



# AUTSCAPE 2013

## Finding a Voice

6 – 9 August 2013 Ackworth School, Pontefract, Yorkshire, UK

### Part 2: Formal Programme

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# 1. Presentations

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Everything at Autescape 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.

Note: The following outlines the **formal programme** only. We also organise an **alternative programme** which partially runs concurrent with the formal programme. Please see part 2A of the information pack (to be published separately) for further details.

## Tuesday, 6 August

### **14:30-17:00 Registration (Information Area)**

See part 1 for details of what to do. After you've registered, spend this time relaxing and settling in. In the Quiet dining room, you can decorate your name badge or folder with the materials provided, spend the time playing some board games, or take a tour of the venue. Tea and coffee will be available here during registration.

### **17:30-18:00 Orientation (Music Centre)**

Orientation will explain a few things about how things work at Autescape. There may be new information, so please come along even if you have attended Autescape before. Attendance is *strongly recommended* for all participants.

18:00-19:30 *Supper (service until 19:00; Dining Room)*

19:30-20:00 *First meeting of Home groups (Quiet 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. Lists of exactly what's on and when will be available at Autescape.

## Wednesday, 7 August

08:30-09:30 *Breakfast (Dining Room)*

### **09:30-10:15 Listening to autistic voices – Larry Arnold (Music Centre)**

Autescape is all about autistic people listening and being heard, but there are other fora where autistic people present. There are some well known speakers such as Temple Grandin and Ros Blackburn, but also many lesser known presenters whose experience is limited to talking to local autistic societies for instance. I want to look at the different ways autistic speakers present at conferences and meetings, the differences between speaking to a primarily autistic audience and of fulfilling NT expectations for instance. This will be interactive as I am offering the chance for people to talk about their own experiences of talking to different audiences and of their experience of listening to autistic speakers.

### **10:15-11:00 "Sitting on a rock": exploring what may have been given up for lost – Lyte (Music Centre)**

A lecture and a workshop on the theme 'finding a voice': claiming our Authentic Selves. Can we reclaim some of what may have been compromised or even lost to us in our efforts for Survival? Do we need to reclaim any of those aspects in order

to find our own empowered ways to Thrive? This will be a verbal, visually illustrated and possibly multisensory lecture followed up with a hands on workshop. This presentation evolves from the perspective that so many neuro-diverse/autistic people have had to make compromises for survival purposes in an often uncomprehending and relatively hostile space. The possibility is examined that reclaiming such parts of ourselves that we may have compromised and 'shut away' may be essential to our thriving rather than mere 'surviving' - and may (by reclaiming our wholeness) actually empower us, allowing our true nature to come through as authentic beings.

*11:00-11:30 Break (drinks and snacks will be in the Dining Room)*

**11:30-12:30 Concurrent discussion sessions of 09:30 and 10:00 lectures**

- ***Listening to autistic voices – Larry (Music Centre)***
- ***"Sitting on a rock" – Lyte (Art Room)***

*12:30-14:00 Lunch (service until 13:30; Dining Room)*

*14:00-14:30 First meeting of Interest groups (Quiet dining room)*

*14:00-16:00 Swimming pool open*

**14:30-15:30 Sessions from alternative programme (see part 2A)**

*15:30-16:00 Break (drinks and snacks will be in the dining room)*

**16:00-17:00 Concurrent workshops:**

- ***When you can't find your voice: using signs and symbols to supplement speech – Kalen (Music Centre)***

This workshop will be about using Makaton signs and symbols as an alternative or supplement to vocal communication. Makaton is a communication system designed to assist those who have communication difficulties. The signs are derived from British Sign Language used by the deaf, but are standardised and applied as a means of supporting spoken language. Makaton also includes picture symbols which are used for communication and for picture schedules and similar. The workshop will consist of an introduction to Makaton and its uses, but the majority of the time will be spent learning and practicing signs from the 'basic signs' in Makaton's vocabulary. Hopefully, all participants will leave knowing at least a few useful signs and recognising a number of symbols.

- ***The Colour of In-Between – Susy (Art Room)***

This workshop makes use of a combination of colour and image to explore the multiple identities that make up our individual characters. It tackles the binary of identities imposed by society and the media and focuses on the 'grey' area in between. The workshop aim is to give autistic participants an opportunity to use colour to re-focus the image of autism, express their voice on their identity/ identities, and produce individual or collective images.

**17:00-18:00 Concurrent workshops:**

- ***Finding a voice within organisations – Yo (Music Centre)***

This workshop aims to provide participants with greater knowledge of how organisations work and help them develop skills likely to improve their ability to gain an effective voice within and through organisations. When autistic people wish to participate in group situations, we can often encounter difficulties

'decoding' the (often unwritten) rules involved. This can act as an obstacle and prevent autistics from finding a voice inside organisations and/or prevent autistics from making the most effective use of organisations to enhance and amplify their voices within the wider community. This workshop aims to help participants overcome this obstacle by increasing understanding and awareness of common rules and procedures and developing the ability of participants to know what questions to ask in order to find out how an organisation works and effectively find a voice within and through that organisation.

