



**AUTSCAPE**  
Autistic Wellbeing

**10-13 August, 2010**

**Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, Somerset, UK**

## **Part 2: Programme**

### **Table of contents**

<b><i>Timetable of presentations .....</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>
Tuesday, 10 August .....	2
Wednesday, 11 August.....	2
Thursday, 12 August .....	3
Friday, 13 August.....	5
<b><i>Presenters' Bios .....</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>
Nusrat-ul Hussan.....	6
Emma Gowen.....	6
Dr. Mark Brosnan.....	6
Katja Gottschewski .....	6
Rudi Harmse .....	6
Caroline Hearst.....	7
Bryan Coleman .....	7
Rob Edwards .....	7
Vicky .....	7

## **Timetable of presentations**

Everything at Autscope is completely optional. You are not obliged to attend anything, speak to anyone (unless you are a parent or carer), or participate in any way. If you are interested in doing things, there is plenty going on throughout the day.

### **Tuesday, 10 August**

#### **14:30-17:30 Registration (reception)**

See part 1 for details of what to do.

#### **17:30-18:00 Orientation (John Todd meeting room)**

Orientation will explain a few things about how things work at Autscope. There may be new information, so please come along even if you have attended Autscope before. Following orientation, if you would like a tour of the facilities, meet at the back of the room. The registrar will also be available in a clearly marked location during this time for people who would like to become members of Autscope. Membership helps to support Autscope, allows you to vote at the AGM and, in the coming year, we hope to offer more benefits for members.

#### **18:30-19:30 Supper (dining room)**

#### **20:00-22:00 Evening activities (various locations)**

In the evening there will be a variety of casual and semi-structured activities including discussions, films and games. Most scheduled activities will be between 20:00 and 22:00. Lists of exactly what's on will be available at Autscope.

### **Wednesday, 11 August**

#### **07:30-09:00 Breakfast (dining room)**

#### **09:30-10:15 Stress in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder – Mark Brosnan**

We all respond to stress many times a day and the nature of this response impacts upon our health and wellbeing. 'Cortisol' is known as the stress hormone and inappropriate responses to stress (e.g. too little or too much cortisol) can have a negative effect upon our wellbeing. This presentation outlines research relating to the cortisol stress response in people with ASD and its relationship to an insistence upon sameness behaviour.

#### **10:15-11:00 Music – Katja Gottschewski**

This is a practice-oriented presentation about the role of music in our lives. I am going to talk about different functions of music that can enhance our life quality, like self-expression, communication and relaxation. I will also talk about what is out there for people who want to explore those functions more fully, for example music lessons, musical ensembles or music therapy. While a big part of my presentation will apply to ACs and NTs alike, I will also address some autism-specific issues, and how music can be a tool to facilitate interaction and understanding between ACs and NTs.

#### **11:00-11:30 Break (refreshments in coffee area)**

**11:30-12:30 Parallel discussions on morning lectures**

Two discussions will happen at the same time in different rooms. You will need to choose which to attend.

12:30-14:00 Lunch (dining room)

**14:00-15:00 Leisure sessions (various locations)****15:00-15:45 Is multisensory integration altered in autism? – Emma Gowen**

The ability to combine information from different senses, termed multisensory integration, is key to making sense of the world around us. In this talk, I will discuss whether there is evidence for altered multisensory integration in autism and how this may relate to sensory symptoms. I will also present some preliminary data from our lab examining integration between vision and touch.

**15:45-16:30 If we want the job done right... best to do it ourselves! – Rob Edwards**

We all know what it's like not to be understood. Never is it more frustrating than when we deal with health or social care professionals who just don't get us. But what if your counsellor was autistic? What if the person who organised your support group was autistic? What if the person you asked for help with your benefits was autistic? What if the people who were there to help you improve your wellbeing actually understood your difficulties, but also genuinely valued your strengths? This is what a group of us hope to achieve in Devon over the next few years. It's a bold plan, but we're serious, and we've got support. As the new Autism Act comes into effect, we discuss how we must be at the forefront of designing and providing new services for our community. We don't all want to become psychologists of course, but there are quite a few of us, for instance, who dream of creating a support group, yet aren't sure where to start. This presentation will try to inspire you to believe in your own ability to make real on-the-ground change to our wellbeing... by taking on the task for yourself! Job satisfaction guaranteed...

16:30-17:00 Break (refreshments in coffee area)

**17:00-18:00 Parallel discussions on afternoon lectures**

Two discussions will happen at the same time in different rooms. You will need to choose which to attend.

