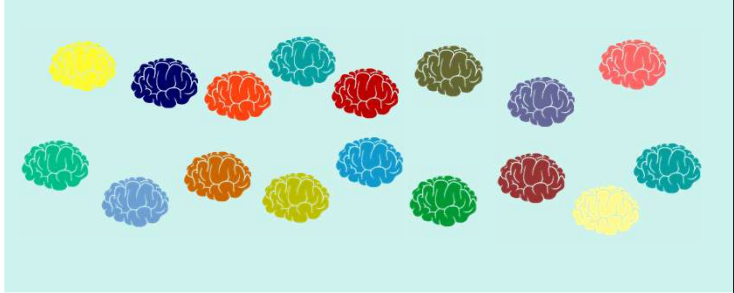


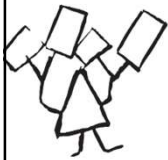


AUTISM in CONTEXT

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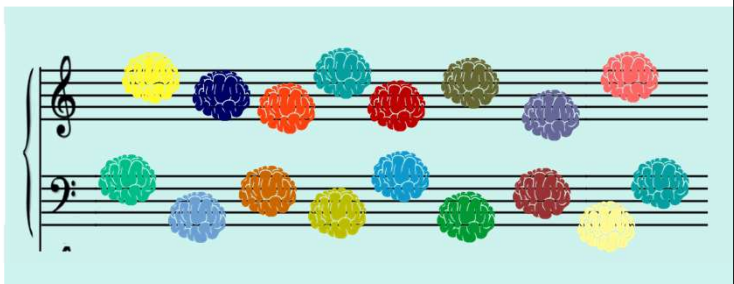
Autism, ID and happiness:
from neurodiversity to neuroharmony



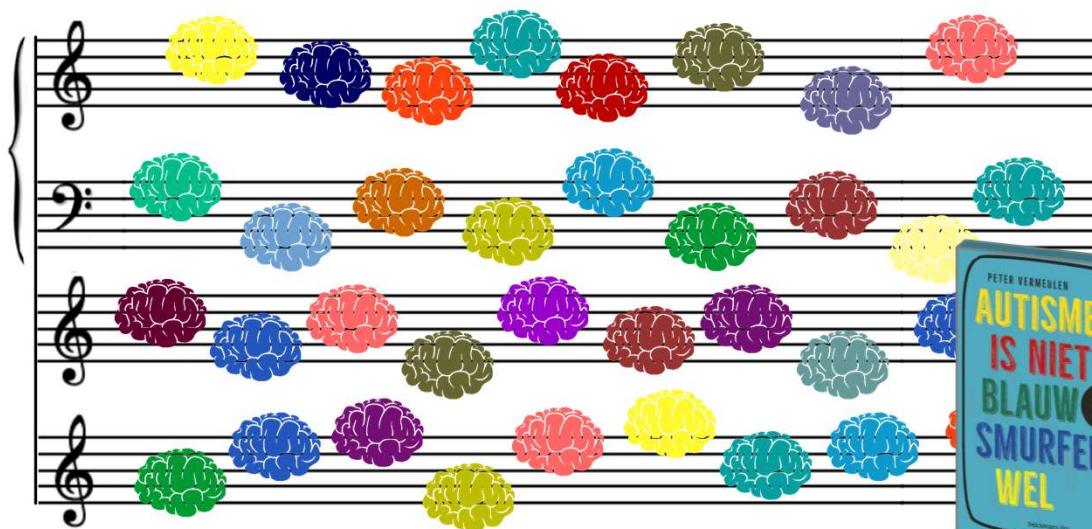
EAMHID 25

Ghent - Belgium 18-20 September
15th European Congress of Mental Health in Intellectual Disability

