



Speakers for Minding Autistic Minds 2025

Eoin Stephens: Opening Address

BA Psychology, Dip Counselling, MA Cognitive-Behavioural Counselling, MIACP, MACI.

Eoin is a counsellor/psychotherapist & lecturer/trainer who has worked in the areas of disability, addiction treatment, education/training, & counselling/psychotherapy in private practice for over 30 years, using a humanistic, pragmatic CBT approach.

After specialising primarily in the areas of behavioural addictions & anxiety disorders for a number of years, and working at a senior level in counselling/psychotherapy education, he received the IACP Carl Berkeley Memorial Award in 2010.

His work is currently focused on understanding the problems faced by Autistic adults, & their specific therapeutic needs. He is Autistic himself, having made the discovery in 2012.

Jessica Doyle: Exploring Our Relationship with our Senses and Emotions Workshop

Jessica K Doyle is Autistic, Adhd and otherwise Neurodivergent. An Assistant Psychologist at the Adult Autism Practice and a Director at Thriving Autistic. Jessica K is the co-author of the recently published and worlds first: The Adult Autism Assessment Handbook: A Neurodiversity Affirmative Approach and is co-author of The Neurodiversity Affirmative Child Autism Assessment Handbook, which is currently in writing. Jessica K is also half thinking about writing a book on her own lived experience but maybe should do a masters first.

Jessica K is currently consulting on a neurodiversity and relationships project at the Muíriosa Foundation, and is/has been a researcher on several projects including with DCU and TCD.

She is a Neurodiversity Affirmative consultant and sensory auditor for several clinics and organisations and is also the current chair of the PSI Special Interest Group in Autism.

Jessica K loves cats, music, sensory exploring and diving into challenges that might just provide more opportunity for growth.

Siobhan Daly: Parents and Schools Working Together Workshop

Siobhán is an autistic primary teacher who advocates for true autistic inclusion in school communities. She recognizes the urgent need for change to ensure that autistic children thrive as themselves and promotes neuro-affirming practices to ensure safety, authenticity, acceptance and agency. She works with and supports newly discovered autistic children on their journey of self-discovery as well as being actively involved in parent support groups. Siobhán provides training for trainee teachers promoting a strength-based view of autistic culture.

Grainne Warren: Facilitating Authentic Emotional Expression

Gráinne is a fully accredited and experienced play therapist based in County Cork, Ireland. She provides Play Therapy, Parent Support, Clinical Supervision, Consultancy and Workshops both online and in person.

Gráinne specialises in the area of Neurodivergence and is passionate about providing a safe and supportive space for children and their families. She also provides clinical supervision and consultation to fellow therapists and those wanting to improve their skills working with and supporting neurodivergent children.

Gráinne's lived experience of being AuDHD (autistic/ADHD) and a parent of three Neurodivergent children, gives her a unique understanding of the neurodivergent experience, allowing her to offer specialised, affirming support to those who may have previously been overlooked or misunderstood.

Her practice is trauma informed, neuro-affirming and LGBTQIA+ affirming, valuing and honouring all individuals.

Grace Harrison: Eating Disorders and Neurodivergence Presentation Third Level Neurodivergent Students in Third Level Education

Grace Harrison is a neurodiversity affirmative and trauma-informed Student Counsellor in the University of Galway and an Integrative Psychotherapist in private practice in Ennis, Co. Clare, working with adolescents and adults. Grace holds a Masters in Integrative Psychotherapy with DCU, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology with UL, and since qualifying as a psychotherapist, has completed further education in adolescent psychotherapy (The Greenane Centre), working with autistic adults (AUsome Training), and excellence in practitioner skills for eating disorders (National Centre for Eating Disorders- NCFED). She has

a special interest in eating disorders and neurodivergence hence she co-designed and delivers specialist counselling group programmes for students in both of these areas, in her role in the University of Galway. In addition to groups, Grace provides training on understanding and supporting neurodivergent people (particularly neurodivergent students), both within the university context to counsellors and academic staff, and as part of AUsome Training's 'Dawn Practitioner Programme'.

Pete Wharmby: Let us be Monotropic Presentation And Sensory Audit Workshop

After being diagnosed as autistic at the age of 34 in 2017, Pete has immersed himself in working to improve autistic awareness, acceptance and making the world a more suitable place for the neurodivergent community. He has spoken at a wide range of events and conferences since 2020 in the UK and in Europe and North America, both in person and remotely, sharing his insight and experience of being autistic and ADHD with businesses, governments, educational establishments and more.

