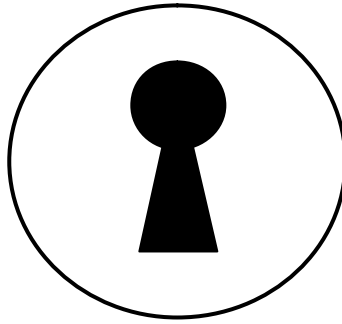


BSDH



UNLOCKING BARRIERS TO CARE

Understanding Autism
Friday, 9th December 2005
The Royal College of Physicians
London

Abstracts

Introduction to the Conference
Jane Asher - President of the National Autistic Society

Jane Asher is an actress, writer and businesswoman. She has worked in the field of autism for many years, and is President of the National Autistic Society, Arthritis Care and The West London Family Service Unit, Vice President of Child Accident Prevention Trust, The National Deaf Children's Society and of Mobility Trust. She is Patron of Colon Cancer Concern and of the Lymphoma Unit, University College Hospital. She has also been an Ambassador for the Prince's Trust for a number of years.

Autism as a Spectrum Disorder
Mr Luke Beardon - Senior Lecturer in Autism, Sheffield Hallam University

Luke has been working for several years in the fields of Autism and learning disabilities, in capacities ranging from practitioner to researcher to trainer. He started work for the National Autistic Society (NAS) as a Service Co-ordinator assisting in the development of a residential service for young adults on the autistic spectrum. Luke worked within this service supporting young adults with a range of complex needs,

from those with high dependency needs and severe learning disability, to individuals with a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome; prior to this Luke worked in the voluntary sector in the learning disability field. He has been involved in the setting up and running of two Asperger Social Groups, both of which are running successfully. Luke has run a Project developing autism services within a specific Local Authority and has also been employed by the NAS as Regional Development Officer co-ordinating developments over a larger geographical area. Luke has been part of a research team at Nottingham University running a three-year project, and has several publications in National and International journals related to the project. He was the dedicated Training Consultant for the National Autistic Society and Head of the Department, involved not only in the delivery of autism specific training, but in the development of autism specific courses and modules, the validation of the material and inputting into developmental areas of the department. Luke provides consultancy around how to work with individuals with ASDs, organisational consultancy and consultancy to Local Authorities. Luke has spoken at a number of National and International conferences on a variety of autism related topics. His most recent post is with Sheffield Hallam University as Senior Lecturer in Autism. He runs various courses at different academic levels on autism, including a Masters qualification, while continuing to research and consult in the field of autistic spectrum disorders. Luke is currently undertaking a Doctoral program of research in autism looking at issues related to crime.

Aim

- To present the background information so that delegates can have a fundamental understanding of Autism as a Spectrum Disorder.

Outcome

- To gain an awareness of how having an ASD can influence an individual's behaviour by its affect on learning, communication, social interaction and sensory processing.

Abstract

Luke's presentation will 'set the scene' for the conference by tackling the core features of Autism including difficulties in communication and social skills. It will include the 'Theory of Mind' and will also cover sensory processing issues and 'resistance to change'.

All of these factors can affect how a patient behaves or reacts within the dental surgery.

A Parent's View Mr Michael Leese

Alex is 11 years old and is autistic with challenging behaviour. He is a pupil at Linden Bridge School, one of two schools in Surrey which specialise in autistic spectrum disorder, which he attends five days a week and, in addition, he boards two nights a week in order to broaden his life skills.

He also suffers from anxiety, which can manifest itself in a variety of ways such as refusal to leave the house or panic, even anger, if he finds himself in an unfamiliar environment. Since Alex is very large for his age, controlling his challenging behaviour can be something of a challenge itself. But, within the constraints of his autism, Alex is a loving child with a very naughty sense of humour.

With patience and persistence - not to forget bribery in the form of sweets or other treats - he can be persuaded to try most things, even if it is just the once.

Being autistic and with no real grasp of language, probably the most important thing in helping him understand the world are the visual clues we can provide. This can take the form of photographs or symbols. Once armed with a programme of pictures, Alex is usually ready to give it a go.

Aim

- To try and help the dental profession understand why autistic children may be difficult patients

Outcome

- To offer dentists some ideas on how to deal with autistic children

Developing Strategies for Communication **Mrs Gina Davies - Specialist Speech and Language Therapist and Head of The Little Group special needs nursery**

Gina was employed by the Health Service in Surrey for 15 years, working in Health Centres and then in mainstream and special schools. Gina worked at Linden Bridge School for several years before leaving to set up the Little Group. The Little Group is a specialist nursery in Epsom for children with complex communication, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the great majority of whom have an autistic spectrum disorder. Approximately 70 children, aged between 2 and 6 attend in any one year, either full or part time with a mainstream placement travelling along in parallel where appropriate. The children attend in small groups with each class group run by a team comprising of a special needs teacher, speech and language therapist and specialist assistant.

Aim

- To give an understanding of the nature of the communication problems experienced by this population.

Outcome

- An understanding of useful and practical communication strategies for use in the delivery and provision of oral care.

Abstract

This talk will draw on visually supported communication strategies and play routines combined with the practical experience of working with the children. The talk will explore ways in which this knowledge can inform and support the communication strategies used with the client group.