Unleashing talent - Embracing diversity



Neuroharmony



Let's make a shift in our approach

FROM

Deficit/diagnosis based

Problem focused

Otherness / difference

TO

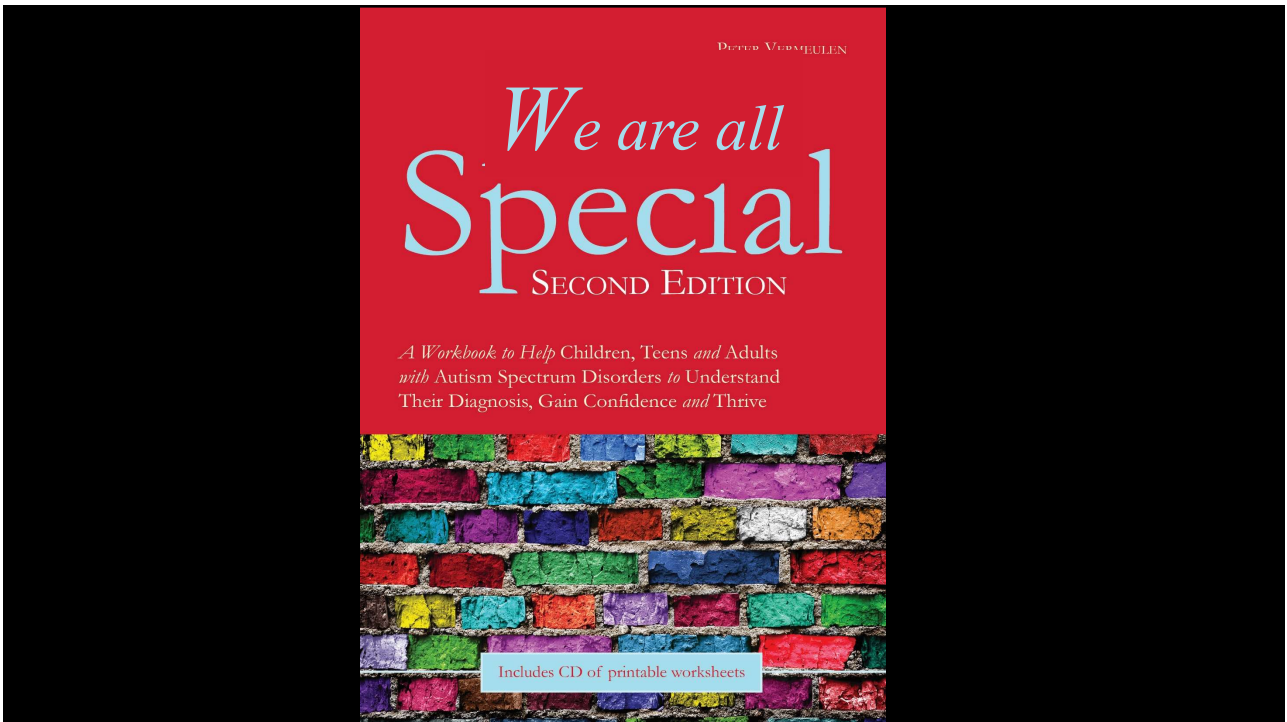
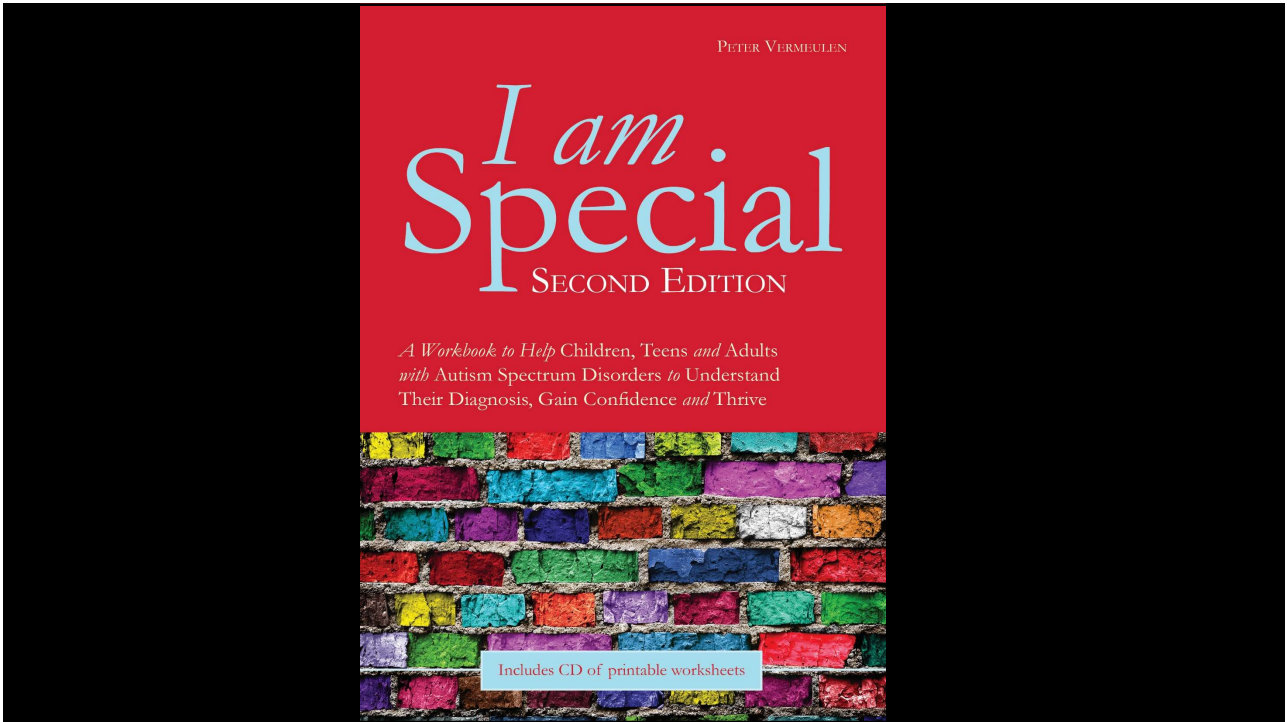
Needs based

