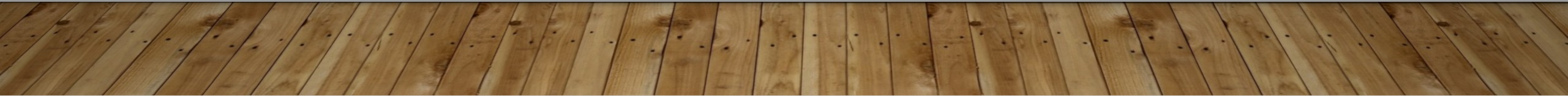


EXPERIENCES OF AUTISTIC JOY

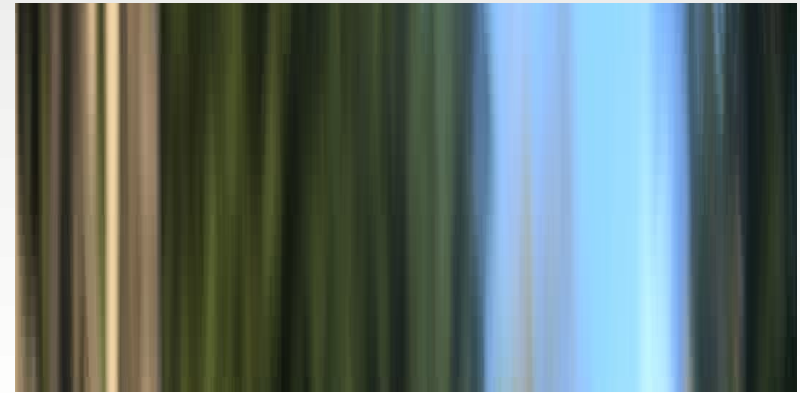
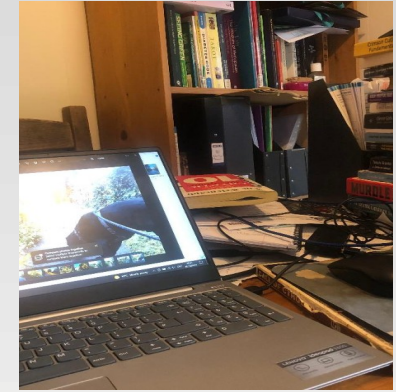
FINDINGS FROM A PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

PRESENTED BY ELLIOT WASSELL



ABOUT ME

- I AM ELLIOT WASSELL
- Autistic adult
- Autism Researcher
- Parent of Neurodivergent Son and Daughter
- Trustee of Autistic Girls Network charity
- Dog servant



THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Autistic Joy

Call for Participatory Research / Research on autistic flourishing

Special Subject for my Masters in Department of Education

Online questionnaire - qualitative and quantitative

Launched 15 September 2022 for 2 weeks

In AGN closed Facebook group and twitter

86 participants provided rich qualitative data

Understudied segment – autistic women

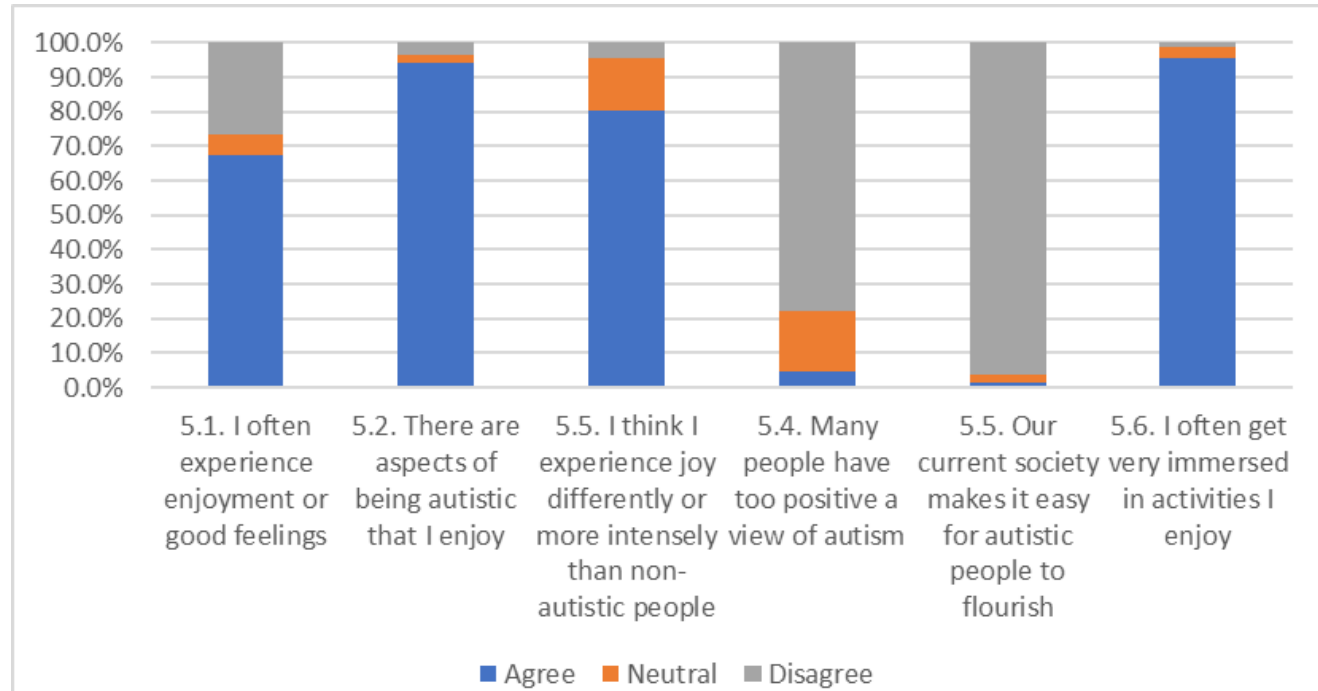
Requirements 18+ and autistic

No gender requirements – but 86% participants identified as female, 10% non-binary, 4% male

Open response question on what participants enjoyed, why and what could be improved

Being an autistic researcher

HEADLINES



THEME I – THE AUTISTIC SENSORIUM AS SOURCE OF JOY

Lining things up is fun because it's pleasurable. It's odd that allistics don't understand it. Sorting / organising is one of the deepest pleasures in life, as intense / as sought after as delicious food.”

(Participant 85)

THEME 2 – THINGS MUST BE JUST RIGHT

“I need the quiet to be able to concentrate and enjoy the research.”
(Participant 74)

“She's the only person I really feel comfortable around.”
(Participant 82)

“I find the swings calming and help me to regulate.”
(Participant 60)

THEME 3 –

OTHER PEOPLE NEED TO CHANGE

“I think one of the easiest, zero-cost things that neurotypicals can do to support autistic joy is to TRULY accept that our "special interests" / passions give us happiness and fulfilment to a degree that simply does not exist for neurotypicals. No matter how "weird", "age inappropriate", or "useless" our passions might seem to them, for us, this is what makes life worth living. Autistic people shouldn't have to hide our special interests.”
(Participant 28)



OBSERVATIONS

- Neurodiversity v Medical model
- DeleuzoGuattarian theory
- Practical implications
- More research needed
- The world needs to change
- Autistic Joy is a revolutionary concept

AUTISTIC WOMEN SPEAK ABOUT JOY IN THEIR OWN TERMS – LET’S LISTEN TO THEM

“Listening to a song I love on repeat. Sitting under the stars. Visiting a pet farm
...All these activities make my heart sing.”
(Participant 15)

THANK YOU!

- ANY QUESTIONS?

