Evening Standard newspapers and also regularly writes for the Huffington Post on the subject of mental health.

**10.30 - 11.10 | The Advantages of Autism**

This presentation will provide a personal account of living with Autism and journey to discovering the advantages of the condition. Katie will provide personal perspectives on childhood, transitioning through school (with its barriers, misunderstandings and the detrimental impact these had on her mental health), her recovery from mental health problems, what she deems to be the advantages of autism and how these have helped her to achieve in business.
Sarah-Jane Critchley
Programme Head of the Autism Education Trust

Sarah-Jane Critchley is passionate about helping autistic people, their families, friends and supporters live happier lives of their own choosing. She is the internationally recognised author of ‘A Different Joy: The Parents’ Guide to Living Better with Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD and More...’ and contributor to two titles on autism and girls. She wrote an ‘Introduction to Autism’ for AC Education to support adoptive and foster parents. She is an international keynote speaker.

For over 10 years (2008-2018), Sarah-Jane managed the Autism Education Trust working to improve educational provision for young people with autism. She was instrumental in the development, monitoring and management of the training programme that reached over 207,000 education-based staff in the UK and adapting the AET’s highly successful training programme to meet the local context in Italy and Greece. She worked with stakeholders to produce guidance on exam accommodations and exclusions. Sarah-Jane holds a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) specialising in the management of change from London’s City University. She is a mother to two fantastically amazing autistic teenagers (a late-diagnosed girl and a boy) and is married to an autistic husband.

11.30 - 11.55 | Family Perspectives of autism

In this presentation Sarah-Jane will share her 20 years of lived experience and professional perspectives on living in a neurodiverse family. Their journey through multiple diagnoses, mainstream schooling, chronic and debilitating illness, falling out of school, choices they had to make and shot through it all the ups and downs of managing work and family life. This is a story of struggle and progress in all its messiness and all its glory.

14.00 - 15.00 | Workshops
Option 2 - Supporting teachers, supporting girls with autism

Getting it right in schools is vital to the wellbeing of autistic girls, but how do you identify and provide what autistic girls need, especially when every autistic person is different?

Whilst each and every individual has a vital role to play, the magic really happens when everyone in a school, setting or service works together. It takes a common understanding and language of autism underpinning a solid approach that recognises the particular needs and vulnerabilities of girls. This session will give you an overview of a whole school approach including standards, competencies and training supported by the DfE that will enable you to provide outstanding support to autistic girls. We will also discuss other ways to develop your provision and develop an implementation plan to make it happen.

At the end of the session, delegates will:

• Know the importance of a solid understanding of autism to the education of autistic girls
• Have a mechanism to assess their provision against good autism practice
• Be able to identify the autism knowledge, skills and competencies their staff currently have
• Know what areas must be enhanced to include specific skills needed to support girls.
• Know where to find training specifically by and about autistic girls and women
• Develop an implementation plan for their school, setting or service.
Ruth Filder

*Education Consultant, Autism Associates*

Ruth Filder worked at an all age non-maintained special school for 94 pupils across the autism spectrum for 22 years until 2014 and has worked independently since then. During her time on the senior leadership team the school sustained Ofsted outstanding status. Ruth worked within the school promoting interactive approaches and emotional well being for pupils with complex autism.

As a member of the leadership team she had a strategic role and contributed to continuing professional development for all staff. She also led an outreach pilot project working with other agencies to meet the needs of children and young people currently unable to attend school. As well as providing training, she regularly observes and monitors teaching and learning, supporting staff to embed and refine good autism and SEND practice. She regularly presents at local and national events and conferences for parents and a range of professionals. She provides training and consultancy for a variety of schools and services across the UK and with organisations including the Autism Education Trust, the National Autistic Society, the PDA Society. She is a member of the National Autism and Girls Forum and the National PDA development group. She has contributed to publications in the Good Autism Practice (GAP) journal on the subject of promoting emotional wellbeing and is co-author of the following books; ‘Understanding Pathological Demand Avoidance syndrome in children’ (2012), ‘Can I Tell You About Pathological Demand Avoidance?’ (2015) Collaborative Approaches to Learning (2019) and Girls and Autism (2019)