Solution focused

Shared humanity

It is time to start focussing also on the similarities,
not only the differences





Time to make
autism smaller
again!



Diagnostic overshadowing

We are not so different in terms of



behaviour



mind

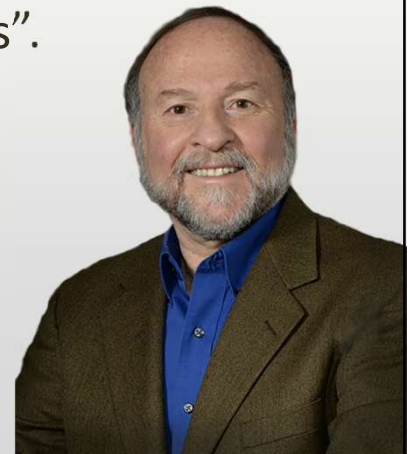


needs

All of us have much more in common than we think

There is no such category as “autistic behaviours,” only “human behaviours”.

Let’s start from a shared human experience.

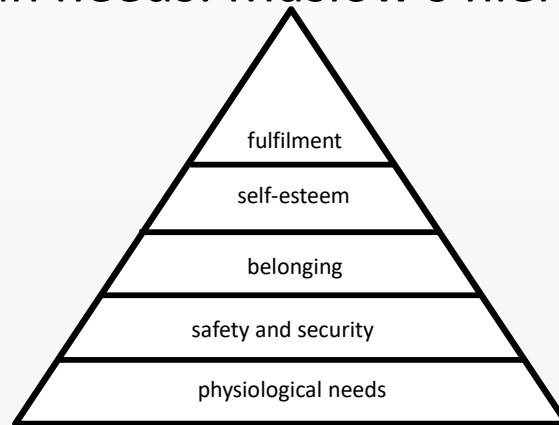


Barry Prizant



Universal human needs: Maslow's hierarchy

Abraham Maslow



United Nations

International Day of Happiness
20 March

What is the International Day of Happiness?

