

DAWN COURSE October 2025

Sat 11th Oct | Sun 19th Oct | Sat 15th Nov | Sun 23rd Nov | Sat 29th Nov

Sat 17th Jan | Sat 24th Jan | Sun 8th Feb | Sat 28th Feb | Sat 14th March

For Helping Professionals working with Autistic Adults

60 hours over 10 days (40 sessions)

Sessions are 90 mins each

Course days start at 10am and finish at 5pm (Irish Time)

Lunch break 1-2pm each day

There will be two 15-minute breaks (1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon)

| Day/Session/Content | Trainer | Content | Learning Outcomes |
|--|-----------|--|---|
| Day 1 Sat 11th Oct | | | At the end of this session participants will: |
| Session 1 Introductions | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation 30 mins • Participant Introductions 30 mins • Break 15 mins • What is Autism- breakout rooms discussion 25 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know each other a little bit better |
| Session 2 What is autism- The Neurodiversity Paradigm | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Autism- full group discussion 40 mins • Terminology, Myths & Ableism 40 mins slides & discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the problems with diagnostic criteria • Understand current terminology |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 3 The narratives of autism | Gillian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of autism (30 mins video) • Future of autism (10 mins) • Group discussion 30 mins • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the medical model of autism • Evaluate the impact this narrative & injustice has on the Autistic population |
| Session 4 Dissecting the Autism Industry and Professional Opinion | Gillian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissecting the DSM • The Autism Industry • How this affects the narratives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above |

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| DAY 2 Sun 19th Oct | | Understanding the Autistic experience | |
| Session 5 Senses & Sensitivities: What being Autistic feels like | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory experiences • Intense emotions • A vivid worldview • Constructing 'autistic' • Ableism and shame • How does this apply to therapy? (85 mins) Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Autistic sensory and social experiences and emotional responses as coherent and well-reasoned • Apply this understanding to the Double Empathy Problem (DEP) • Explore adapting the physical environment in therapy |
| Session 6 Un-Human Behaviour: What being Autistic looks like | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What 'Autistic' looks like • What is stimming for? • Autistic joy and distress • Self harm: bad beats worst • (80 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand stimming as a common human activity • Reimagine 'disordered behaviours' • Explore adapting the physical environment in therapy |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 7 Do you read me: Autistic communication | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autistic Communication • What stimming says • Double Empathy • Influences on Communication • Cognitive decolonisation • (85 mins) Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have insight into how Autistic people communicate • Understand the social experiences which complicate communication • Apply learnings to Autistic non-spoken communication |
| Session 8 Workshop: Decolonising therapy | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Adapting your thinking to adapt your therapy sessions • (80 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply principles of DEP • Adapt communication in therapy • Make the environment safer |

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| DAY 3 Sat 15th Nov | | What “being Autistic” is not | |
| Session 9 Accessible Communication | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making communication accessible **Prewatching • Non-speaking & situationally speaking • AAC • Not just ‘talk therapy’ • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting practise for the varying needs of Autistic clients • Appreciation of the barriers to alternative communication modes • Explore ways to facilitate communication |
| Session 10 Cycle- syncing | Lila H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than a period at the end of a sentence: Why cycle syncing matters for you and your neurodivergent clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what cycle syncing is and why it can be so important for people with a menstrual cycle who have been socialised as girls and women, particularly if they are neurodivergent • Learn how cycle syncing can empower you and your neurodivergent clients to protect personal energy capacity and reframe motivation fluctuations for enhanced well-being and improved self-esteem |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 11 Masking | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is masking? • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand "masking" as Distorted Self-Perception & Self-Presentation. |

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| Session 12 Unmasking | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the client to unmask | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support clients to reconnect with their authentic self & real needs |
| Day 4 Sun 23rd Nov | | Specific Therapy Issues | |
| Session 13 Basics of making your practice accessible | Gillian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making your practice accessible to Neurodivergent clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current practices and make relevant adaptations to make therapy more accessible |
| Session 14 Assessment, diagnosis/discovery, common misdiagnoses | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implications of discovery/diagnosis before or during therapy If/when/how to raise the autism possibility in therapy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the difference between exploration/guided discovery & formal assessment Develop some feel for the skilful approach needed when exploring the possibility of autism with a client |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 15 Depression, low self esteem, suicidality | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causes and presentation of depression & burnout in autistic adults The reality of suicide risk in autistic adults Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how to identify & help with burnout & depression Be able to explain the nature of autistic burnout to clients, and its links with depression, masking, shame, interoception difficulties etc |
| Session 16 Complex PTSD/developmental trauma | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Self-Esteem, and how prevalent it is in autistic adults | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the nature of this complex issue as it presents for autistic clients, and be able to explain it to clients in ways that are relevant to the client's experience |

