

Course Structure: LEANBH – Neurodiversification of your practice, certificate course

PART 1

Day 1:

Theme - Where are we, and how did we get here?

We are all products of our environment so in the first week we explore what sort of world an Autistic child is born into.

We show you how we often hold unconscious bias even though we are unaware of it.

We look at what influences our attitudes to autism now and in the past.

We set the scene for the rest of the course by focusing on the environment - physical, social and conceptual - and how everything starts there.

This week you will gain a real insight into the grand picture we have to see and understand before we can begin to understand what it is to be Autistic, and how 'The Three Bs' - behaviour, bias, and blame - shape how we interpret and respond to what we see

We look at how environments change over time and how these changes affect human development

We look at environments in their many contexts and start to really build a relationship in our minds between environment, world views, senses and experiences.

Day 2:

Theme: Autistic experiences and Autistic appearances

This week builds on the previous session and focuses on sensory experiences, learning and how that is all dependent on the environment.

You will start to see just how important an accepting and nurturing environment is in the lives of Autistics from infancy to teenage years and beyond.

We also start to examine what it would mean to be Autistic if our environment was a nurturing and welcoming one.

We will explore the Autistic experience, focusing on senses, emotions, cognition and expression

You will begin to see the beauty that lies in our existence and the desperate need for us to be welcomed into our world rather than shunned, disabled and oppressed.

This session concludes with a discussion of your own experiences with Autistic children in your practice, viewed through the perspectives from Day 1 and Day 2.

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PART 2

Day 3:

Theme: Experiences of harm and strategies for survival

We question why what we learnt in previous weeks isn't how Autistics are showing up (or presenting) in this world.

Beginning with a reconsideration of the ways Autistic children play, learn, develop and socialise, we will consider how much of what we see is actually clever techniques for survival in an unaccommodating world.

This way you can identify changes needed in order to avoid long-term negative effects, and understand the signs of past harm for what they are, and together start to build a plan for a better future, both short term and long term, one of Acceptance which starts with your Neurodiversity-affirming practice.

We conclude the session by focusing on the not-so-pleasant but all-too-common ways Autistic children seek to cope with this unwelcoming world such as:

- prioritisation and "regression"
- social avoidance and demand avoidance (PDA)
- masking, passivity, and fawning
- defiance and "challenging behaviours"
- executive dysfunction
- "school refusal"
- meltdowns and shutdowns
- stress, anxiety and trauma
- depression and suicide

Day 4:

Theme: From root causes to enduring solutions

Building on the previous session, we will explore the relationship between mental health and the changing environment across the younger years of an Autistic person's life, from birth to teenage years.

We will introduce the 'Double Empathy Problem' and some techniques to analyse and identify the - often multiple - root causes of the ways Autistic children may present.

Through a series of case studies this session will allow you to put your learnings up to this point into practice, and in particular highlight just how much Autistic energy is expended on self defence, coping with trauma and harm, and expressing anxiety.

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ASSESSMENT

Day 5:

Assessment

This last week is a collaborative workshop type session that allows you develop a detailed analysis of and approach to addressing the needs of a specific child.

Through analysis of our set case study, attendees will identify the underlying issues, develop an approach to this case, and detail a series of sessions to engage with and support the child

There is a separate set of multiple-choice questions to be completed after the final session, with the combined scores from the case study and questions used to assess attendee performance.

Learning Outcomes

We've designed our course to really delve into the lives of Autistics.

Here are just some of the questions we will explore:

What makes us who we are?

Why do we do certain things?

Why do we think in certain ways?

Why do other people not fully understand us?

How does this lack of understanding effect us?

How does it effect them?

How does it often get in the way of us connecting?

How can we do better, collectively?

What small changes will make huge impacts on Autistic happiness?

And how can we achieve this?

Topics we will cover include:

- The sensory and emotional experiences of Autistic people

- The environmental impacts on Autistic people

- Cognitive experiences of Autistic people including motivation, masking, anxiety, executive functioning, procrastination and everything else that comes from growing up a sensitive soul in a world that does not understand you.

- Autistic expressions: play and creativity across the ages

- Autistic rhythms: stimming, learning and thinking

- Practical approaches to identifying and addressing the needs of Autistic children and teens