It's a day to be happy, of course! Happiness is a fundamental human goal. The United Nations General Assembly recognizes this goal and calls for "a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes the happiness and well-being of all peoples."

Governments and international organizations should invest in conditions that support happiness by upholding human rights and incorporating well-being and environmental dimensions into policy frameworks, such as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The effectiveness of governments in upholding peace and social order, as well as in the fields of taxation, legal institutions and delivery of public services, strongly correlates with average life satisfaction.

The United Nations invites each person of any age, plus every classroom, business and government to join in celebration of the International Day of Happiness.

Mental health issues in autism and ID



We focus a lot on negative feelings

The Development of a Stress Survey Schedule for Persons with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities

June Groden,^{1,5} Amy Diller,¹ Margaret Bausman,¹ Wayne Velicer,² Gregory Norman,³ and Joseph Cautela⁴

Research Article

Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Psychiatric Comorbidities and Their Relationship with Challenging Behavior

Carlos Peña-Salazar^{1,2}, Francesc Arrufat, Josep-Manel Santos López³, Abel Fontanet⁴, Pere Roura-Poch⁵, Montserrat Gil-Girbau⁶

...show all

Pages 77-94 | Published online: 07 Feb 2022.

Cite this article | <https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2022.2029641>



Review Articles

Identification of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review

Arvid Nikolai Kildahl^{1,2}, Trine Lise Bakken, Trine Elisabeth Iversen & Sissel Berge Helvershou³

Pages 1-25 | Published online: 13 Apr 2019

Cite this article | <https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2019.1595233>



frontiers | Frontiers in Psychiatry

TYPE REVIEW
PUBLISHED 26 JANUARY 2024
DOI 10.3389/fpsy.2024.1320566

Check for updates

OPEN ACCESS

Trauma and psychosocial adversity in youth with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability

Sarah J. Palmer* and Yael Dvir*

Department of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, Worcester, MA, United States

Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders 5 (2011) 377-387

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders

Journal home page: <http://ees.elsevier.com/RASD/default.asp>



Anxiety in people diagnosed with autism and intellectual disability: Recognition and phenomenology

Sissel Berge Helvershou^{a,*}, Harald Martinsen^b

^aThe National Autism Unit, Oslo University Hospital, AS, Oslo, Norway
^bInstitute of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway

Happiness

Pleasant life
(*Hedonic*)

Meaningful life
(*Eudaimonic*)

Joy - Pleasure

Purpose in life

Absence of pain

Personal growth

Safety

Serving others

Activities you like

Life satisfaction

Often one-sided focus on the negatives
(problems, deficits, ...)

We should (also) focus on the positives:
strengths, interests,

Find out what makes people feel good

TRIAL VERSION - FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY

AUTISM STRESS INVENTORY

PART I: STRESSORS

Judge to what extent the following situations cause stress for the person with autism.

- 1: no stress
- 2: lightly stressful
- 3: moderately stressful
- 4: highly stressful
- 5: severely stressful

Sensory stimuli

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Certain kinds of light, namely... | | | | | |
| Certain kinds of noises, namely... | | | | | |
| Certain kinds of smell, namely... | | | | | |
| Certain kinds of tactile stimuli, namely... | | | | | |
| Being touched | | | | | |
| Being hugged | | | | | |
| Being kissed | | | | | |
| Certain kinds of food | | | | | |
| Other: | | | | | |

Autism Good Feeling Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains items referring to all sorts of things that can give a person a good feeling. Obviously, each person is different. What gives a good feeling to one person, can be very unpleasant for another person. Below, you can indicate the extent to which things or events give you a good feeling. For each category of items, there is place to add things that are not mentioned in the list.