- **Session from alternative programme** (see part 2A)

18:00-19:30 *Supper (service until 19:00; Dining Room)*

19:30-20:00 *Meeting of Home groups*

**20:00-22:00 Evening Activities**

## Thursday, 8 August

08:30-09:30 *Breakfast (Dining Room)*

**09:30-10:15 *From finding a voice to being understood: exploring the double empathy problem – Damian Milton (Music Centre)***

This presentation begins with an overview of the double empathy problem theory as devised by the author of this presentation. Issues such as empathy and reciprocity will be explored through the use of examples and interactive activities. This will be followed by examining how autistic voices are presented and perceived within the field of autism studies, and how issues relating to the double empathy problem can act as a barrier to autistic voices being 'found', or at least understood on their own terms. This discussion then lays a foundation for an exploration of what counts as, as well as how one acquires, various forms of 'expertise', with the view of exploring the perennial topic of 'who should speak for autistic people?'

**10:15-11:00 *Self advocacy booklet for adults on the autism spectrum – Alexis Green (Music Centre)***

This booklet was designed to help autistic people communicate their needs at formal appointments. This presentation will describe how the booklet was designed with user input. Continuity of information between various professionals can be communicated via this book. There is also a section for criminal justice professionals which has been used by authors of this book in real life situations. The booklet explains autism in a clear and concise way and has sections to complete your own needs. Examples of what to write are included in each section.

11:00-11:30 *Break (drinks and snacks will be in the Dining Room)*

**11:30-12:30 *Concurrent discussion sessions of 09:30 and 10:00 lectures***

- ***From finding a voice to being understood – Damian (Music Centre)***
- ***Self advocacy booklet – Alexis (West Wing classroom 1)***

12:30-14:00 *Lunch (service until 13:30; Dining Room)*

14:00-14:30 *Meeting of Interest groups*

14:00-16:00 *Swimming pool open*

**14:30-15:30 *Sessions from alternative programme (see part 2A)***

15:30-16:00 *Break (drinks and snacks will be in the dining room)*

**16:00-17:00 Concurrent workshops:**

• ***Find your voice through self-employment – [REDACTED] (Music Centre)***

This practical and interactive workshop will explore the hidden potential within the autism community by taking its participants through a journey of discovering their unique gifts and abilities, and exploring the many ways in which these can be utilised in self-employment. Starting with a conversation about research into self-employment for autistic people, participants will have the opportunity to look into why self-employment could be a suitable choice for someone on the autism spectrum and how our gifts can be of great value to society when combined to create a unique product or service.

• ***A Faith That Speaks Our Language – Caroline Henthorne (West Wing classroom 1)***

This workshop is based on the research of James Fowler. This looks at how people develop their world view from childhood through to adulthood. Fowler looked at religious traditions and psychology. After interviewing hundreds of people he described six stages of world view development or faith. However, autistic people have different emotional and social experiences. Are we on the same journey? And how can we develop in faith?

**17:00-18:00 Concurrent workshops:**

• ***Making conversation – Peter Baimbridge (Music Centre)***

A very simple practical workshop aimed at helping individuals who want to improve their understanding of and confidence in meeting strangers and/or asking for help. Direct and second hand experience has given the presenter some insights into some of the problems many people face meeting new people / making 'small talk' and he has achieved some success helping individuals improve their success rate in this area and their comfort levels while achieving it.

• ***Session from alternative programme (see part 2A)***

18:00-19:30 *Supper (service until 19:00; Dining Room)*

19:30-20:00 *Meeting of Home groups*

**20:00-22:00 Evening Activities**

## **Friday, 9 August**

08:30-09:30 *Breakfast (dining room)*

09:00-09:30 *Packing (please vacate your room at this time)*

**09:30-11:00 Annual General Meeting (AGM; Music Centre)**

All Autescape members have the opportunity to vote on issues related to the running of The Autescape Organisation. If you wish to become a member (£5 per year) please contact [registrar@autescape.org](mailto:registrar@autescape.org). Membership helps to support Autescape and allows you to vote at the AGM.

11:00-11:30 *Break (drinks and snacks will be in the dining room)*

**11:30-12:30 Panel discussion on the theme of “Finding a voice” - various presenters (Music Centre)**

12:30-14:00 *Lunch (service until 13:30; Dining Room)*

## 2. Presenters' Bios

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### Larry Arnold

*Presenting:* Listening to autistic voices

Larry has played a pivotal role in the Autism Rights movement in the UK, serving on the board of the NAS and facilitating a local neurodiversity group amongst other things. He has presented at Autscope before, and at various conferences. He comes from a background of disability rights and specialises in video, this being the topic of his PhD research in Autism and Education at the University of Birmingham. He claims the right to be called neuro-diverse by virtue of more than one neurological diagnosis; however, autism is one he is happy to use as a positive affirmation of who and what he is.