18:30-19:30 Supper (dining room)

**20:00-22:00 Evening activities (various locations)****Thursday, 12 August**

07:30-09:00 Breakfast (dining room)

**09:30-10:15 Autistic self-mastery: The role of e-health systems in enhancing quality of life – Rudi Harmse**

With healthcare systems around the world struggling to cope with the level of need in the various communities, e-health has emerged as a method to provide an increased range of services while still being cost effective and focused on the individual consumers' needs. This lecture will consider the potential ways that e-

health systems could impact the quality of life of individuals with an ASD. The desirability of a person-centered methodology which can provide the means for the individual to strengthen their social support network while providing support that is tailored to the specific needs without sacrificing individual control during the process is discussed. The important role that individual autistics should play in such a system is also considered.

**10:15-11:00 *How balancing senses can improve quality of life in Autism – Nusrat-ul Hussan***

We explore or learn about the world around us through sensory experiences. The sensory system is vital for survival, growth, development and the experience of bodily pleasure. As commonly known, our senses are: Touch - Taste - Smell - Hearing - Vision. But we have many more senses than that. Broadly, we can divide the senses into internal and external senses. The 'sense of well-being' is a sense too, but an internal one, which can be observed when all our senses both internal and external work together to give us a dependable view of the world. This is possible by the process of Sensory Integration.

Sensory integration therapy can be provided as a balanced sensory diet through multi sensory inputs, as a planned, controlled activities in accordance with the person's specific sensory needs. The purpose of a sensory diet is to provide sensory experiences throughout the day in order to help the person to maintain a functional level of arousal, which is necessary for learning, to perform activities of daily living and to participate in society in a productive way.

**11:00-11:30 *Break***

**11:30-12:30 *Parallel discussions on morning lectures***

Two discussions will happen at the same time in different rooms. You will need to choose which to attend.

**12:30-14:00 *Lunch (dining room)***

**14:00-15:00 *Leisure sessions (various locations)***

**15:00-15:45 *Autism-friendly strategies for coping with eating disorders – Vicky***

Repeated studies have shown that autistic people are particularly vulnerable to eating difficulties, especially anorexia, so a discussion of how these conditions should be approached and treated is long overdue. My presentation will explore the reasons why autistic people are so likely to develop eating disorders and offer some autism-friendly strategies for coping with them.

**15:45-16:30 *Supporting autistic students at university – Bryan Coleman***

This lecture is about what is happening at the University of Manchester to provide support and adjustments for autistic students. The university has an arrangement with NAS Prospects to provide mentorship and pastoral care for students and to provide autism awareness training for staff. Bryan provides advocacy and communication assistance for disabled students, acting as a liaison and making sure students' needs are met at the university and through Disabled Students Allowance.

**16:30-17:00 *Break***

**17:00-18:00 *Parallel discussions on afternoon lectures***

Two discussions will happen at the same time in different rooms. You will need to choose which to attend.

*18:30-19:30 Supper (dining room)*

**20:00-22:00 *Evening activities (various locations)***

**Friday, 13 August****09:00-09:30 *Vacate rooms***

Pack up and put your bags in the Lounge. Artists, don't forget any art work you may have brought or created. If you have time, please remove the sheets from your bed and place in the hall outside your door. When you are finished, please return your key(s) to the reception desk.

**09:30-11:00 *Addressing anxiety with meditation and/or CBT – Caroline Hearst***

One of the traits the Autism Spectrum is a tendency to high anxiety levels. In my own case I noticed when looking at photos of myself that even as a teenager I looked highly anxious, however my anxiety was so continuous and chronic that I was unaware of it and even denied it when it was pointed out to me by others. In more recent years I have become more aware of the anxiety and its tendency to segue into depression. I have taken steps to alleviate it including practicing daily meditation and undergoing some CBT treatment with a psychologist. In this workshop I will speak about how meditation has helped me become aware of and move through the anxiety and also how I found CBT. I will offer a short guided meditation and allow time for discussion about both meditation and CBT.

*11:00-11:30 Break (refreshments in coffee area)*

**11:30-12:30 *Annual General Meeting (John Todd meeting room)***

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is where the future of Autescape is determined. Come and vote (members only) for next year's committee and take part in other major decisions asked of the membership.

*12:30-13:30 Lunch (dining room)*

*13:30-14:30 Transport to Bath station leaves*

***End of Autescape 2010***

## **Presenters' Bios**

### **Nusrat-ul Hussan**

#### ***Presenting: How balancing senses can improve quality of life in Autism***

Nusrat is a Master's in Occupational Therapy from India. During her post-qualification experience she had worked with children having "Autism spectrum disorder and Learning disabilities" in Action For Autism (India).

She has organized and executed conferences and group workshops for parents, professionals and undergraduate and diploma students of occupational therapy and special educators. She is an active participant with various organisations and activity groups in India.

