

“

they made me feel

it makes me feel

[benzos] allowed me to feel

NORMAL

”

— **YOUNG PEOPLE IN COLCHESTER, HULL & BRIGHTON**



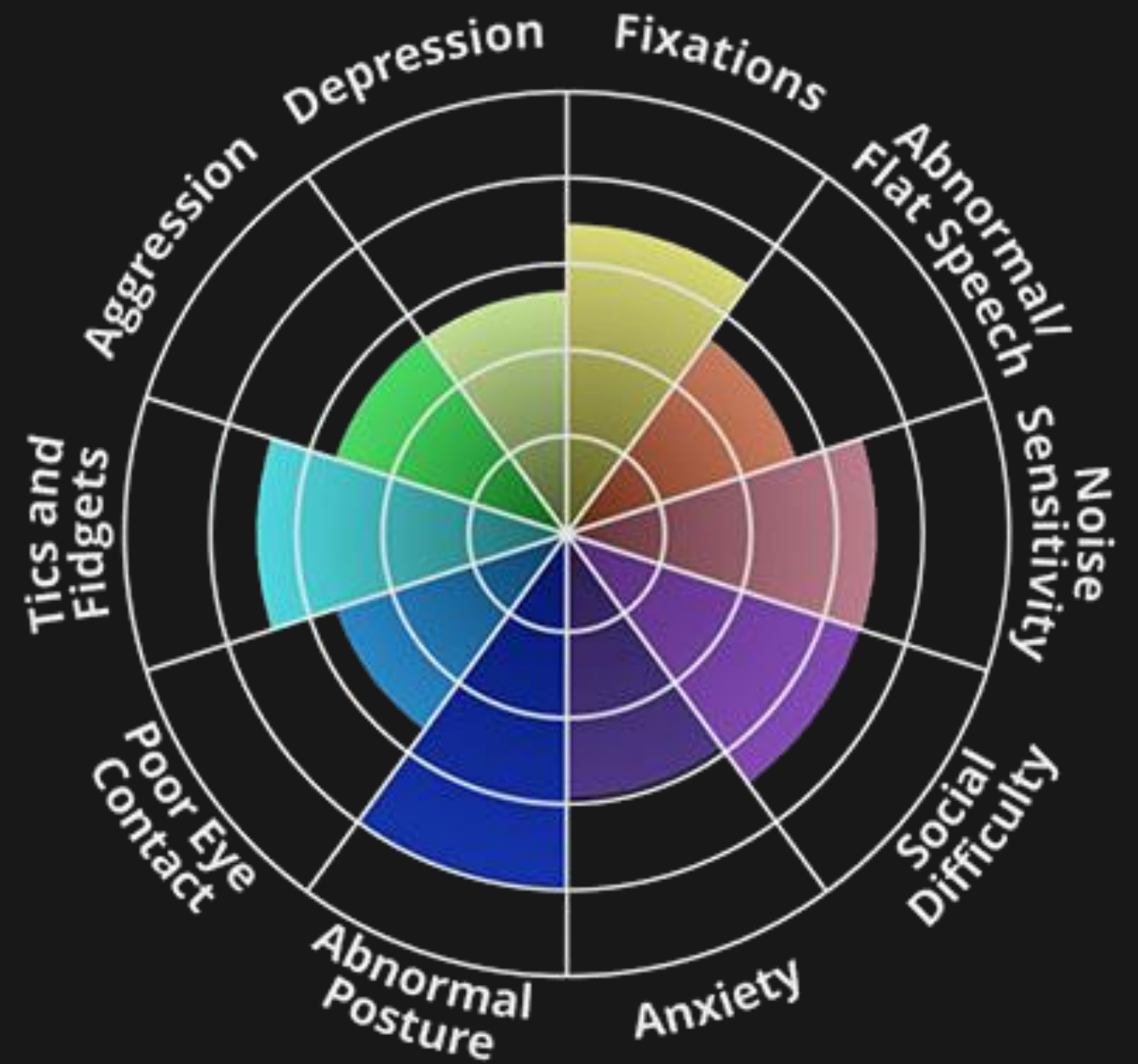


Photo Credit: @LauraFMcConnel

NEURODIVERSITY MODEL

Popularised in the late 90s

Centres autistic people as experts

Acknowledges lived realities

Affirming and non-judgemental



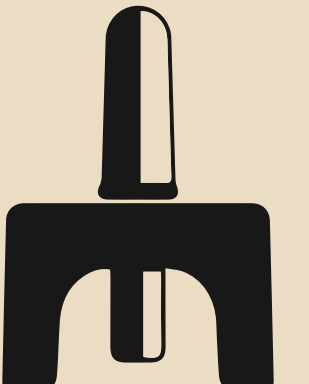
HARM REDUCTION

Popularised in the mid-80s

Centres people who use drugs as experts

Acknowledges lived realities

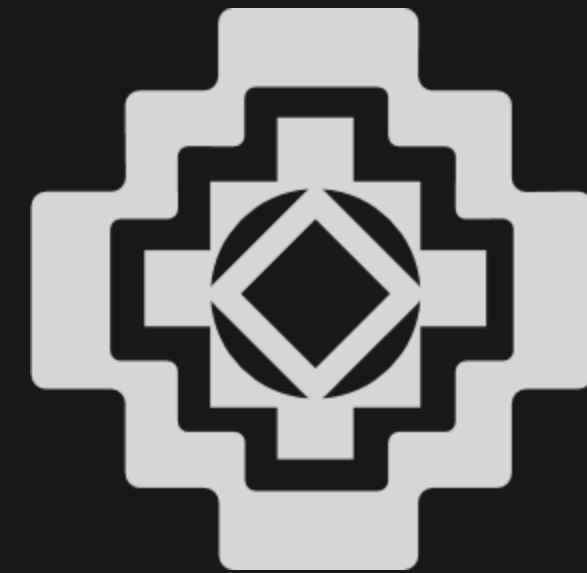
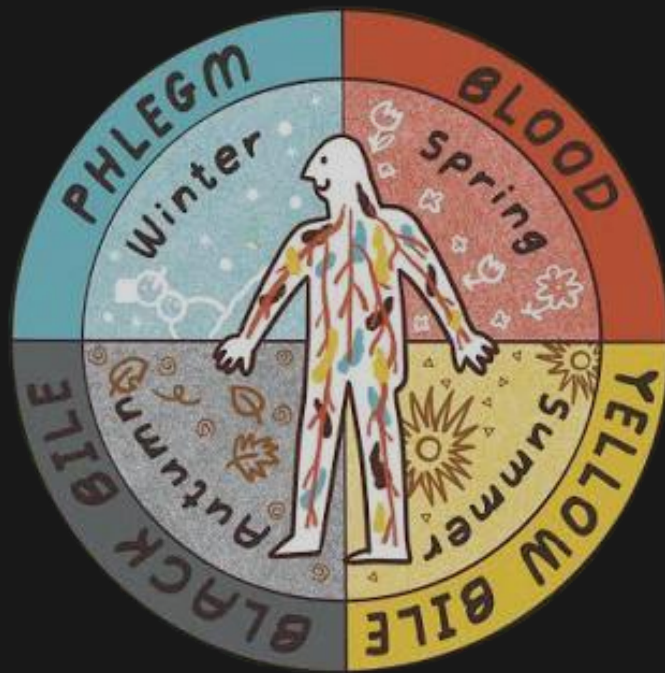
Affirming and non-judgemental



WHAT IS 'HEALTHY'?



HEALTH AS BALANCE



HEALTH AS FUNCTION



Fig. 30.

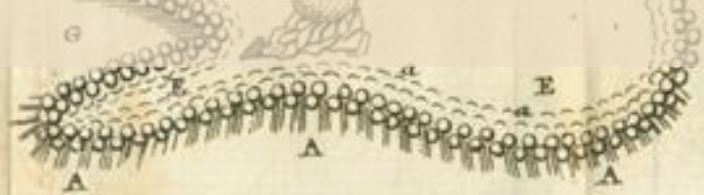


Fig. 32.



Fig. 33



N.º. 56





Chapman, R., 2023. Empire of Normality: Neurodiversity and Capitalism. London: Pluto Press.

The UK
economy
is almost
80%
services



David Cameron, 2016. Britain's choice. UK GOV.



UNDERSTANDING THE ‘RISE’ IN NEURODIVERGENCE

Independent report

Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism: interim report

Updated 10 June 2026

“behaviours in children once regarded as within the range of normal variation[...] are now more often interpreted as requiring intervention or treatment.”



UTA FRITH & ‘BREAKING UP’ THE SPECTRUM

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FEATURE

Uta Frith: why I no longer think autism is a spectrum

The autism spectrum has widened to the point of collapse, affecting how teachers should support autistic pupils in the classroom, researcher Uta Frith tells Helen Amass

4th March 2026, 5:00am

Interview

Uta Frith: 'The brain is not a pudding; it is an engine'

Kate Kellaway

The neuroscientist who first recognised autism as a condition of the brain rather than the result of cold parenting



AUTISM AS A SERIAL COLLECTIVE



ASSET OR HINDRANCE?

RELEASES

ICYMI: Trump Administration “Going Bold to Tackle Autism”

The White House

September 22, 2025



Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump · 5m

20 years ago, Autism in children was 1 in 10,000.
NOW IT'S 1 in 34. WOW! Something's really wrong.
We need BOBBY!!! Thank You! DJT

Neurodivergent Fellowship at Palantir Technologies

Paid, Full-Time Fellowship | USA



Palantir is launching the Neurodivergent Fellowship as a recruitment pathway for exceptional neurodivergent talent. This is not a diversity initiative. We believe neurodivergent individuals will have a competitive advantage as elite builders of the next technological era, and we're hiring accordingly for all roles.

