



Your Voice Neurodiverse Meeting Minutes



Thursday 5th September 2024

Topic – Autistic Discovery and reflection



Attending Chaired by members of the network

Self-advocates from Gloucestershire
South-Advocates from Devon
Self-Advocates from North Somerset
Self-Advocates from Wiltshire

Organisations Represented Inclusion
Gloucestershire, Dimensions For Autism



Opening Question

Favourite snack to have in the summer?
Orange Juice and Lemonade, Rocket Lollies
(sour flavour), Iced coffee, Ice-cream or
chocolate, watermelon iced tea, oreo ice cream
sandwich.



What is Autistic Discovery and Reflection

Autistic discovery is a massive topic, and could be broken down in to many different smaller aspects such as learning about your rights and needs and how to express them, Self Identity and Acceptance, community, autistic joy and so much more. We discussed how life changed or didn't change when you found out you were autistic.



Things we found difficult about being autistic

We discussed how we discovered that it was hard to express some of our needs in certain situations or due to masking

- It can be hard for an autistic person to articulate their needs in the workplace..
- Masking feels like wearing an uncomfortable itchy piece of material that you cannot take off.
- Autistic people can hold Trauma from not being understood.
- The world is not built for a neurodivergent brain – it can make you feel like you suck at being a human.
- Struggle with transition to secondary school. Or with some discrete support some one managed through secondary but things fell apart in sixth form – university. This lead to what they now know was Autistic burnout.
- Feeling of lack of social inclusion.
- School lunchtimes were definitely sensory overload territory.



Discovering autism and the autistic community

- People feel like currently feel that they are on the journey and constantly on the treadmill.
- Reasonable adjustments are not being met or consistent on a patient's notes. This is very tiresome for an autistic individual.
- Interactions with the world – It can be hard to be more yourself.
- It takes time to learn to be autistic
- Having a diagnosis or self identifying can make your life make sense.
- Communication and understanding is really important in relationships.
- Identity is really important. Sometimes it is not enough to know who you are, it is helpful to have people around you to valid and confirm, respect that.
- Community provides validation. Being part of the community It is good to relate to other people who have similar experiences.



Health and Social care

Reasonable adjustments are not being met or consistent on a patient's notes. This is very tiresome for an autistic individual.

There isn't a lot of support post diagnosis and people feel like they end up having to find different ways of getting support people feel like their on a treadmill

There is a lot of confusion between autism and mental health conditions. Mental health is often diagnosed rather than Autism or Autism is treated as a mental health condition which can lead to mental health crisis from not getting the support.

Next Meeting



Our next meet Thursday 3rd October 2024

We have been asked by the NHS to talk about Talking Therapies. We have the director for NHS Talking Therapies South West who is gathering feedback on how to making Talking Therapies more accessible coming to the November meeting.