Each 'item' can be scored as follows:

- 3: This gives me a good feeling** - I enjoy this very much
- 2: This gives me a good feeling** - I enjoy this
- 1: This gives me a little bit of good feeling** - I enjoy this a little
- 0: This does not give me a good feeling** - I don't enjoy this in particular (neutral, I feel nothing) or I even find this unpleasant
- ?: I do not know if this gives me a good feeling**

Obviously this list is not exhaustive. Therefore, there is room left to add things that make you feel good or that you enjoy.

Sensory aspects

| | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | ? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Certain light, namely: : | | | | | |
| Certain sounds, namely: : | | | | | |
| A certain kind of voice, namely: : | | | | | |
| Silence | | | | | |
| Certain smells, namely: : | | | | | |
| Certain tactile stimuli, namely: : | | | | | |
| Being touched | | | | | |
| Being cuddled | | | | | |
| Being kissed | | | | | |
| Heat | | | | | |
| Cold | | | | | |
| Certain foods, namely: : | | | | | |
| Certain beverages, namely: | | | | | |
| Certain items that I like to touch, namely: : | | | | | |
| Certain weather conditions (please specify:.....) | | | | | |
| A fleece blanket around me | | | | | |

© AUTISME CENTRAAL



AUTISM in CONTEXT

from neurodiversity to neuroharmony


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[AUTISM GOOD FEELING QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

Autism Good Feeling Questionnaire

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Autism-Good-Feeling
Questionnaire English




Autism-Good-Feeling
Questionnaire French




Autism-Good-Feeling
Questionnaire German



Autism-Good-Feeling
Questionnaire Danish



Autism-Good-Feeling
Questionnaire Swedish



Autism Good Feeling
Questionnaire Finnish

Assessment of good feeling in autism and ID

Good Feeling Questionnaire
Good Feeling Sensory Circuit
 Good Feeling Street



Good Feeling Sensory Circuit
(Vermeulen, 2014)

What are we targeting?



Review

What are we targeting when we treat autism spectrum disorder? A systematic review of 406 clinical trials

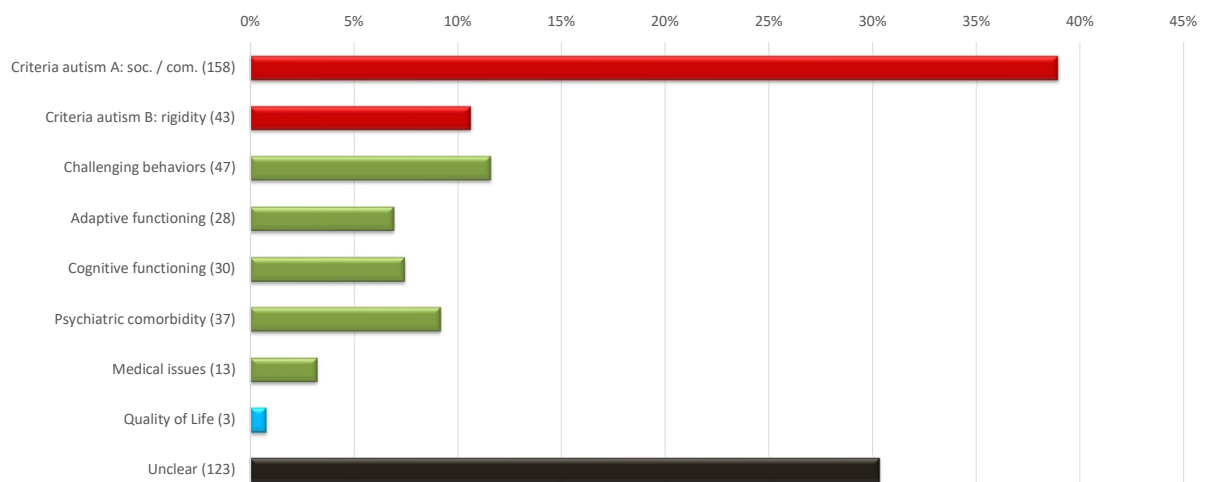
Umberto Provenzani^{1*}, Laura Fusar-Poli^{1,2*},
Nataschia Brondino¹, Stefano Damiani¹, Marco Vercesi¹,
Nicholas Meyer³, Matteo Rocchetti^{1†} and Pierluigi Politi^{1†}

