



autism

a hands on approach
conference

**TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER
2021**

SPEAKER
BIOGRAPHY



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Catherine Aldred is a Consultant Speech and Language Therapist and & Honorary Lecturer University of Manchester, IMPACT & Roundway Centre. Catherine's goal is early intervention for autism and associated social communication impairments, preventing secondary needs and promoting the best quality research into practice. She led pioneering autism therapy trials developed from her Ph.D. research at the University of Manchester and clinical practice including PACT, a follow-up study and UK and international implementation trials in India, France, Italy, Hong Kong due to extend to China and Denmark.

Catherine has worked in the NHS for 38 years simultaneously to her clinical research at the University of Manchester and become the founder of a new not-for-profit social enterprise IMPACT (Interaction Method for Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy) disseminating evidence-based autism intervention for the benefit of all children and their families.

Catherine is an honorary lecturer at the University of Manchester. Catherine provides assessments, diagnosis and therapy intervention for children with communication needs at the Roundway Centre. She is a national trainer in autism diagnostic and assessment instruments and developed a measure of child communication competencies, sensitive to change through therapy intervention (DCMA, Dyadic Communication Measure for Autism).

CATHERINE
ALDRED



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Mandy Barker is a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Switzerland. She is specialised in the diagnosis and intervention of children with autism spectrum disorders and has been engaged in training and teaching at the University of Geneva Hospital (HUG) and the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and many other institutions for more than 20 years. Dr Mandy and her team at Consultation Libellule help children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental disorders in particular autism spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit and hyperactivity (ADHD), cognitive and/or language impairments and genetic syndromes. They provide them and their families with a comprehensive evaluation using a multidisciplinary approach and up-to-date tests. According to the determined diagnosis, they develop a personalized intervention plan for the children and follow them through childhood and adolescence working closely with the family, school and others to discuss their progress and goals that will be achieved in the future leading them to fulfil at best their personal and professional adult life.

MANDY
BARKER



SIMON BARON- COHEN



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Simon Baron-Cohen is a Professor in the Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry University of Cambridge and Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. He is Director of the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge. He is author of 5 books: *Mindblindness*, *The Essential Difference*, *Prenatal Testosterone in Mind*, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, and *The Pattern Seekers*. He has edited scholarly anthologies including *Understanding Other Minds*. He has also written books for parents and teachers including *Autism and Asperger Syndrome: The Facts*. He is author of *Mind Reading* and *The Transporters*, digital educational resources to help children with autism learn emotion recognition, and both nominated for BAFTA awards.

He has published over 600 peer reviewed scientific articles, which have made contributions to many aspects of autism research, to typical cognitive sex differences, and synaesthesia research. Three influential theories he formulated were the 'mindblindness' theory of autism (1985), the 'prenatal sex steroid' theory of autism (1997), and the 'empathizing-systemizing' theory of typical sex differences (2002).

He created the first UK clinic for adults with suspected Asperger Syndrome (1999) that has helped over 1,000 patients to have their disability recognized. He gave a keynote address to the United Nations in New York on Autism Awareness Day 2017 on the topic of *Autism and Human Rights*. See <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/toward-autonomy-and-self-determination-world-autism-awareness-day-2017/5380816054001>

He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, the British Academy, the Academy of Medical Sciences, and the American Psychological Association. He is Vice-President of the National Autistic Society, and was President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR, 2017-19).



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He was Chair of the NICE Guideline Development Group for Autism (Adults) and was Chair of the Psychology Section of the British Academy. He is co-editor in chief of the journal *Molecular Autism* and is a National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Senior Investigator. He is the Principal Investigator of the Wellcome Trust funded award investigating the genetics of autism, in collaboration with the Sanger Centre.

He serves as Scientific Advisor, Trustee or Patron to several autism charities including the Autism Research Trust, the Cambridge Autism Centre of Excellence, and to the company Auticon, which only employs autistic people. He has taken part in many television documentaries, including the BBC's *Horizon*, and *Employable Me*. He received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List 2021. See www.autismresearchcentre.com



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Andy Burnham was elected as Mayor of Greater Manchester in May 2017. Responsible for shaping the future of Greater Manchester, Andy's priorities include ending rough sleeping, transforming Greater Manchester into one of the greenest city regions in Europe, and making Greater Manchester a great place to live, get on, and grow old.

The Mayor works closely with Jon Rouse, Chief Officer of the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, to improve the health and wellbeing of the 2.8 million people living in Greater Manchester. The Mayor has been a longstanding advocate of health and social care integration, and is passionate about improving access to mental health services.

Before being elected Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy was MP for Leigh from 2001. In government, Andy has held Ministerial positions at the Home Office, Department of Health and the Treasury. In 2008 he became Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, before returning to Health as Secretary of State in 2009.

In opposition, Andy has served as Shadow Education Secretary, Shadow Health Secretary and Shadow Home Secretary.

Andy lives in Leigh, Greater Manchester, with his wife and three children. He is a keen supporter of Everton FC.

ANDY
BURNHAM



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Francesca Happé is Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and Director of the MRC Social, Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry Centre at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London. For the last 30 years, Francesca's primary research focus has been autism. Her work has explored the nature of social understanding in neurotypical development and 'mentalising' difficulties in autism. She's also actively engaged in studies of abilities and assets in autism, and their relation to detail-focused cognitive style. Some of my most recent work focuses on mental health on the autism spectrum, and under-researched subgroups including women and the elderly. Her research methods have spanned cognitive experiments, functional neuroimaging, exploration of acquired brain lesions, and behaviour genetic approaches. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and the Academy of Medical Sciences, past-President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR; 2013-2015), has received the British Psychological Society Spearman Medal, the Experimental Psychology Society Prize and the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award. Francesca was awarded a CBE in the New Year's honours list 2021.

