

*@xio* POST-DIAGNOSTIC  
SUPPORT GROUP

28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

# Things to note...

- This session is being recorded

For those of you watching at home..

- If you would like to use your microphone, use the 'raise hand' function so that we can unmute you
- Feel free to comment in the chat box

# Autistic Safety – an Axia Production

Dr Luke Beardon

28.10.22

# Rules/Guidelines/Suggestions

Confidentiality – everything shared in this sessions is strictly confidential and not to be shared with anyone without permissions

Inclusivity (general) – please respect everyone in the session and aim to be as inclusive as possible

Inclusivity (from me) - feel free to fidget, jump, stim, knit, lie on the floor – whatever suits you so long as it doesn't cause distress to anyone else; if I need to adapt in some way please let me or Axia know

Questions – feel free to ask questions as I chat, or you can wait until after the presentation if you prefer

# Positionality

- ◆ Senior Lecturer in Autism, SHU
- ◆ 'Practice based academic'
- ◆ Decades of working in the autism field
- ◆ Range of research interests
- ◆ Hands on practitioner
- ◆ Course leader Post Graduate Certificate in Autism/Asperger Syndrome (with the NAS)
- ◆ Not a clinician - rather than having clinical training my skill set comes from academic pursuits juxtaposed with hands on experience in autism-specific roles (I have worked in 'autism only' contexts for nearly 30 years)
- ◆ Knowledge base from research, consultancy, and experience - most of all, from autistic individuals and families

# Trigger Warning

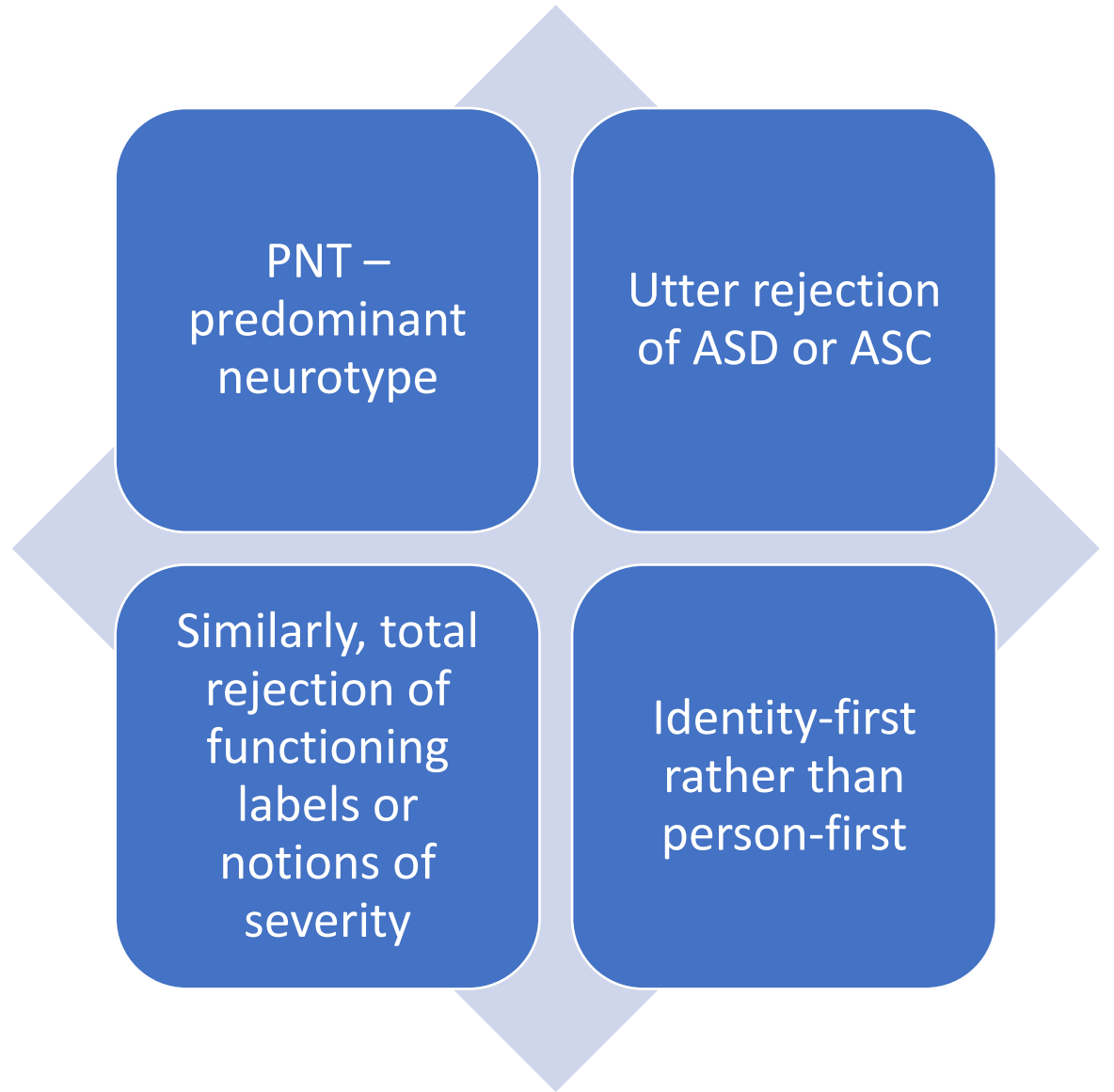
*My hypothesis is that there is a pervasive and invidious pattern of thought, behaviour, and belief that is at the heart of a societal 'norm' that is, in effect, destroying autistic lives.*