Autism
1-11
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SAGE

Review study 2019: 406 controlled trials
between 1980 and 2016

What are we targeting? (Review 406 studies)

Goal of the intervention



This is how many think it works

LESS AUTISTIC



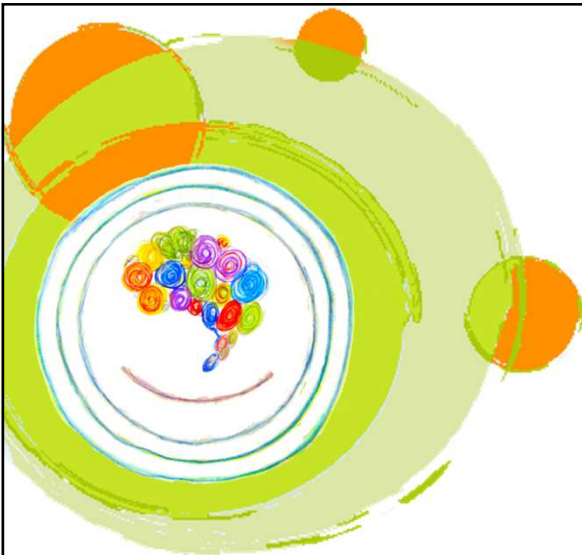
MORE
WELL-BEING

But it works like this

MORE
WELL-BEING



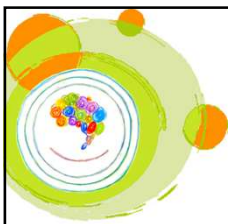
LESS AUTISTIC



H.A.P.P.Y.

Happiness in Autism Personal Project for Young people

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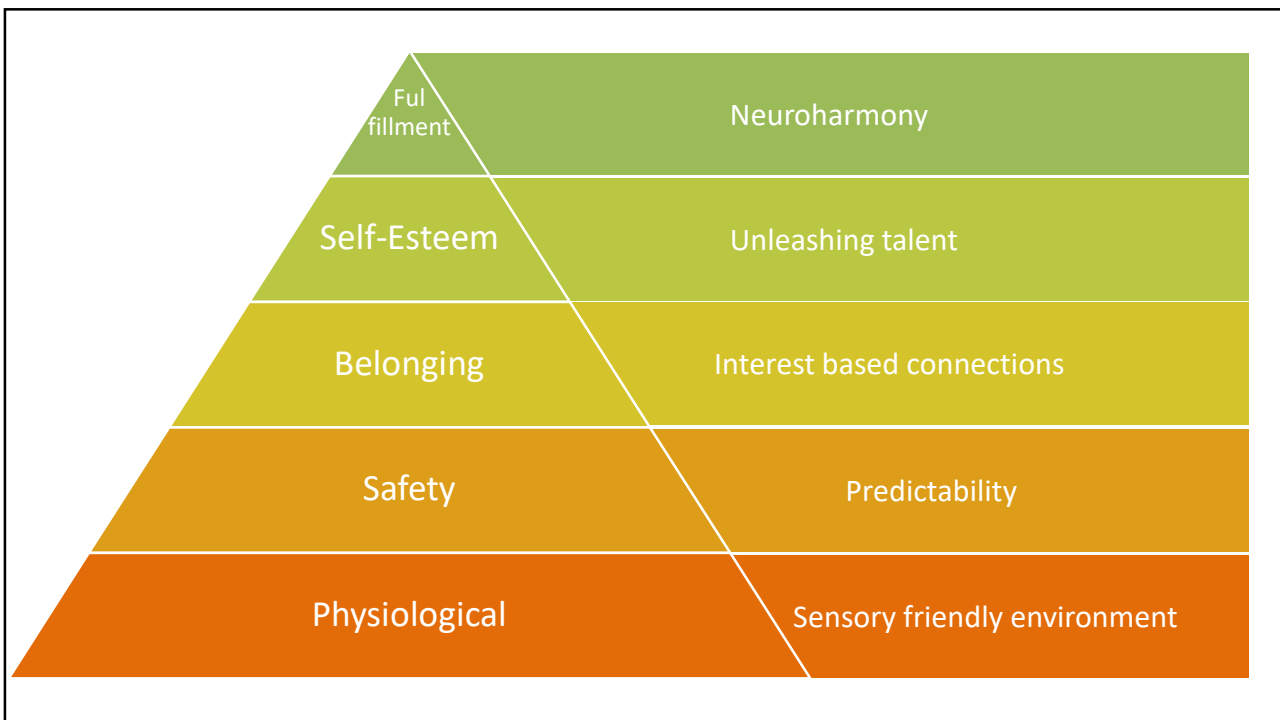