**14.00 - 15.00 | Workshops**
**Option 3 - Supporting girls with a Pathological Demand Avoidance profile**

Supporting girls with a PDA profile: this session outlines the characteristics of the PDA profile and introduces Collaborative Approaches to Learning which promote positive experiences of learning and improved outcomes.
Sarah Wild

*Headteacher of Limpsfield Grange School for girls*

Sarah Wild is the Headteacher of Limpsfield Grange School for girls with communication and interaction difficulties including autism. She has worked in education for 20+ years, in a range of settings across London and the South East. She has experience of leadership in a mainstream secondary school in the east end of London; and special schools in London and Brighton. A qualified Teacher of the Deaf, and English teacher.

Over the past 6 years alongside members of the Limpsfield Grange team she has dedicated time to raising awareness of female autism nationally. Limpsfield Grange School was the subject of the ITV documentary “Girls with Autism” and students of the school have written two novels M in the Middle and M is for Autism with the author Vicky Martin.

She has contributed chapters to books about female autism, edited by Professor Carpenter and Dr Hebron, and has written blogs and articles for a wide range of publications.

Representatives from Limpsfield Grange speak nationally about female autism, and have spoken at the Autism Show London, NAHT and NUT SEND conferences, the National Autistic Society professional’s conference and the House of Lords.

Sarah is a founding member of the Autism and Girls Forum, and has contributed to published works on female autism and education, and on working with disadvantaged young people with SEND.

11.30 – 12.10 | Educating girls with Autism

This presentation will focus on how schools can design and implement a curriculum that enables autistic girls to stay well and be safe. The session will include tips and take away strategies that delegates will be able to use in their own settings.

Jo Egerton

*Schools Research Consultant*

Jo Egerton is a Schools Research Consultant, supporting and evaluating school and organisation practitioner research initiatives. She is currently Research Fellow for research directed by Professor Barry Carpenter investigating how wordless books support school pupils’ mental health.

Among other publications, she has most recently co-edited/co-authored books with Barry Carpenter and others on autism and girls and engaging complex learners (Routledge 2018, 2015).

14.00 – 15.00 | Workshops
Option 3 - Supporting Transition for girls with Autism

This workshop will focus on transition issues that impact on early career planning decisions made by young autistic women for their futures. It will review recent employment research, and look at the career aspirations and planning of autistic girls with and without learning difficulties and how this can inform school-based career support.

It will introduce wordless books as one way to support career understanding and planning for young autistic girls with learning difficulties.
Dr David Colley

Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Special Educational Needs/Inclusion at Oxford Brookes University

David Colley is a Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Special Educational Needs/Inclusion and leads the Masters level training for teachers wishing to secure the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCo) in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

David’s experience includes teaching children and young people with autism and complex learning needs in both primary and secondary schools and leading specialist facilities for learners with social, emotional and attachment needs. David spent five years working as the head of primary Pupil Referral Unit before managing a successful nurture group initiative on the Isle of Man for a further five years. During that time, David completed his PhD into the development of nurture groups in secondary schools, including the publication of the Boxall Profile for Young People (Bennathan, Boxall and Colley 2010).

David completed his three year tenure as Chair of the Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association (www.sebda.org) from 2016-2019 and currently sits on the editorial advisory boards for both the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties journal and the International Journal of Nurture in Education.

In 2017, the book ‘Attachment and Emotional Development in the classroom’ was published by Jessica Kingsley. This book has been co-edited by David and aims to support beginning teachers on Initial Teacher Training courses in understanding the emotional needs of children who have experienced a difficult start in life.

In 2018, David was invited to work with the Department for Education in Westminster as part of the Steering Group that revised the guidance for schools around the Mental Health and Behaviour of children and young people. This revised guidance now makes reference to the importance of staff training around attachment and the need to value the wellbeing of staff.

David will be presenting his latest research findings regarding best practice in Secondary school nurture groups at the 2019 ENSEC International Conference in Budapest, Hungary.

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