A neurodiversity-affirming approach doesn’t “treat Autism”. Autism is NOT a disease, a medical injury, a behavioral problem.

**Definition of Intervention**

“Action taken to improve a situation, especially a medical disorder. An occasion on which a person with an addiction or other behavioral problem is confronted by a group of friends or family members in an attempt to persuade them to address the issue.

**Presume Competence**

The Expert Knows What’s Best

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### Neurodiversity Affirming

**Neurodivergent-Affirming therapists don’t treat autism (Autism Intervention).**

Both, Autistic lived experiences and contemporary research tell us it's unethical to write goals with outcomes for "normalization" through teaching/training autistic people to hide their autistic traits.

*(The Double Empathy Problem, Diversity in Social Intelligence, Monotropism, Autistic Masking & Camouflage)*

Autistic people are capable of learning, growing, and developing, just like all people do when well-supported.

**Neurodivergent-Affirming Therapy Goals:**

- Improve quality of life as determined by client, not the therapist. Effective and robust communication, self-determination, self-advocacy, access to supports.

Informed consent and refusal of consent is provided at all times. Client's "no" is always respected and honored.

- Autistic play is authentic play.
- Autistic play is functional for autistic people.

Research and autistic lived experiences tell us that training Autistic people to perform with Neurotypical social skills

- Just doesn't work. (Research & Lived Experiences)
- Enforces masking, leading to depression, loss of identity, chronic anxiety, suicidal ideation.
- Is dehumanizing, demeaning, elitist, and ableist.

**Goals:**

- Present neutral information for navigating social interactions, and interpreting social situations

**Advocacy:**

- Teach perspective taking about differences in social communication
- The Double Empathy Problem
- Validate Autistic social diversity
- Train Neurotypicals to accept Autistic social differences.

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### Neurodiversity Lite

**Therapist "Autism Expert" who Treats Autism, performs Autism Intervention**

Buy my expensive "Neurodiversity" master class, handbook, video training, CEU event on how to treat Autism, or Autism Intervention/Behaviors.

- Led by an allistic (non-autistic) therapist who knows somebody who is autistic - a child, family member, friend, etc. who will teach you how to understand autism.
- Uses neurodiversity lingo & the buzzwords although not always correctly.
- ABA is considered "controversial" (but not unethical, immoral, a violation of human rights)
- Compliance/behavioral based, treating "autistic behaviors"
- Trains/sells products for Social Skills training
- Therapy to reduce sensory responses through toleration, exposure, extinction.
- Therapy goals for play, socialization/social engagement, reduction/extinction of stimming, table “readiness”
- "Learning to learn" *

"We all have to do things we don't like."

"They have to function in the real world."

"Autistic play is authentic play," but... let’s shape it and make it *functional, meaningful, purposeful, imaginative, social, "more fun".*

"Respect neurodiversity", but...

Teach your autistic clients how "to have meaningful relationships, theory of mind, increase empathy, accept responsibility for and fix their communication breakdowns, their social awkwardness, socially engage *appropriately*, sit at a table or in a circle to learn, at even a young age. Reduce movement. Use their interests, hobbies, and activities as rewards for compliance or social skills training intervention. Modify/change autistic social communication traits to appear "normal", help them "blend".

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Adapted from Autistic Self Advocacy Network’s

"For Whose Benefit? Evidence, Ethics, and Effectiveness of Autism Interventions" - 2021

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