

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY WITH THE AUTISTIC CLIENT

Virtual Training for Clinicians



This training is designed for clinicians to build their knowledge, skills, and confidence to provide therapy to Autistic clients within the mental health setting.

The training includes a total of 5 parts, as outlined below. Each part includes about 6 hours of pre-recorded virtual content, with total instructional hours at about 30 hours. Registrants also have the option of joining monthly, live clinical application sessions with the presenters.

- **Introduction:** Autistic Mental Health & Well-Being
- **Part 1:** Beginning Considerations
- **Part 2:** Diagnosing other Mental Health Disorders in Autistic Clients
- **Part 3:** Adapting Therapeutic Modalities
- **Part 4:** Implementing Therapy



This is the training I didn't get in graduate school!

This clear, comprehensible, and current information is a must see for all clinicians!

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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 **Autism Society**
Greater Wisconsin

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY WITH THE AUTISTIC CLIENT

Introduction: Autistic Mental Health & Well-Being

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Training was superb, cutting edge, and comprehensive. It was very informative and helped me grow my awareness of importance of having a strength-based mental health counseling approach when working with people with autism.



Mental health and wellness are important for all people. To support mental health and wellness for autistic people it is important to understand their particular style of thinking and the way their brain handles information along with the impact of both environmental and other types of trauma. Additionally, when it comes to mental health and well-being, there are specific stressors unique to autistic individuals. This three-part series will examine these topics, giving you a foundation of shared knowledge. During this section, clinicians will be invited to examine their own biases when it comes to neurodivergence and ableism.

Objectives:

- Clinicians will be able to identify three characteristics present in the autistic style of cognitive processing.
- Clinicians will have a better understanding of specific stressors that may impact their autistic clients.
- Clinicians will examine their own ableism and consider its implications on working with autistic clients.

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Part One: Beginning Considerations

In the field of therapy, Autism is a relatively newer diagnosis, first appearing as a diagnostic entity in the DSM in 1980. In this section, Judy will track the changes to Autism as a diagnosis in the DSM while discussing the implications for therapists today. The limitations of the DSM will be juxtaposed with neuro-affirmation of autistic neurology. With this foundation, the trainers will introduce a framework for establishing therapy sessions with an autistic client including examples. This section will also cover how to set up the environment for success and determine appropriate therapeutic goals with clients.

Objectives:

- Clinicians will understand the clinical implications that history has on Autism.
- Clinicians will feel confident setting up initial sessions with their autistic clients.
- Clinicians will have the tools and knowledge to evaluate their current clinical settings and identify specific changes to make the setting safer and more welcoming for autistic clients.

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The course has been valuable in helping me to learn how to engage autistic individuals in therapy and how to make sure I am making my sessions accessible and inclusive for all.



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Part Two: Diagnosing other Mental Health Disorders in Autistic Clients

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The trainers did a wonderful job putting together a comprehensive course which builds on fundamentals and connects them to strategies and interventions. I already see changes in my practice from all that I have learned and am looking forward to referencing these materials in the future.



Clinicians who see autistic individuals in their mental health practice need to differentiate whether presenting symptoms are a comorbid DSM diagnosis or are better explained by autistic neurology, sensory differences, trauma impacts, or other autistic attributes. This section will include discussion of how to adapt common assessment tools to successfully use with autistic clients. The section will also include a discussion about common DSM diagnostic checklists, applying concepts from the introduction and illustrating the many aspects of differential diagnosing of autistic attributes from comorbid DSM diagnoses with autistic clients.

Objectives:

- Clinicians will develop an understanding of the autistic traits that might overlap with other DSM diagnoses.
- Clinicians will learn to adapt commonly used assessment tools to make them accessible to their autistic clients.
- Clinicians will feel more confident determining when an autistic client also has a co-morbid mental health disorder.

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Part Three: Adapting Therapeutic Modalities

Part three will include a discussion of strategies for adapting common therapeutic modalities for the autistic neurology. Some of the modalities explored will include: CBT, DBT, Mindfulness, Expressive Therapy Modalities, ACT, and Solution Focused Therapy. The trainers will examine the use of techniques considered to be evidenced-based practices through a neuro-affirming lens and how utilizing these practices can help make mental health treatment more accessible for autistic clients.

Course Objectives:

- Clinicians will be able to assess the appropriateness of fit of common therapeutic modalities as they relate to autistic clients.
- Clinicians will feel confident adapting current treatment modalities used in their clinical practice to align with autistic neurology.
- Clinicians will be able to identify evidenced-based practices from the teaching field and be able to apply them to mental health treatment.