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| Day 5 Sat 29th Nov | | Further Specific therapeutic issues | |
| Session 17 Social Anxiety | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand possible adaptations, for autistic clients, to standard CBT approaches to this common issue |
| Session 18 Special Interests | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fuller meaning & implications of this aspect of the autistic experience • The value of incorporating the client's special interests in therapy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a good grasp of the depth of meaning in the concept of Special Interests • Have some understanding of the relevance of SPINs to therapeutic work • Understand possible use with GAD |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 19 OCD / Addictions / Eating Disorders | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of these issues, and their prevalence in autistic clients • The various meanings of the concept of "obsession" • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an understanding of the similarities & differences between these issues • Grasp the role addictive behaviours may play in the lives of autistic people |
| Session 20 Co-occurring physiological factors | Stiof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDS and hypermobility • Digestive issues • Hypertension • Dysautonomia • 'Autistic' as part of a whole-person complex | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an awareness of the high incidence of physiological issues in the Autistic community • Understanding 'Autistic' as part of a broader complex of interacting, mostly physiological, conditions |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary collaboration • (85 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore our understanding of “Autistic traits” and Autistic reasoning and motivations. |
| Day 6 Sat 17th Jan | | Intersectionality | |
| Session 21 Intersections I - ADHD | Katie Kerley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the intersection of Autistic and ADHD characteristics • The apparent clash of attentiveness and sensory characteristics • How “AuDHD” plays out in daily life • 75 mins, Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the distinctive characteristics of “AuDHD” • Appreciate the prevalence of this intersection • Apply appropriate strategies to AuDHD clients |
| Session 22 Intersections II - Multiply-neurodivergent- Impact and presentation | Katie Kerley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence rates for intersections with EDS, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, ID, etc. • Presentation of multiply-neurodivergent clients • Microtrauma, shame, and a complex of coping strategies & masking • 90 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how common neurodivergent intersections are • Appreciate the complex, interlinked web of resulting characteristics • Apply this understanding to client assessment & interactions |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 23 PDA in therapy | Gillian Kearns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examining your current knowledge of PDA • What current thinking is in relation to PDA • other aspects to take into consideration - interactions with other Neurodivergencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of PDA • learn about the internal and external presentations of PDA • understand the differences between PDA and other forms of Neurodivergence |

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| Session 24 PDA in therapy | Gillian Kearns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations when working with PDA clients • how may PDA influence the therapeutic relationship • approaches that may help support PDA clients • role play scenarios | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gain insight into PDA from lived experience examples • understand how to recognise PDA clients • learn about adapting your practice to engage PDA clients |
| Day 7 Sat 24th Jan | | Therapeutic Approaches | |
| Session 25 Person-Centred Therapy | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Person-Centred approach & autistic clients • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to reflect on aspects of the Person-Centred approach in relation to working with autistic clients |
| Session 26 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy | Grace Harrison & Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Psychodynamic approach & autistic clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to reflect on aspects of the Psychodynamic approach in relation to working with autistic clients |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 27 Demo/Practice Sessions | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demo session by trainer with volunteer • Practice sessions in triads • Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to develop a feel for working with autistic clients |

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| Session 28 Practice Sessions | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice sessions in triads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to develop a feel for working with autistic clients |
| Day 8 Sun 8th Feb | | Further therapeutic approaches | |
| Session 29 CBT, ACT, DBT, CFT | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive-Behavioural approaches & autistic clients Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to reflect on aspects of Cognitive-Behavioural approaches in relation to working with autistic clients |
| Session 30 Motivational Interviewing | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivational Interviewing approach & autistic clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to reflect on aspects of Motivational Interviewing in relation to working with autistic clients |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 31 | Christine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Puberty to Menopause: Hormonal Impacts on Autistic Lives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty and Menstruation and the Autistic experience, Supporting Pregnant and Post Partum Autistic adults, Perimenopause and Menopause and what is helpful for Autistic people who menstruate |
| Session 32 | Christine | As above | As above |

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| Day 9 Sat 28th Feb | | What next? | |
| Session 33 Supporting clients with unmasking | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting clients to unmask | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit masking and how we can support clients to unmask |
| Session 34 Other topics not covered on course? | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of requested topics not covered on course Break 15 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop confidence in working with autistic clients in relation to a variety of issues. |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 35 Demo session? Practice in triads? Discussion of case examples? | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demo session by trainer? Practice in triads? Exploration of case examples from trainer and participants? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop a feel for working with autistic clients. |
| Session 36 Practice considerations: supervision, CPD, etc | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion re further resources for ongoing professional growth, especially ongoing education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frame the course learning in a larger, long-term, professional developmental context. |

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| Day 10 Sat 14th March | | Presentations of individual learning summary | |
| Session 37 Presentations | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate & solidify course learning |
| Session 38 Presentations | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate & solidify course learning |
| Lunch | 1-2pm IST | Lunch | |
| Session 39 Presentations | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate & solidify course learning |
| Session 40 Presentations | Eoin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate & solidify course learning |