H.A.P.P.Y.

Happiness in Autism Personal Project for Young people

10 well-being strategies

1. Accepting and loving yourself
2. Good Feeling toolbox
3. Flow activities
4. Physical exercise
5. Problem focused coping strategies
6. Emotion focused coping strategies
7. Positive thinking
8. Gratitude
9. Kindness
10. Personal projects: learning something new



Sensory friendly environment

- Reducing / eliminating stimuli (e.g. noise-cancelling)
- Amplifying / presenting stimuli (e.g. deep pressure)
- Making stimuli predictable (e.g. when you touch someone)
- Giving control (e.g. waiting until the person is ready for a stimulus)

Main source of distress in autism

Psychological Review
2014, Vol. 121, No. 4, 649–675

© 2014 American Psychological Association
0033-295X/14/\$12.00 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037665>

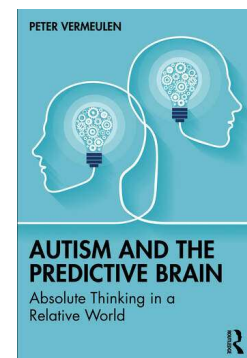
Precise Minds in Uncertain Worlds: Predictive Coding in Autism

Sander Van de Cruys, Kris Evers, Ruth Van der Hallen, Lien Van Eylen,
Bart Boets, Lee de-Wit, and Johan Wagemans
KU Leuven

Absolute thinking in a highly unpredictable world



confusion – uncertainty - anxiety



Want to make autistic people happy?

Be autism friendly:

Give **clarity** and **predictability** first,

All the rest comes later



AUTISM in CONTEXT

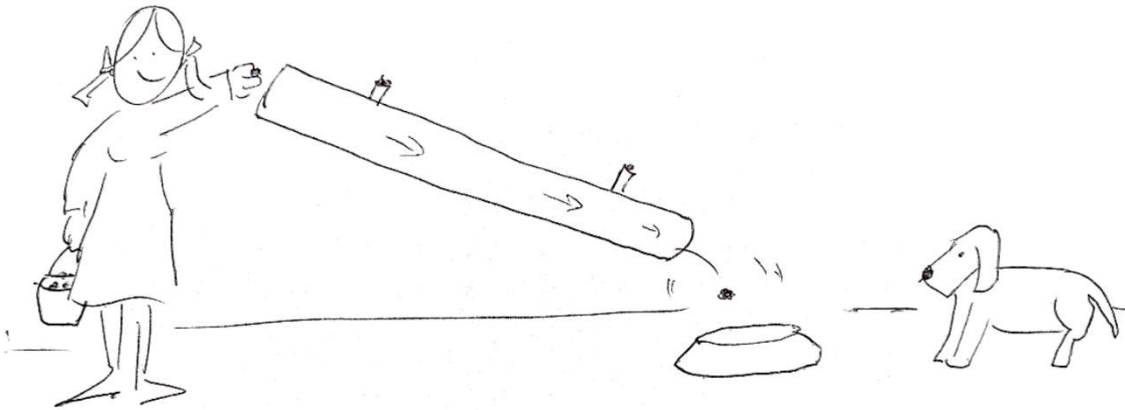
Embedding the interest into activities





AUTISM in CONTEXT

Hidden talent of stereotyped interests



Meaningful and purposeful life

What can society offer to autistic people?

