

# Developing a Strength-based Understanding of Autistic Children and Young Peoples' Emotions and Social Relationships



Date	Saturday 14th June 2025
Time	9.30am-4.15pm
Venue	Online via Zoom
For	Children and Young People Counsellors/ Play Therapists
Presenters	Jeanne McLaughlin
Cost	RS Members £60/ Non-Members £120
CPD Points	6 Category A Points
<b>Booking</b>	<b>Secure your place <a href="#">HERE</a></b>

There is an increased awareness of Neurodiversity and the different ways human beings think, interact and feel. More recently the term Neurodivergent has come to encompass Autism when in fact it is a term that recognises that “a person’s neurocognitive functioning diverges from the dominant societal norms” *Nick Walker* - <https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions>.

This workshop will introduce participants to the social and emotional world of Autistic children and young people with up-to-date research reframing an understanding of how the brain develops, the conflict between Neurotypical and Autistic communication and challenging the notion that being Autistic means deficits in emotional and social awareness.

When working in this area, practitioners will also be working with Autistic children/young people’s fixed experience of past interactions such as: positive and negative social interaction; feeling misunderstood; masking to hide true emotions; confused sense of identity; defensive/avoidance behaviours; high levels of stress or anxiety in new relationships; unrealistic expectations of others. These can be hidden barriers to the building of a supportive therapeutic relationship.

Using a new framework of communication that seeks to understand the socioemotional world, practitioners can reflect and develop a strength-based approach to their support. In this interactive workshop there will be regular slots for reflective discussion around the presentation in relation to professional practice situations.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the day participants will be able to:

- Critically think about the proposed differences in Autistic brain development from current research and describe how this impacts Autistic socioemotional development from birth to adulthood.
- Reflect on their own emotional understanding and social expectations in the context of working with Autistic individuals.
- Recognise anxiety-based masking strategies and develop appropriate sensitive responses to help children/young peoples develop better coping strategies.
- Support conversations around identity and gender.

**Presenter:** [Jeanne McLaughlin](#) is a BAPT Registered Play Therapist® and Clinical Supervisor working at With Kids for 12 years. Jeanne has thirty years of experience working with infants, children and teenagers and their families. Her research on Play Therapy has been published in the UK and international academic journals. She designed the infant-child development module on the With Kids and Queen Margaret University MSc in Play Therapy and is an Honorary lecturer at Glasgow University involved in the new Infant Mental Health MSc.

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## HOW TO BOOK

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Relationships Scotland CPD events are for practitioners who are currently working for a Service that is a Member of Relationships Scotland. Booking early is encouraged as spaces may be limited. Spaces may be open to practitioners from external organisations where appropriate and available. We use an online booking process, the link to the online booking form for this event can be found [HERE](#). The online booking form can be used by:

- Member Services to book on behalf of practitioners.
- Practitioners from Member Services who wish to self-fund.
- Practitioners from external organisations, when spaces are available.

If you have any questions about the booking process please contact:

Liz Thackwray: [liz.thackwray@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:liz.thackwray@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

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## BOOKING TERMS

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Booking for CPD events will be confirmed by email within 10 days of submission. Please check your inbox and/or junk mail, if you have any issues receiving this email please contact us immediately. Only participants that have received a booking confirmation email will be able to access the event. Member Services or Self-funded practitioners will be sent an invoice for the course fee before the event, please do not make a payment until you have received this invoice as it will have a unique invoice number for the payment reference.

Cancellations within 14 days of the event and non-attendance will be charged in full. Member Services/practitioners must notify us of any cancellations by email. Where appropriate, Member Services may transfer a place to another attendee if the original person cannot attend, we must be informed of this ahead of the event taking place. If a CPD event is cancelled by Relationships Scotland (because of insufficient numbers or unforeseen circumstances) then all fees will be fully refunded. We are unable to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel and accommodation.

In exceptional circumstances, Member Services/practitioners may request a refund of the cost of the training event or a free place at a future event. Examples of exceptional circumstances include admission to hospital at short notice, or a family bereavement. We are unable to reimburse out of pocket expenses, such as travel and accommodation. Requests for refunds or credits for future events will be considered by the Office Bearers Group (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer of the National Office). All request for refunds/free places at future events should be made in writing or by email to the CPD Manager, [sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

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## ACCESSING THE EVENT ONLINE

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**System Requirements:** The CPD event will usually be delivered using the Zoom platform. Please attend the online session from a private space using a compatible computer or tablet connected to the internet. You will need to download Zoom to access the session: <https://zoom.us/> Please make sure you have the most recent version of Zoom. Please note, some organisations have additional security settings that may prevent you from accessing the CPD event on an organisational device. Please also ensure that you have the required bandwidth and internet speed. You can test whether you are able to join a Zoom meeting here: <https://zoom.us/test> Relationships Scotland are unable to provide refunds when there are issues with a participant's IT which prevents them from accessing the CPD event. Please contact the CPD Manager if you are unsure about how to use the technology [sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

**Accessing the Event:** A link to the session will be sent out a few days before the event. Please ensure that the email address to which the link should be sent is clear in the Booking Form. It is also important that the Zoom account uses the same name that you used to register for the event. The Relationships Scotland CPD Host will use this information to admit participants into the event and to confirm attendance certificates. The username for your Zoom account can be amended by signing into Zoom and going to the profile section of your account.