10 Neurodiversity Affirming Principles for Therapists***

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It's not about compliance, control, normalization, or fixing perceived "deficits"

The Double Empathy Problem

Emotional Well-Being & Empowerment

Self-advocacy & personal agency

Authenticity & Diversity in social communication

1. *Abandon ABA*, IBI, NDBI *& all other behavioral, compliance-based, restrictive & controlling approaches.*

Monotropism

Authentic, robust, self-determined communication

2. *Advocate, validate, accept autistic &neurodivergent diversity in social intelligence.*

Meet sensory & environmental needs

3. *Advocate for & train autistic acceptance* (play, perspectives, behavior & social communication differences, sensory needs).

Authentic play is purposeful play!

4. *Seek to understand behaviors, & make sure these needs are met: communication, sensory environment, supports, barriers.*

Safe vs Unsafe, Harmful vs Helpful

5. *"Therapy vs cure" means self-determined quality of life vs hide / change / eliminate neurodivergent characteristics.*

Remove barriers! Equitable inclusion!

Friend vs Friendly vs "not a Friend"

6. *Reject normalization goals that induce trauma, autistic masking, loss of autonomy, personal agency, authenticity.*

Autistic masking & camouflage

7. *Abandon social skills training goals that shame & lead to autistic masking & poor mental health outcomes.*

Boundaries & Consent

8. *Replace SST with neurodiversity-affirming social communication assessment and therapy****

Perspective taking for everyone!

9. Conduct respectful, informed assessments; write evidence-based, strength-based reports & empowering goals.

Problem-solving, meeting needs, achieving personal goals

10. Focus on communication, self-advocacy, boundaries & consent, safe vs unsafe, harmful vs helpful & acceptance of authenticity.

Accommodations, modifications, supports!

***** The Neurodiversity-Affirming Conceptual Practice Framework for Social Communication (Roberts, J. © 2019-2022)**

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