Autism Unlimited Notes from Stacey

March 2022

I have just finished the pilot course from Autism Unlimited. It is meant to take two hours, but there were so many errors, I became very distracted, and it slowed me down somewhat...

I have a lot of feedback to collate and forward, but generally, I think it was a good introduction to autism. It is more up to date than some of the understanding autism courses I have completed, and was open about involving autistic voices during production.

It promoted respecting the individual, and recognising that needs may vary from day to day.

It explained that Asperger's is no longer diagnosed, but that some people still like to identify as 'aspies'.

It used identity first language by default, but again respected that some individuals may prefer person first language.

It covered communication, social understanding, sensory differences, repetitive and restrictive behaviours, special interests, stimming and how autism is not linear and does not fall on a scale of low to high functioning.

There was an interactive element, and reminder pages which were quite helpful.

It also placed emphasis on people having autism on their radar, so they can have some understanding of how to support autistic people and make helpful adjustments.

The sensory section bemused me... they referred to 7 sensory systems:

Audiotory - hearing
Gustonmy - taste
Perperception - body position
Smell -
Vision - sight
Touch - Tactile
Vestibular - movement

I think they meant auditory, gustatory, proprioception, olfactory, visual, tactile and vestibular. At least I hope I am right.

I am going to suggest that they also include interoception, but I'm not sure whether they will.

Associated conditions were mentioned, so I am going to also suggest using the comorbidity flower image to accompany this section.

In some areas, they briefly covered how autistic people may struggle to recognise and communicate their feelings and emotions, and how some 'communication' may come across as rude when it is not meant that way. I am going to suggest they provide links to Dr Damian Milton's double empathy problem, and resources about alexithymia. Again, they might choose not to include them, but I am hopeful that it will 'fit' in some capacity.

There was a section on 'behaviour that challenges', so I found that interesting, given that this was also used in the CDC pre-diagnosis pack. I have seen it used several times now...

At the end of the course, it was acknowledged that things are changing but there is still a long way to go.

Participants are asked to make a note of what they will change upon completing the course, and it is stressed that we need people to apply their learning in the real world, to really make a difference.

There are a few bugs to iron out...for example, when I completed the quiz, the same landing page kept appearing, which wasn't matched to the question I had answered.

But overall, I think this is a good starting point. Especially, as they have expressed during meetings that they will continue to review and update content.

Stacey