Salary

The estimated salary range for this position is estimated to be \$110,000 - \$200,000/year.

MASKING: A TRICKY BALANCE FOR SURVIVAL

▲
**RELATIONSHIPS
BELONGING**



▼
**ENERGY
MENTAL WELLBEING**

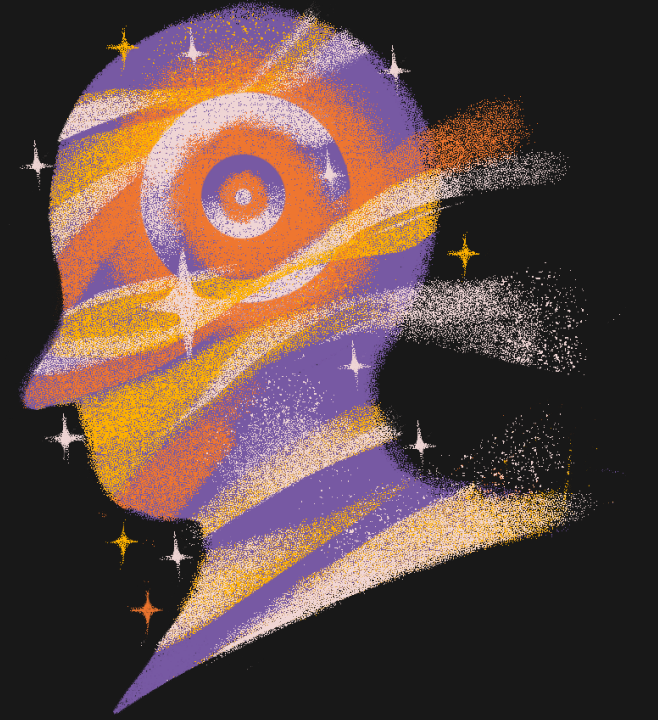
MASKING, BURNOUT & SELF-MEDICATION



AUTISTIC FLOW THEORY

Flow (being 'in the zone') is an essential part of autistic wellbeing

Autistic characteristics amplify experiences in and out of flow, requiring **predictability** to enter flow states.

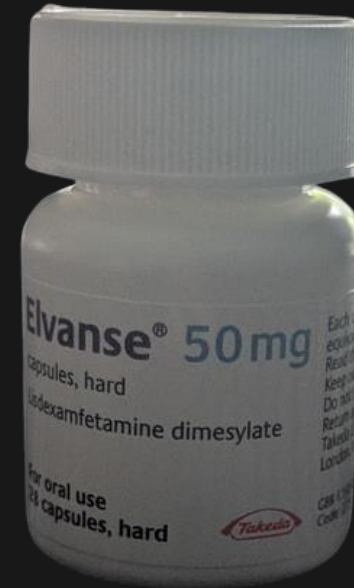


SELF-MEDICATION

Self-medication can be understood as a strategy for some to **enter flow in an unpredictable environment** (internal or external).

A harm reduction strategy!

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION: SAFE SUPPLY



31%

lower rate of
drug-related harms



ANXIETY
IRRITABILITY



Chang, Z., et al., 2014. *J Child Psychol Psychiatr*, 55: 878-885. doi:10.1111/jcpp.12164

Karhson, D. S., LaFrance, E. M. & Cuttler, C., 2025. *Scientific Reports*, 15, 39849. doi:10.1038/s41598-025-23472-3

PREVENT THE HARMS, STOP THE DEATHS



How can you help unlock the door to neurodivergent support?



How can you facilitate autonomous leadership of NDPWUD in harm reduction innovation?



How can you ensure your innovation is accessible to all?

Neurodivergent-led

From the beginning, BRP has championed a neurodivergent-inclusive team.



AJ



Monica

Although we each have experienced hardships related to our neurodivergence, our different ways of thinking have been pivotal in pursuing our project's mission.



Benzo Research
Project

brp.org.uk

SUMMARY

Neurodiversity is a philosophy, like Harm Reduction, of meeting people where they're at.

Self-medication can be a survival tactic for living in a society not made for us.

Lack of safe supply exposes more marginalised neurodivergent folks to prohibition-related harms.

Neurodivergent people who use drugs need access to, and oversight over, quality and timely support.

TAKIWĀTANGA

“

Time to heal, time to understand and time to imagine more equitable futures for us all. Intentionally valuing time creates courage, compassion and connection

”

— Lewis and Arday, 2025, p. 206



Potiki, T., 2025. HIT Hot Topics, Liverpool, UK.

Lewis, C. J. & Arday, J., 2025. We See Things They'll Never See: Love, Hope & Neurodiversity. Princeton University Press.

Fin.



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ajmartin.one

Come and talk to me about:

BENZO RESEARCH PROJECT



DRUGMAP.UK



YOUR REFLECTIONS ON THIS TOPIC!