**This can be avoided - relatively easily and for very little cost, with extraordinary reward.**

# Autistic Safety

- So – I am not talking about things like consent, how to *be* safe from the world or abusive people as such...
- I do hope to share some thoughts about what it might mean to *feel* safe as an autistic person, what autistic safety might be as a concept and, possibly, as a reality
- I am both confidently 'qualified' to chat about this while at the same time woefully ignorant – so please do contribute as you wish if you feel comfortable doing so
- This is likely to be a combination of personal reflections along with musings on knowledge I have as a result of others being generous enough to share their experiences with me

# Terms



# PNT Stability versus Autistic Fragility







Stability Equates to Safety

# Autistic Safety - Communication

What choices are available?

- Written
- Verbal
- Non-verbal
- Social media
- Messaging
- Phone calls

Chatting to one's self

Animal communication can be lush

Reduction of unwanted communication is perfectly valid

- Headphones
- Signs at work etc.
- Specified times for communication

# Sensory

- Touch
- Smells
- Visual
- Auditory
- Pain
- Taste
- Vestibular
- Proprioception
- Interoception



# Emotions – Alexithymia

# Teaching of Emotions?



We don't 'not feel'!



How does one know what one doesn't know?



Is there a shared understanding of emotional terminology?

# Sociality

Autistic friendships –  
animals count

Solitary sociality can be  
pretty cool

Cutting through the  
bullshit is a fine way of  
being

Allowing one's self to be  
autistic and reduction of  
masking could benefit in  
many cases

Setting out rules and  
expectations – self and  
others

Being given a specific  
'social' role can be  
hugely beneficial

Social parameters  
should be clear and  
trustworthy (e.g. what  
time can we escape?)

Autism-friendly  
wedding!

# Expectations

Routines work

Autistic passionate interests are a must and must be embraced

Playing to autistic strengths – spiky profiles

# Theory of Mind (and other theory myths)

Double Empathy – Cross-Neurological  
Theory of Mind

Rejection of any notion of lesser

Society *must* accept these concepts  
else autistics will continue to be  
misunderstood, mistreated, and left  
feeling unsafe



# Monotropism



Processing speeds



Ability to focus



# Trust

Please understand – trust is not a binary  
notion!



Sense of Self

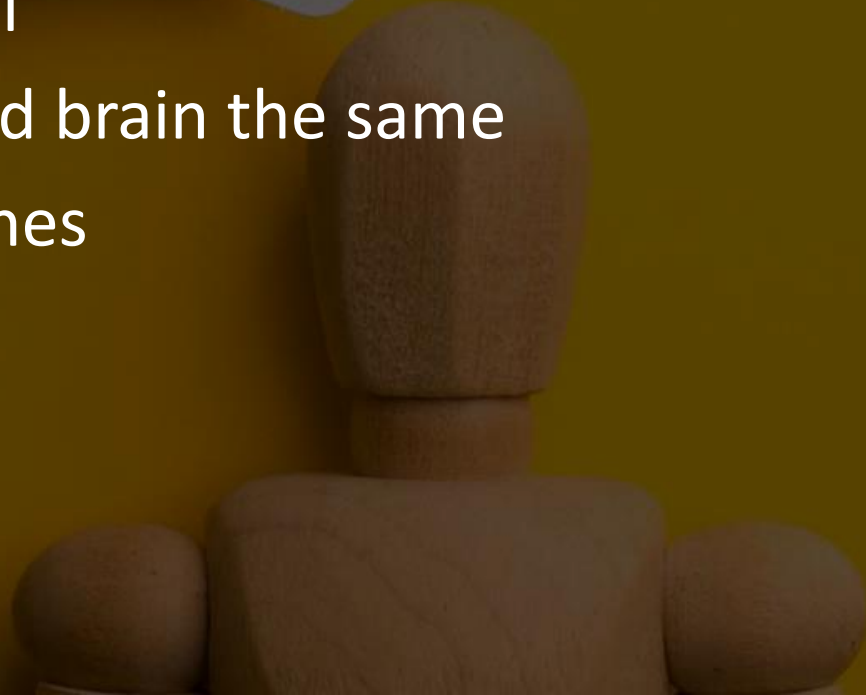


# Demographical Status

Are the numbers simply against us???

# Thoughts

- Proactive reasoning – a Luke Beardon way of doing things
- Rumination
- Emotions – not negative but uncomfortable
- Trauma model
- Treat body and brain the same
- Spoons/matches



# Autopia – Autistic Utopia

Where/when the world becomes  
weirdly normal

– or where/when weird becomes  
the new normal

Finally, she  
says it far  
better than I  
ever could

*The privilege of being oneself is a gift many  
take for granted, but for someone with  
autism, being allowed to be oneself is the  
greatest and rarest gift of all*

*Alyssa Aleksanian, 2016*