Logically Illogical **Ros Blackburn**

Ros Blackburn is an adult with Autism. At three months old she appeared withdrawn, isolated and very much in a world of her own. At six months she was diagnosed profoundly deaf, which later proved to be far from correct. Finally, at a year old she was diagnosed very severely autistic but with average intellectual ability. Now at 34, Ros tends to feel that although many areas of her autistic condition have remained very severe, others, such as her severe language delay, have disappeared almost completely.

Aim

- It is Ros' wish that all those who attend her talks find them helpful and informative, but above all that the experience is entertaining and full of fun.

Outcome

- To gain insight into how having autism can affect you and become aware of the problems linked to having an uneven profile of strengths and weaknesses.

Abstract

In her talk entitled 'Logically Illogical', Ros describes many aspects of living and working with autism and gives an invaluable insight into her own world of autism. She uses humour and gives graphic examples of her experiences. She talks about her history from her early diagnosis to the present time and discusses some of the practices that played an invaluable part in her progression. Ros talks about the positive as well as the negative side of living with autism: she describes the fun she has as well as the ways in which her autism continues to restrict her life and the sort of support she would like to have. Her talk also illustrates the problems of having an uneven profile of strengths and weaknesses, where often the strengths mask her very real difficulties and needs.

The Paediatric Perspective and Use of ABA

Wendy Bellis MSc, BDS - Specialist Senior Paediatric Dental officer and Acting Clinical Dental Services Manager for Islington and Camden PCT's

Wendy has worked in the CDS in central London for over 20 years treating children with special needs and teaching. Her two areas of interest are Behaviour Management and Autism and she has taught widely both nationally and internationally on these subjects.

She has been working closely with autistic children for the last 8 years and now 80% of the children that she treats are within the autistic spectrum. During this time she has experienced children on many therapies - a number of which can impact on dental care. She has witnessed early behavioural therapy in action and the successful use of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA).

Over the years she has experimented with ABA and behavioural approaches in relation to dental care for these children. Parents and therapists have witnessed how behavioural approaches can benefit autistic children and as a result a dental unit is being built for her in a local ABA special school so that this work can continue to develop.

Aim

- To illustrate the importance of the role of the various therapies for autism and their relationship to paediatric dentistry.

Outcome

- To investigate and explain how therapies for autism can work for and against the paediatric dentist.

Abstract

The presentation will outline the different therapies which are available to parents of autistic children and will identify therapies that can deal with dental management.

Autism - The Eighth Colour of the Rainbow

Florica Stone - Author and Consultant in Autism

Florica was introduced to the world of autism in 1992 by her son, Alexander's inability to speak or interact meaningfully. Determined to hear him speak, she has devoted her life to understanding *what it means to be autistic* and transformed her home into an autistic Sanctuary for those who lived with this condition. Subsequently, she found ways to improve their quality of life via what she calls Literal Interaction - a method of teaching *meaningful social interaction and meaningful speech* and shared her knowledge in her book 'Autism the Eighth Colour of the Rainbow - Learn to Speak Autistic'. She is currently working on a video entitled: 'From non-verbal to expressive language - a 10-year journey towards meaningful interaction'.

Aims

- To describe and illustrate how the literal interpretation of language and body language manifest as communication barriers and/or behavioural problems. What does: 'Open wide' or 'Say Ah' mean?
- To share examples of false 'literal realities' experienced by people whose inner worlds were shaped by their own literal understanding of language (i.e. 'I must be an alien').
- To share examples of 'first meaningful' interactive moments.

Outcomes

- To increase awareness of how: clear, simple, literal communication - verbal or non-verbal - coupled with a smile leads to meaningful interactions. This in turn can unlock some barriers to care by increasing a patient willingness to co-operate with his dentist because he or she knows/understands what is required of him/her.
- To increase awareness that achieving *mutual understanding* may take as little as 10 minutes or as long as 10 years, yet autistic people can achieve it and that it acts as a powerful key to unlocking a person's potential.

Abstract

This talk will draw upon 13 years of interactive personal experience with autistic people aged from 2 to 50.

Video recorded examples will be shared to illustrate positive outcomes following literal interaction.

Questions are welcome.

Development of Information Leaflet for People with Autism

Michelle Golding - Assistant District Dental Officer, East Elmbridge & Mid Surrey PCT

Michelle Golding considers herself to be a "jobbing" community dentist with a special interest in Special Care Dentistry. She began her studies at Guy's in 1972, having worked in Special Needs Playgroups and as a volunteer with Mencap. Michelle began working as a dentist in 1978 with Kent Area Health Authority on the very day that the role of the CDS was extended to include adults with Special Needs and has developed with the service ever since.

Aim

- To describe the development of an interactive leaflet on autism and dental care and suggest ways that it can be used.

Outcome

- To provide participants with a means of encouraging patients with autism to seek appropriate dental care and prepare for a dental visit.

Abstract

Many people with autism and or their carers avoid dental treatment or are ill-prepared. Some dental staff are equally ill-prepared. This leaflet aims to "bridge the gap" for the benefit of all.