




The Autism Academy UK



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**The inclusion of autistic needs in health provision: Using the autistic hierarchy of needs in the pursuit of mental health.**


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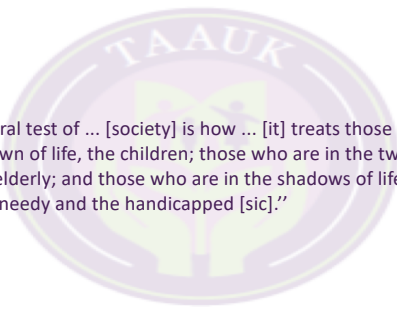
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“The moral test of ... [society] is how ... [it] treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped [sic].”

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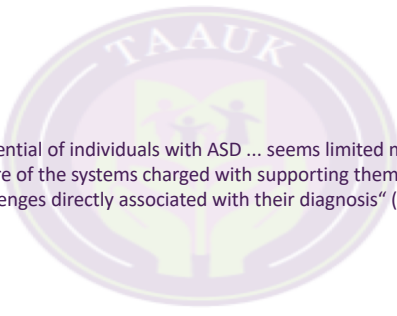
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“the potential of individuals with ASD ... seems limited more by the failure of the systems charged with supporting them than by the challenges directly associated with their diagnosis” (p.38)

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### Autism and mental health

- Mental health difficulties are common for autistic individuals
  - Pose an additional challenge for autistic adults
  - Add to complexity of needs
  - Services???

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### Mental health services

- Accessible
- Available
- Appropriate

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### Approach to autistic needs

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| <p>Current approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid</li> <li>• Top-down</li> <li>• Professional-led</li> </ul> | <p>What we <u>need</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Bottom-up</li> <li>• Needs-driven!</li> </ul> |
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### Autistic needs

NOT based solely on a diagnostic label or intellect!

- May not be immediately obvious
- Complex and lifelong
- Differ across the life-span

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### *I Exist*

(The National Autistic Society, 2008)

63% of autistic adults reported that they do not have enough support to meet their needs

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### Maslow's Hierarchy of needs



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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)

Physiological Needs

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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs

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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)

Relationship Needs

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs

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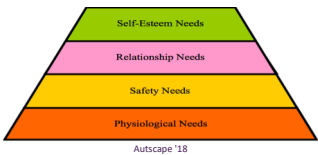
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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)



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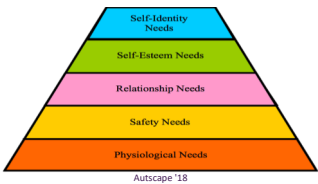
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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)



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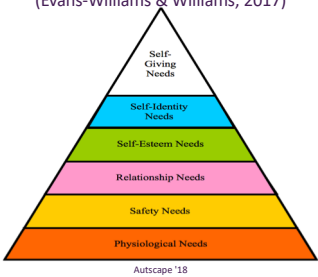
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Autistic Hierarchy of Needs  
(Evans-Williams & Williams, 2017)



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### Person-centred planning (PCP)

- Requires thorough understanding of each individual's personality, abilities, difficulties, aspirations and support
  - Takes time
  - Must balance focus on skills/abilities/like's and challenges/dislike's
  - Need to attend to the detail of their life and personal preferences.

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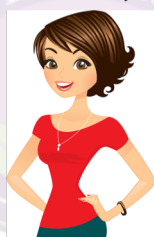
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### Julia's story (Evans-Williams, 2017)



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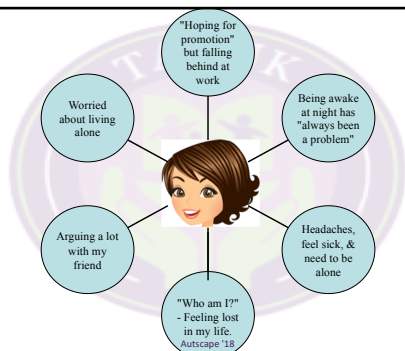
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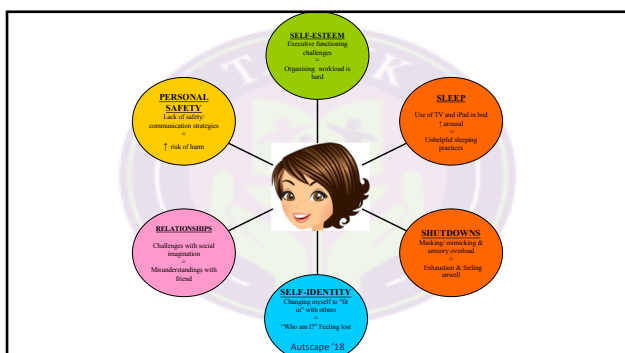
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### The Autism Academy UK (TAAUK)

- Training/coaching on the Hierarchy
- Diagnostic assessment and therapeutic intervention
  - Animal-assisted therapy
- Specialist professional training
- Inpatient & community-level consultation
- Academic research

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### Summary

- Mental health difficulties = Additional challenge for autistic adults
- Mental health services: Availability, Accessibility, & Appropriateness
- Addressing needs of autistic people.  
Rigid, top-down, -----> Flexible, bottom-up, professional-led needs-driven
- Autistic hierarchy of needs = A human rights approach

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