Pete is active on LinkedIn, Instagram and on YouTube, where his channel has over 3000 subscribers. He is a bestselling author: his first book, *What I Want to Talk About*, was published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers in September 2022, and his second book, *Untypical*, was published by HarperCollins in March 2023, with the paperback released in March 2024. He has also written a number of articles, interviews and book chapters, and appeared on BBC Radio 2. Pete is a former secondary English teacher and a father-of-one.

Dean Beadle: Day 1 Autistic Empowerment, Identity and Wellbeing

Day 2: Supporting young Autistic People through Anxiety

Dean Beadle is a speaker and trainer who has spent twenty years publicly sharing his experiences of being autistic. He has delivered hundreds of school inset sessions across the length and breadth of the UK, supporting schools staff to better understand the needs of autistic students. He has delivered conference keynotes on stages across Europe and completed for seminar tours of Australia and New Zealand. As a guest lecturer, he has spoken at several Universities including the University of Birmingham, where he guest lectured at the autism study weekends for a decade and the University of Plymouth, where he delivered annual lectures to the BEd students.

During the lockdowns of 2020, Dean worked in collaboration with autism specialists Dawn Brown, Sarah-Jane Critchley, Lynn McCann and Sally Glossop to produce a series of acclaimed webinars. He then went on to deliver solo virtual sessions for audiences across Europe, Asia, Australasia and America.

He is also passionate about inclusion in the workplace and has delivered sessions for Ambassador Theatre Group, Balfour Beatty, Scotiabank, International Rescue Committee, YouViewTV, SopraSteria and others in recent years, looking at barriers to accessibility in the workplace and practical ways to make the workplace more inclusive for autistic employees. All in all, Dean has delivered over a thousand keynotes, inset sessions, parents talks and webinars worldwide, and has become known for his engaging delivery style, which is both humorous and thought-provoking in equal measure.

Devoting his career to being a change-maker, Dean has used his own experiences to increase understanding and challenge the negative attitudes that autistic people come up against in society. Only once society better understands the autistic experience will it be able to better meet needs and create spaces that are both accessible to and empowering for autistic people.

As a freelance journalist and writer, Dean has written print pieces and guest blogs for *The Guardian*, *The London Paper*, *News Shopper Online* and *ReachOutASC*. He worked as a regular writer and columnist for *GreenwichTime* newspaper for three years before going on to edit a charity e-newsletter that went out to subscribers in 90 countries.

Since 2017, Dean has also worked as a singer, having performed at events across the UK, Ireland and Denmark. He devised a show, *My Life in Songs and Stories*, which he has toured accompanied by a pianist. As a songwriter, he released the anti-ableism protest song *Me And Your Normal Are Done*, which he collaborated on with the neurodivergent band *Aukestra*. With Leanne Thompson, he co-wrote the ballad *Bohemian Woman*, and in 2023 he released *Intruded (OCD)* and *Papercuts*.

Dean holds honorary roles at three autism related UK charities. He is president of AP Cymru, an Autistic led charity in Wales. He is also patron on *OneToOne Enfield*, a charity

that supports LD and Autistic adults in North London and SPACE, a parent-led organisation in Hertfordshire.

Stiof MacAmhalghaigh: Exploring Our Relationship with our Senses and Emotions Workshop

Stiof MacAmhalghaigh is our Subject Matter Expert at AUSome Training. Stiof is an Autistic theorist, trainer and campaigner with decades of experience supporting neurodivergent students. Self-identified as Autistic at 12, they gained clinical confirmation at 30. Stiof has worked on developing a comprehensive Autistic-oriented theory of Autistic living for over a decade, publishing, presenting and training on this work internationally via conferences, Autistic Union, and most recently through their Infinite Diversity blog and Ausome Training webinars.

Introducing Stiof MacAmhalghaigh, our esteemed Subject Matter Expert at AUSome Training.

With decades of experience supporting neurodivergent students, Stiof is a highly regarded Autistic theorist, trainer, and campaigner.

Stiof's journey of self-identification as Autistic began at the age of 12, and they obtained clinical confirmation at 30. Since then, Stiof has dedicated their life to developing a comprehensive Autistic-oriented theory of Autistic living, which forms the foundation of their impactful work.

Their expertise and insights have been widely recognized, leading to international engagements through conferences, the Autistic Union, and their influential Infinite Diversity blog and Ausome Training courses.

