

Therapists do not train autistic people to mimic neurotypical social skills. Everyone learns different styles of social communication by neurotype. "Social Skills Standards" are subjective and not evidence based.

Perspective Taking: Diversity in Social Intelligence & The Double Empathy Problem for All

Strength-based Assessment & Reporting

Focus on strengths, not "deficits"
Respect for social communication differences (monotropism, eye contact avoidance, tone, autistic play). Goals for compliance are not therapy goals, and these types of goals benefit someone other than the client.

When sensory differences are not well accommodated, this can have a negative impact on client wellbeing, emotional regulation, attention and concentration, and attainment. It is imperative that therapists advocate for sensorily comfortable environments for their clients.

Sensory Integration without expectations for Tolerance or "Extinction"

Empathetic & Respectful Therapy

Unrestricted AAC as alternative or as a replacement of Speech for Everyone

*Selective Mutism
Apraxia
Autistic People
Stutterers
Sensory Overwhelm/Overload
Burnout
Meltdown
Personal Preference
Cognitive injuries such as TBI
Developmental delays
Intellectual disability
Person with degenerative disease*

ABA Free
Positive reinforcement free
Seclusion & Restraint Free

**Intrinsic Motivation
Interest-led sessions
Body autonomy
Presume Competence
Honor "no" & "stop"**

Therapists learn directly from Neurodivergent people, including acquired neurodivergence

Client perspective is 1/3 of evidence based practice. Autistic people are "Autism Experts"



Therapist Neurodiversity Collective International

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The most important thing is that any therapy should help neurodivergent people get what they want and need, not what therapists think they need ("cure" or "normalize" or appear "less autistic"). Good therapies focus on helping neurodivergent people figure out their goals, and work with clients and students to achieve them.

Empathetic and respectful therapists are advocates for equitable inclusion, and unrestricted access to supports, modifications, and accommodations. They respect co-agency, ensuring diversity in learning by actively seeking to align their understanding with that of their clients and tailoring support to meet the specific ways in which each client learns.

Adapted from Autistic Self Advocacy Network Position Statements:
<https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/position-statements/>

therapistndc.org

What are Some Examples of Empathetic & Respectful Therapy?



Speech - Language Pathologists & Speech Language Therapists:

Provide access to/ teach a means of functional communication based on the client's choice, teach self-advocacy
AAC for all
Language disorder/delays - spoken, written
Language development - receptive and expressive
Cognitive-communication: post CVA, TBI, dementia, congenital Apraxia, Dysarthria
Dysphagia/Feeding (ARFID)
Articulation, phonological processing
Fluency based on client goals
Medical voice issues, gender expression voice therapy based on client goals
Perspective-taking regarding variations in social use of verbal and nonverbal communication
Recommend supports and accommodations

Occupational Therapists:

Motor skills for activities of daily living
Acquire balance and develop range of motion and strength
hand writing, using tools, computer use
dressing/grooming/toileting
Identify and purchase equipment, such as wheelchairs or bathroom safety devices, to ensure client safety
Cognitive-communication: post CVA, TBI, dementia
Assess home and/or work environment and recommend adaptations to fit needs and improve independence
Driving and Community Mobility
Feeding, Eating, and Swallowing
Assess profile sensory processing needs and differences to inform accommodations and to identify strategies to alleviate sensory distress/trauma
Help develop self-regulation on client's terms

Physical Therapists & Physiotherapists

Manage illnesses or injuries to:
Musculoskeletal system (bones and muscles)
Neurological systems (brain)
Cardiopulmonary system (heart and lungs)
Integumentary system (skin)
Various settings

- Oncology (Cancer)
- Cardiovascular (heart) and pulmonology (lungs)
- Geriatrics (elderly health)
- Orthopedics (bone, joint, and spinal issues)
- Neurology (brain health)
- Sports
- Clinical electrophysiology
- Pediatrics (children's health)

Help patients recover from surgeries including, herniated discs, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction, rotator cuff repair, sports injuries, other orthopedic issues

We are a Collective for Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, & Physical Therapists