FRANCESCA
HAPPE



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Paul Isaacs is an autistic trainer, speaker, consultant and blogger. He has co-authored several books including *Life through a Kaleidoscope* and *Living through the Haze*.

Paul was branded as a “naughty & difficult child” at school. He was classically autistic and non-verbal due to speech articulation difficulties. He had complex sensory issues and appeared both deaf and blind. He gained functional speech around the age of 7 or 8 years old.

Paul went through the mainstream school system with no additional help or recognition of his autism. Consequently, he did not achieve his academic or his social potential and had very low self-esteem.

At age 11, Paul was referred to the children’s mental health service with childhood depression where he was regarded as “developmentally underage” and having speech problems.

As an adult, Paul had a string of unsuccessful jobs, and his mental health suffered. He developed both Borderline and Schizotypal Personality Disorders in early 2007. He was referred to mental health services and misdiagnosed with “Asperger traits with a complex personality”, which did not satisfy Paul or his family.

PAUL ISSACS

A local autism organisation put Paul in touch with an experienced psychiatrist, who diagnosed him with Autism at 24 years old. In 2012 Paul was also diagnosed with Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome by an Irlen Consultant who confirmed that he also had face, object and meaning blindness - conditions which Paul describes eloquently in his speeches and training sessions. He also has dyslexia, dyscalculia and also a dissociative disorder.

Paul has released and published 5 books on the subject of autism published by Chipmunka publishing and has contributed to other books too. Having overcome many challenges to achieve the success that he now enjoys, Paul's message is that Autism is a complex mix of ability and disability. He firmly believes that every Autistic person should have the opportunity to reach their potential and be regarded as a valued member of society.



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Anna Kennedy has two sons who have autistic spectrum disorder. She is an educator who has worked to provide an improved education and other facilities for children with autistic spectrum disorders. In pursuing support for these children, she has established two schools, a college, a respite home and a website with over 50,000 international followers.

Kennedy was appointed an OBE (Royal Reward for Inspirational Mother) Award by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace in 2012 for her services.

ANNA
KENNEDY



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Jess Kerr-Gaffney is a post-doctoral researcher with experience in eating disorders, autism, and affective disorders. She completed her PhD at King's College London investigating social cognition and autism symptoms in people with anorexia nervosa. Her work contributed to the development of the Pathway for Eating disorders and Autism developed from Clinical Experience (PEACE), the first autism-friendly eating disorder service in the UK. She has also advised the National Autistic Society on eating difficulties and autism.

JESS KERR-
GAFFNEY



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Charlotte Moore is an author and freelance journalist. She has written widely on autism-related issues and has spoken at many conferences and other events. 'George and Sam' her account of life with her autistic sons, is published by Penguin. She lives in Sussex with George and Sam, now both in their twenties, their neurotypical brother Jake, and her partner Simon.

CHARLOTTE
MOORE



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Gail Spruce is an Inspector with Greater Manchester Police with responsibility for the policies and processes across GMPs 7 Custody sites. Gail was diagnosed with autism 4 years ago and describes the diagnosis as finally giving her the tools to understand herself. Gail reflects that her own autism has probably shaped the choices she has made in the police, causing her to pursue roles that have less social contact, allowing her to use her skills in attention to detail and determination to complete tasks to the highest standards. Across GMPs custody sites Gail is committed to doing what is right and ensuring the environment and the skills of the custody staff are right and fair for all arrested people.

GAIL
SPRUCE



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Ruth Williams is a Psychotherapist who specialises in ADHD and Autism. She supports individuals, couples and families and co-directs Aspire Autism Consultancy with her colleague Deborah Wortman. Together they offer a range of counselling and consultancy services as well as running regular workshops and training courses to help people gain a deeper understanding of neurodiversity. Ruth offers clinical supervision to other professionals and runs monthly CPD/Supervision groups. She has extensive personal and professional experience of supporting people with ADHD as she has family members diagnosed with this condition which undoubtedly has helped her to gain deeper insights into the daily challenges of living with ADHD whilst exploring a full range of strategies to enable people with ADHD to lead more satisfying lives. A significant proportion of autistic people also have ADHD but often this is not picked up until later in life. Ruth feels passionate about improving awareness around what ADHD actually is, in the hope that individuals will be able to gain access to a range of resources to help them tackle the demands of life whilst staying mentally well and thus more likely to achieve their potential.

For further information about the work Ruth does see:
www.aspireautismconsultancy.co.uk

RUTH
WILLIAMS



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Mark Berry and Deborah Wortman have been married for 27 years; Mark has a diagnosis of Aspergers dating back 15 years. They have two adult children aged 27 and 22 who also have an autism and ADHD diagnosis.

They will talk about the challenges, the highs the lows of their relationship and strategies to enable a long-term healthy relationship with a neurodivergent partner and children.

Deborah Wortman is a specialist psychotherapist, working with autistic and ADHD clients. She has a private practice in Halifax she also runs Aspire Autism Consultancy with her colleague Ruth Williams Mark Berry is an IT team manager and has worked in this field for over 30 years.

MARK
BERRY &
DEBORAH
WORTMAN