### Lyte

*Presenting:* "Sitting on a rock": exploring what may have been given up for lost

Lyte has been a regular attender of Autscope since discovering and identifying with the neurodivergent community as an adult. Life spent in 'socially enforced NT-emulation mode' resulted in survival but not in gaining the freedoms that appear to be on offer in wider society. This raises questions of how to reclaim a sense of 'wholeness' which Lyte has been exploring through a search for Meaning, and the seeking, learning, loss and findings encountered along the way. An experienced teacher in higher and further education currently studying at post grad level in mainstream education, and with a backdrop of other areas of study including humanistic psychology and nonviolent communication, Lyte is a qualified and practicing artist. Recently Lyte has presented at Birmingham University and collaborated on papers featured in various academic journals such as 'Good autism Practice' and 'Autonomy', as well as being cited in other writings.

### Kalen

*Presenting:* When you can't find your voice - using signs and symbols to supplement speech

Diagnosed with high functioning autism in 1997, Kalen has been involved in Autscope since its inception in 2004. She has given presentations for autistic and other audiences including several at Autscope which were well received. She is the mother of five children, one of whom had a speech delay and benefited from baby sign and Makaton. She also has personal childhood experience of what it's like to be unable to use expressive language. Kalen holds a first class honours degree in cognitive neuroscience and psychology and is currently writing her Master's dissertation on medical and disability ethics.

### Susy

*Presenting:* The colour of in-between

Susy grew up with autism and neurodiversity 'in the family' and has spent her adult life challenging discrimination and fighting for equal rights at all levels of education and across the arts, community and health sectors in the UK and abroad. She is currently investigating ways to incorporate the views and diverse identities of autistic young people in debates around inclusion in services as a part of her doctoral research at the Autism Centre for Education and Research at the University of Birmingham. Susy is more

comfortable with the identity of neurodiverse as regards describing her various neurological challenges.

## Yo

*Presenting:* Finding a voice within organisations

Yo is autistic and has two children who are both also autistic. She has a PhD in policy analysis and her academic work in social sciences has often involved the study of political and social organisations. She has an obsessive interest in organisational structures, procedures and underlying legal frameworks, particularly in the voluntary sector. She has 8 years experience as secretary and company secretary of Autscope during which she has supported the process of Autscope's organisational development. Prior to and alongside that experience, she has knowledge and experience of a wide range of other organisations (mostly outside the autistic community and ranging from political groups to charities to campaigning groups to local forums and community groups). In the past she has presented to a variety of audiences (including previously at Autscope) and is looking forward to the challenge of making a seemingly 'dry' subject relevant and interesting to Autscope participants keen to 'find a voice'.

## Damian Milton

*Presenting:* From finding a voice to being understood: exploring the double empathy problem

Damian is currently studying for a doctorate with the Autism Centre for Educational Research at the University of Birmingham. He is a member of the steering group for this department, a member of the programme board for the Autism Education Trust, and a member of the scientific and advisory committee for Research Autism. Damian has also recently started work for the National Autistic Society as a consultant for their 'Ask Autism' project. Damian holds a number of academic qualifications and a number of years experience as a lecturer in both FE and HE. Damian's interest in autism began when his son was diagnosed in 2005 as autistic at the age of two. Damian was also diagnosed with Asperger's in 2009 at the age of thirty-six.

## Alexis Green

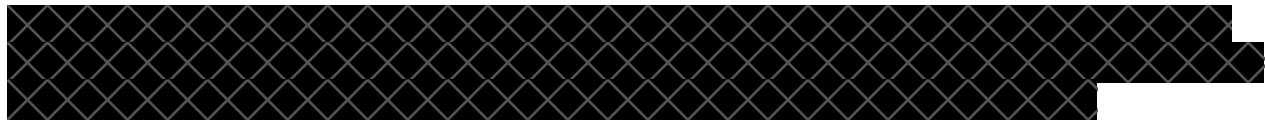
*Presenting:* Self-advocacy booklet for adults on the autism spectrum

Alexis Green, BPhil Autism 2:1 was diagnosed quite some time ago and has been involved in a number of projects including the group that created the self-advocacy booklet as a co-author. She facilitates autism social groups in the Bristol and Bath areas including a self-advocacy group. Her degree is in autism and she has personal experience of using the book to help her communicate in difficult situations. She is also a wheelchair user and has found this booklet can be used to communicate any needs she has difficulties expressing herself. As the booklet is free from the NAS website she hopes many people will be able to benefit from using this resource.

*Presenting:* Find your voice through self-employment







## **Caroline Henthorne**

*Presenting:* A faith that speaks our language

Caroline Henthorne has been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum for the last eight years, in which time she has been involved in the autistic community in a number of ways: writing on political activism for Asperger United magazine; researching the approach psychotherapists use with autistic clients for her MA; and representing the needs of autistic people on a steering group at Lambeth Council. Caroline plans to conduct further research into meeting the needs of autistic adults focusing on equipping churches to engage with autistic people.

## **Peter Baimbridge**

*Presenting:* Making conversation

Diagnosed with high-functioning autism, Peter built a career in sales and marketing and has been helping individuals with interpersonal communication difficulties on a personal basis. Direct and second hand experience has given him insights into some of the problems many people face meeting new people and making small talk.