

WHY WE SHOULDN'T BE USING SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING



Semi-Speaking,
Autistic, ADHD
Speech & Language
Therapist and
Neurodiversity
Advocate

WHAT IS SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING?

An aspect of Speech & Language Therapy intervention and other practices, which attempts to improve the social skills of autistic people. It aims to improve eye contact, turn-taking, conformity to social norms, active listening, conversation skills and more.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH IT?

Social skills training is based on the idea that there is only one correct way to communicate. Many of the programs claim to be able to 'reduce autistic symptoms'. It teaches a person to mask their authentic self, which is proven to result in mental health difficulties in the autistic population.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

- Social Skills Training encourages masking.
- Masking is associated with poor mental health.
- Masking is associated with identity loss.
- The approach violates our boundaries making us more vulnerable to abuse.

NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMING PRACTICE

As a Neurodiversity-Affirming Therapist I ensure that my clients have full autonomy of their goals and are able to give informed consent. I do not attempt to change the person and celebrate their differences.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Safeguarding Autistic Girls - Carly Jones (book for adults)
- A Different Sort of Normal - Abigail Balfe (book)
- LEANS Project (Neurodiversity Psychoeducation resource)

ALTERNATIVES

Teach self-advocacy skills

Educate everyone about different communication styles

Support access to the autistic community

Celebrate difference

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