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I did not even know what I didn't know. From an introduction of neurodiversity and ableism, to understanding that the neuro-minority needs opportunities for mental health services, as well as, the adaptations and recommendations for providing therapy from leading experts practicing in the field has made a profound impact and shift in my thinking.



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Part Four: Implementing Therapy

In this final section, the presenters will use case examples to integrate information learned in previous sections on how to set up the therapeutic environment and establish therapeutic goals, how to differentiate presenting symptoms, and how to adapt therapeutic modalities with autistic clients. Participants will walk away from the final section with practical, ready-to-use tools and strategies to start implementing in the clinical setting.

Objectives:

- Clinicians will be able to identify how treatment modalities were adapted and individualized for autistic clients in case examples provided.
- Clinicians will feel confident integrating the information from previous sections into their clinical practice.
- Clinicians will be able to identify other resources they can access to continue learning about the intersection of autism and mental health disorders.

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I feel more confident in treating consumers with autism and believe it will strengthen my abilities both in individual therapy practice and supervision. I would encourage anyone who is interested in working with autistic children and adults to enroll in this course. It is definitely worth the time it takes to complete and will change the way you approach autism in a very positive way!



Meet the Presenters



Judy Endow, LCSW, author and international speaker has been providing trainings for clinicians and school staff for more than 20 years. She has written numerous award winning articles and books. Endow received the Autism Society of America's Cathy Pratt Professional of the Year Award — the first autistic person to receive this prestigious national award. Endow has served on the boards of both the Autism Society of America, Wisconsin Chapter and the Autism National Committee, was featured in the New York Times' Patient Voices, and was honored by The Art of Autism as one of the most influential bloggers on the web. She has made over 400 presentations all over the world. As a person who lived some of her early years in an institution, Endow has emerged as a leader in the autism community.

At Common Threads Family Resource Center in McFarland, WI, she provided consulting and training for both school and clinical staff along with clinical services for autistic clients and families. Additionally, she has provided autism consultation and training for school districts, adult services and other organizations in WI and in other states and countries.



Sharon Hammer, MS, LPC, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and an Education and Behavioral Consultant. She is a partner at Imagine a Child's Capacity, where she provides psychotherapy to clients using a combination of Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Mindfulness in a neuro-affirming, client directed format. Sharon has been providing training on autism and autism related topics for the last 15 years, throughout the county and internationally. She has co-authored two books and DVDs about using technology to support autistic people, entitled Lights! Camera! Autism!. As well as co-authoring a chapter in the text book: Autism: The Movement Sensing Perspective. In 2006, with Star Cinema, Sharon co-created the first "Sensory Friendly" movie going experience in the state of Wisconsin. Sharon is committed to increasing acceptance and possibilities for autistic people everywhere.



Lisa Hoeme, MS, LPC is a Licensed Professional Counselor, consultant, and presenter. She is a partner at Imagine a Child's Capacity where she has a clinical practice and provides training and consultation to schools, community agencies, other professionals, families and individuals seeking services. She has clinical experience serving an expansive range individuals and families, including autistic individuals and those with Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury, attention difficulties, obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety, and depression. In her counseling practice, Lisa uses a variety of approaches, including mindfulness, cognitive behavior therapy, collaborative problem solving, expressive therapy techniques, yoga and interpersonal neurobiology. She uses these modalities as a catalyst to help clients work through difficult life experiences, develop effective coping and relaxation strategies and to express themselves authentically. Lisa is committed to helping those she supports to achieve personal growth and overall well-being using a positive, individualized and person-centered approach.

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Certificates of Attendance

Participants who complete the full training and complete a post-training survey will receive a certificate of attendance. This training includes 30 content hours.



Continuing Education Hours

This training has been approved by the National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter for 30 continuing education hours. CEHs are available for Social Workers, Counselors, and Marriage and Family Therapists licensed in the state of Wisconsin. There is no additional fee to receive CEHs.



Live Clinical Application Sessions

Participants are invited to join the presenters for a live session each month to ask questions and discuss how to apply concepts into clinical practice. Clinical application sessions will be held over Zoom on the second Monday of the month from 9:00 - 10:00 AM Central Time.

Session Dates:

June 12, 2023
July 10, 2023
August 14, 2023
September 11, 2023
October 9, 2023
November 13, 2023
December 11, 2023

