

Therapist Neurodiversity Collective

International

• Therapy • Advocacy • Education •

Established January 2018

We Don't Treat Autism

HERE'S WHY:

Pathology Model: Autism
"refers to a group of complex neurodevelopment disorders characterized by repetitive and characteristic patterns of behavior and difficulties with social communication and interaction. The symptoms are present from early childhood and affect daily functioning."

NIH - <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-Fact-Sheet>

There is no cure for autism and therapists should not provide therapy with an intent to "cure" autism.

Neurodiversity Model:
ASAN (Autistic Self Advocacy Network): "Autism is a developmental disability that affects how we experience the world around us. Autistic people are an important part of the world. Autism is a normal part of life, and makes us who we are. ASAN believes that instead of trying to change disabled people, we should work to make sure people with disabilities can access what we need."

Autistic People:

- Think differently
- Process senses differently
- Move differently
- Communicate differently
- Socialize differently
- May need help with daily living

ASAN: About Autism

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/about-autism/>

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/position-statements/>

Some Autistic people have intellectual disability, others do not. Some Autistic people can speak, others do not speak. Some Autistic people need a lot of support in their daily lives, others do not. Some Autistic people have other disabilities in addition to autism, others do not.

Therapies should help Autistic people, not train them to appear "less autistic" or meet neurotypical standards or clinical outcomes.

We don't "Treat Autism".
"Autism Therapy" looks like:
ABA/Behavior Modification
Training Neurotypical Social Skills, teaching masking
Insisting on spoken communication/Verbal behavior
Gatekeeping AAC
Masking Sensory Processing issues
Denying access to supports, accommodations and modifications
Extinguishing echolalia, stimming or Autistic "quirks"

Empathetic and Respectful Therapy for Autistic people looks like:
Unrestricted AAC access
Improving communication abilities using a total communication approach
Teaching self-advocacy
Providing supports, accommodations and modifications in schools and for activities of daily living
Perspective-taking, problem solving/ empowerment
ST/OT/PT using a trauma informed approach