

Therapist Neurodiversity Collective International

Therapy • Advocacy • Education
Established January 2018



8 Signs of a Respectful & Empathetic Therapist

1 PRESUMES COMPETENCE

Presuming competence is a respectful presupposition. All humans have the right to dignity and understanding, unrestricted access to communication support tools, and empathetic, respectful and trauma-informed therapy provided by competent, credentialed and licensed speech-language pathologists and speech-language therapists.



2 PROVIDES BARRIER-FREE ACCESS TO AAC

No one should have to prove ability or mastery of “prerequisite skills” in order to “qualify” for access to robust AAC language systems and literacy instruction. Access to AAC is a human right for both non-speaking people, and speaking people who need additional supports.

3 ADVOCATES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION



We commit to upholding the dignity, humanity, civil liberties and human rights of all of the people we serve, including non-speaking, intellectually disabled, traumatically brain-injured, neurologically involved, neurodivergent, and those with a mental illness, Dementia, Alzheimer’s, or otherwise disabled.

4 ADVOCATES FOR INCLUSION

We support and advocate for client’s/student’s/patient’s needs first and foremost, including equitable and unrestricted access, and the implementation of accommodations and supports which work for them in all of their environments.



5 TEACHES SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

Our primary goal is to empower the people we serve with functional communication, tools and supports to help them navigate decision-making and self-determination in all areas of their daily life, and in public policy decisions affecting them.

6 ZERO USE OF ABA-DERIVED THERAPY PRACTICES



The fundamental goal of ABA is compliance with the will of the person in the position of authority. ABA is completely counterintuitive to self-advocacy, self-determination, and the upholding of human rights and dignity. We practice neurodiversity acceptance, self-determination, bodily autonomy, sensory preferences, and the power of “no.”

7 STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

We develop therapy goals from a strength-based position, concentrating on the inherent strengths of individuals we serve. Therapy focuses on strengths, abilities and potential rather than problems and perceived deficits, and without ignoring challenges that may require supports and accommodations. We see the people we serve as our therapy partners and work in collaboration with them, to help them achieve the goals they desire to meet.

8 RESPECT OF BODY AUTONOMY



We practice total and complete respect of body autonomy. (e.g. Will not physically manipulate client, without client consent.) We use hand under hand only with client consent, and only when necessary. We will not force-feed. We will not withhold access to emotional comfort, physical comfort, food, drinks, favorite items, activities, personal belongings as a way to manipulate or control the people we serve. We don’t train social skills or masking.