As a trainer, theorist, and international speaker, Stiof brings a wealth of knowledge to their role. Their pioneering 'CDF' model of Autistic Living serves as a guiding framework throughout our course, providing a unique perspective on the diverse experiences of autistic individuals.

Stiof's deep involvement in the Autistic community as a researcher, rights activist, advocate, and educator further enriches their understanding of the challenges and needs of neurodivergent individuals.

Since 2002, Stiof has provided invaluable one-on-one and group support to Autistic and other neurodivergent students, spanning from primary to third-level education. Their commitment to empowering individuals through education and personalized support is unmatched, making a lasting impact on the lives of those they work with.

Stiof's insights, theories, and extensive research are highly regarded within the field, establishing them as a prominent thinker who tirelessly strives towards creating a better world for Autistic individuals. Their dedication to advocating for Autistic rights and promoting inclusive practices is evident in all aspects of their work.

Scott Neilson: Creating Safe Spaces for Autistic People

Scott is an Autistic Trainer, Mentor and Consultant based in Lanarkshire, Scotland under the trade name of 'Autistically Scott'. Through this, Scott has delivered training sessions to

hundreds of professionals, including teachers, social workers and early years practitioners. They also collaborate with other Autistic professionals and organisations, such as AUSome Training and Autistic Revolution. Additionally, they co-authored the book 'Creating Safe Spaces for Autistic People' with Laura Helfeld, which underpins the core principles, values and ethos required for organisations and groups to design events that are accessible for Autistic people. They believe that helping Autistic people feel safe must be a core aspect of professional practice.

Gillian Kearns: Neurodivergent Parenting

Introducing Gillian Kearns, a dedicated Early Childhood educator with a wealth of experience spanning the primary education and child protection sectors. With a strong focus on fostering collaboration and improving relationships and outcomes, Gillian has made a significant impact throughout her career.

Gillian's passion lies in supporting adults and young people to work together harmoniously, promoting a positive and inclusive environment. Recognizing the importance of understanding the neurodivergent experience, she has actively worked with parents, guardians, and families to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to support the young people in their care effectively.

As a co-founder of Neuro Pride Ireland, Gillian has played a pivotal role in establishing a self-directed community space and Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO). Through their annual festival, Neuro Pride Ireland celebrates and honors the diverse communities and identities within the neurodivergent spectrum, including a special children's festival.

Education is a cornerstone of NeuroPride's work, exemplified by their engaging YouTube channel that amplifies the voices of neurodivergent individuals.

Gillian's dedication to creating inclusive spaces and platforms for neurodivergent individuals is truly commendable. Her collaborative approach and commitment to education enable her to bridge understanding and foster greater acceptance within communities. By harnessing the power of education and advocacy, Gillian actively works towards creating a world that embraces and celebrates the unique strengths and perspectives of neurodivergent individuals.

Gillian is also the parent of two wonderful Neurodivergent children and strives to put their money where their mouth is when it comes to parenting neurodivergently.

Jolene Coady: The Autistic Foster Child

Jolene has a degree in social care and social studies. Qualifications in healthcare, criminology, and community care. For a decade Jolene worked with autistic children and adults, supporting them in several different settings. Jolene supported autistic adults and children in daycare, residential, respite and one on one support. Jolene also spent a number of years working as an SNA in a school of 7 neurodivergent children aged 9 to 19. Jolene also worked with parents privately. Jolene spent 5 years in the UK in two separate residential homes. In one residential home they supported adults with dual diagnoses, schizophrenia,

psychosis, and addiction. In the second residential home they supported adults with neuro-divergence, dementia, intellectual disability, and physical disabilities. Jolene is a guest speaker at colleges and universities where they share their experiences with lectures and students. Jolene is very open and honest about their past trauma.

Jolene was made a ward of the courts at thirteen years old and spent 5 years being moved from foster home to foster home. They also spent time in two different residential homes before the HSE closed them down.

Jolene was not diagnosed till the age of 43. Jolene's lived experience of being AuDHD (autistic/ADHD) and dyspraxia gives them a unique understanding of the neurodivergent experience. They are very passionate about using their experience to help parents, and neurodivergent people navigate their own trauma and experiences. Jolene is gay and her wife is also AuDHD.

Megha Saibu: Our misunderstood sensory systems

Megha is a 20 year old non-speaking Autistic person who communicates through S2C.

Sam Saibu: Equal Access to Education for non-speakers

Sam is an 18 year old non-speaking Autistic person who communicates through S2C.