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RESEARCH NOTES

Neurodiverse Online Conferencing

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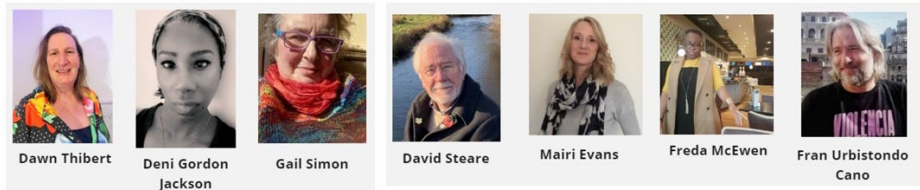
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Hello!

We are the Autism & Systemic Practice Research Hub
at LenticularFutures.com and organisers of the
3rd Systemic Practice & Autism Conference in July 2021.

Keywords:

*autism,
neurodiversity,
online conference,
good conference
practice
depathologising,
decolonising,
intersectionality*



You can experience this Interactive Poster that we presented at the 2022 European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry.

Watch this 30 second introduction to the board first:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zl3m3OuVeg>

Then view the board: <https://bit.ly/38UzNQw>

Abstract

In this digital poster using the platform, MIRO, we share learning from designing and hosting the first online edition of the 3rd Autism and Systemic Practice and Research Conference. We describe how we used the online possibilities of Zoom to challenge some of the professional discourses on autism to create a more reflexive conference culture. We propose that good practice for neurodiverse attuned online conferences can be generalisable as good conference practice.

Citation Link

Background to the conference

The Autism and Systemic Practice and Research Conference started in 2016 on a university campus in England. As systemic practitioners and researchers, we are preoccupied with relational ethics and critically exploring how discourses affect service delivery and stories about and for people. This conference has invited presentations which challenge dominant discourses and practices influenced by the medical and psychological powerhouses. We create conference programmes which foreground the voices of people living with autism in their lives for practitioners to learn from.

The online conference

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the neurodiverse steering group developed an online format which created opportunities for presenters and participants to engage and be present in a range of ways.

Autism and Intersectionality was the theme of this year's conference. There were intersecting agendas in the conference design: i) the conference design had to be coherent with the neurodiverse cultures and ii) the culture of the event recognised and made space for complexity in participant and presenter experience and identities. By foregrounding the experience of speakers and participants who define as autistic and Black / Queer / Trans / Female / with Learning Disabilities and so on, the single story of the diagnostic category was challenged and deconstructed in follow up conversations. The focus on Autism and Intersectionality was another step towards reclaiming the discourse around autism and honouring complexity in identity and experience.

One of the outcomes of this conference is the idea of a manifesto for good practice. Another outcome is that we've decided to hold the next conference entirely online in June 2022 as this suited many people for whom the demands of travel and in-person or in-building intensity would have discouraged participation.

Finally, the conference did not follow what we consider misguided government legislation to "make reasonable adjustments" for autistic people. Instead, the steering group rethought the rule-bound traditions of what a conference normally looks like and instead explored how online space could i) align format and content with the values of the critical autism thinking/practice and critical intersectionality theory/practice and ii) use the theme of Intersectionality and Autism to encourage decolonising and depathologising ways of doing and being with together as autistics as well as neurotypicals.

- **Visit our interactive poster:** <https://bit.ly/38UzNQw>
- **See more events:** <https://lf.eventbrite.com>
- **Contact us:** systemicautism@lenticularfutures.com

Citation

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