Her areas of interest include Autism, Sensory Integration, Handwriting skills and Visual perceptual skills. She introduced "Hand writing Program" for children having ASD at Action for Autism.

Her interest also involves writing and preparing reading material for caretakers, she has contributed to "Autism Network", a journal published by AFA.

### **Emma Gowen**

#### ***Presenting: Is multisensory integration altered in autism?***

Dr Emma Gowen is a lecturer at The University of Manchester. She is interested in how sensory information is used to control action and behaviour and how this may be different in people with ASD. Her current work focuses on sensory integration and imitation.

### **Dr. Mark Brosnan**

#### ***Presenting: Stress in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder***

Dr. Brosnan is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Bath. He has published widely within academic journals upon a range of topics relevant to ASD.

### **Katja Gottschewski**

#### ***Presenting: Music***

Katja is a German music therapist and cellist living in Norway. She has given presentations about music and music therapy in various contexts, including Autscape and Autreat. Music has always been an extremely important part of her life, and she cannot imagine a life without music any more than a life without being autistic.

### **Rudi Harmse**

#### ***Presenting: Autistic self-mastery: The role of e-health systems in enhancing quality of life***

Rudi Harmse is a senior lecturer in the School of Information and Communication Technology at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa. He uses his systemising abilities and intense focus on particular topics of interest in his research activities which involve the design of information technology systems that support human activities, particularly in the areas of education and consumer health informatics, in ways that give due consideration

to the differences among people. He is currently working towards his PhD focusing on the development of consumer e-health systems that address the needs of individuals exhibiting characteristics typical of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

## Caroline Hearst

### ***Presenting: Addressing anxiety with meditation and/or CBT***

Caroline Hearst is currently living in Christchurch, New Zealand, having moved from the UK with her NZ partner and their 2 children 12 years ago. The discovery two years ago that she is on the autistic spectrum helped her make sense of the previous 50 years of her life and also helped her understand her 18 year old son (also suspected to be on the spectrum) better. Even before her diagnosis she noticed that pictures of her as a teenager seemed to show someone experiencing extreme anxiety. Discovering that her anxiety is related to ASD has helped her address it.

## Bryan Coleman

### ***Presenting: Supporting autistic students at university***

Bryan is the deputy manager of the Disability Support Office at the University of Manchester. He has worked with students on the autistic spectrum for 10 years, at three different universities. He has been working at Manchester for nearly 5 years.

He has been involved in working with the NAS/Prospects in setting up a support service for autistic students. This involves one-to-one regular appointments with an NAS adviser, awareness sessions for university staff, and an informal social group for the students – largely arranged and run by the students themselves.

Bryan is also involved in a project – led by Dr Mark Hughes – to develop easy-to-use awareness materials for university staff.

## Rob Edwards

### ***Presenting: If we want the job done right... best to do it ourselves!***

Rob Edwards is a trainee psychotherapist who is diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. He volunteers as a speaker for the NAS, and also as a moderator of their new web forum. He has previously been interviewed on BBC local radio about his diagnosis. He is currently working, alongside autistic colleagues, on the development of a resource centre, providing diagnosis, counselling, support groups and advocacy, including support toward self-advocacy, for people with autism.

## Vicky

### ***Presenting: Autism-friendly strategies for coping with eating disorders***

This year's theme resonates strongly with me. I am diagnosed with a severe and enduring eating disorder, and have often struggled to get appropriate treatment in a health service that was not designed with autistic people's cognitive, social, and emotional needs in mind.

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08:00		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
09:00		(Free/flex time)	(Free/flex time)	Packing
10:00		Stress in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder <i>Mark Brosnan</i>	Autistic self-mastery: The role of e-health systems in enhancing quality of life <i>Rudi Harmse</i>	Addressing anxiety with meditation and/or CBT (verbal workshop) <i>Caroline Hearst</i>
11:00		Music <i>Katja Gottschewski</i>	How balancing senses can improve quality of life in Autism <i>Nusrat-ul Hussan</i>	
12:00		Break	Break	Break
13:00		Parallel discussion of morning lectures	Parallel discussion of morning lectures	AGM
14:00	Registration	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
15:00		Leisure	Leisure	
16:00		Is multisensory integration altered in autism? <i>Emma Gowen</i>	Autism-friendly strategies for coping with eating disorders <i>Vicky</i>	
17:00		If we want the job done right... best to do it ourselves! <i>Rob Edwards</i>	Supporting autistic students at university <i>Bryan Coleman</i>	
18:00		Break	Break	
19:00		Parallel discussion of afternoon lectures	Parallel discussion of afternoon lectures	
	Orientation			
	(Free/flex time)	(Free/flex time)	(Free/flex time)	
	Supper	Supper	Supper	