What can autistic people offer to society?

Different ways of making a difference

- Volunteer work
- Jobs at all kind of events (rock festival, theatre, ...)
- Running / cycling for cancer or other diseases
- Charity work
- ...

neuroharmony

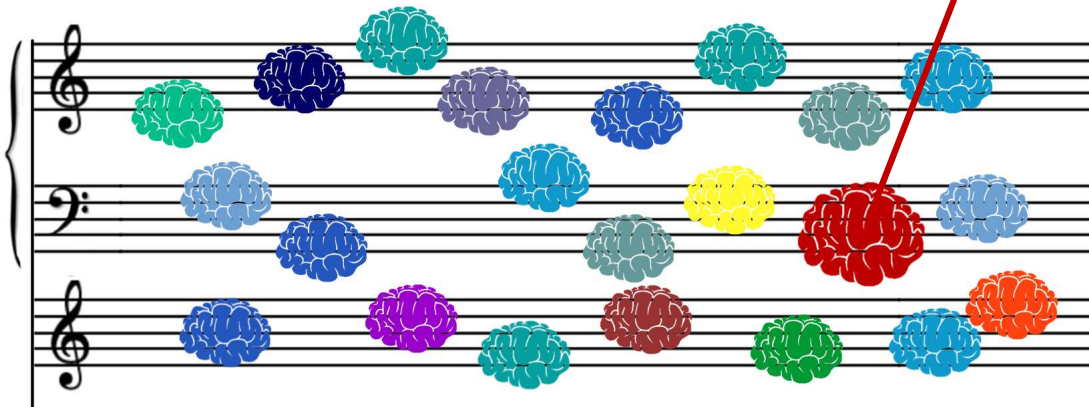
broom maker

runner

artist

uncle

THIJS

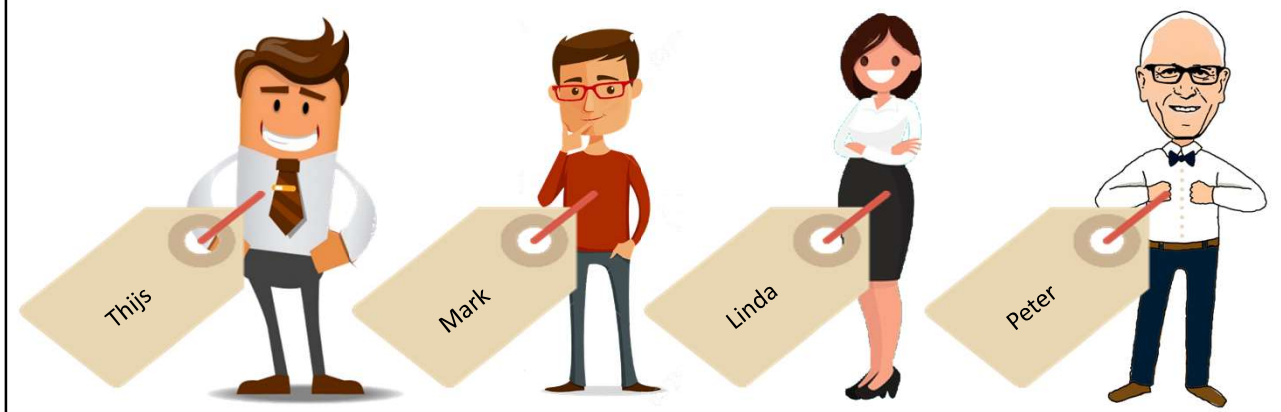


Autism is only one of Thijs's many labels



The first and most important label

Our name



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



AUTISM in CONTEXT

from neurodiversity to neuroharmony

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