

## Strategies for day to day support for Women on the spectrum

Bettina Riese-Stott

## The Impact of Ideas

Assumptions about the nature  
of autism have always influenced  
and will always influence  
approaches to treatment and outlook

Gualtieri (1990)

## Different Needs

- Biological/ Physical
- Psychological/ Mental Health
- Social/ Expectations/ Experiences

## Recognised Issues

- Masking
- Stereotyping
- Social pressures
- **identity conflict**
- Autobiographical memory

## Long term consequences on:

- Relationships
- Families and Children
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Sexuality (Transgender, asexual, homosexual, gender-fluid)

## Strategies \*

Based on the RHB\*\* approach

\*\* Retrospective-Hindsight-Backwards

*With special thanks to our Worthing Ladies 'Group*

## Good Communication

### Structure Communication Times

- Chat times (does this need to be face to face using words?)
- Family discussion times
- Guidelines on what to say in situations/ Scripting

### Reducing the anxiety over communication

- ✧ Sensory Issues (touch etc)
- ✧ Environment
- ✧ Use of special Interests
- ✧ Graded approach
- ✧ Does it have to be discussed/resolved now?

## Good Communication

### Other important considerations

- Sometimes time is needed to allow for processing
- All strategies will need to be practiced/repeated
- ✧ Using humour and being positive
- ✧ Be clear and explicit
- ✧ Compassion for everyone

## Confidence and Self Esteem

- Support to:
- Understanding yourself and your ASC
- Like yourself
- Be yourself (including stimming, time out and meeting your needs)
- Being allowed to be herself
- Knowing your strengths and what you're good at
- Meeting other women

## Translate and Keeping it real

- What do they really mean?
- Keeping Safe – strategies
- What does it mean – different perspectives
- What is real and what is not (Social Media/ Media)
- Modelling – nobody is perfect
- Good peer networks (i.e. groups for women)

## Managing Anxiety

- REVIEW
  - Developing self awareness
  - Identifying triggers
- PLAN
  - Identify:
  - General de-stress strategies
  - “First Aid Kit” to tackle acute stress
  - Specific interventions for particular triggers
- DO
  - Try out the strategies
  - Work together

## Working Together Successfully

The screenshot shows a social media post with the following text: "I know it isn't autism related but I'm having a serious relationship problem, but it my first time this has happened. If anyone can help in anyway please message me. I don't have any friends to talk to. I understand if no one responds". Below the post are several replies. One reply says "I'm not sure I'll be good for advice, but I'm always around as a listening ear x". Another reply says "jame here, Maddie. I'm a crusty old woman but happy to help if I can!". A third reply says "He may have cheated on me with a girl just like me, but not autistic". A fourth reply says "Ok. What evidence do you have or what made you think that he has? Do you want to send me a private message or are you happy to keep it in the group?". A fifth reply says "Writing down key points is great idea. Definitely tell him how it has made you feel, he can't guess. Lol at Tini AlongsideAutism's advice about boys not being good with lots of crying!!! Sadly true more often than not, there again I can't deal with that either.". A sixth reply says "Oh and hope it goes well. Let us know.". A seventh reply says "Thank you so much guys, we've got it sorted out. Really glad I had you guys xxx". An eighth reply says "That's brilliant news. Well done for talking to him, that can't have been easy.". A ninth reply says "Sorry I couldn't help with this. good advice above! Well done for sticking it out and asking for help x".