



Neurodiversity-Affirming Physical Therapy Care for Autistic Adults

2-Day (11.5 hour) Live Online Webinar (Lecture and discussion)

Upcoming course dates:

Saturday 4/29/23 - Sunday 4/30/23

OR

Saturday 10/7/23 - Sunday 10/8/23

Course description:

Autism is a common lifelong neurodevelopmental disability. However, due to ongoing evolution in the understanding and diagnosis of autism since it emerged as a diagnostic category in the 1940's, many of the autistic people who have currently reached adulthood are undiagnosed. If you as a physical therapist work with adult patients, you are already working with autistic adult patients on a regular basis, whether you (or your patients) are currently aware of it or not!

Autistic people commonly face barriers to accessing healthcare, and physical therapists can help to mitigate these barriers. Your autistic patients have differences in sensory processing, motor development, and executive functioning which can necessitate modifications to their plan of care in order to achieve optimal outcomes with physical therapy, and they are more likely than average to experience a range of co-occurring conditions for which referral to other healthcare providers may be indicated.

This course will empower you to be confident in adjusting your interventions, communicating effectively, screening/referring appropriately for co-occurring conditions, and being a partner and ally when working with autistic adults.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- o Summarize the principles of the neurodiversity paradigm
- o Discuss autism through a neuroscience-informed, neurodiversity-affirming lens
- o List common barriers to accessing healthcare that autistic adults face and discuss ideas for mitigating these access barriers
- o List common co-occurring conditions and referral needs for autistic adults
- o Recognize common autistic differences in sensory processing, motor development, and executive functioning and develop plans of care accordingly
- o Consider potential modifications to plan of care for autistic patients with co-occurring hypermobility spectrum conditions and/or dysautonomias

Speaker:

Iris Warchall, PT, DPT

Iris Warchall (pronouns: she/her/hers) is an autistic self-advocate, parent to an autistic child, and practicing physical therapist since 2013 specializing in outpatient care for adults with a variety of the health conditions which are more prevalent among autistic people, including hypermobility spectrum conditions, pelvic health concerns, chronic pain, dizziness and vestibular dysfunction, and movement disorders.

Course Schedule

Day 1:

- 7:30 am PST** - Zoom opens 30 mins before course for registration and setup
- 8:00 am PST** - Start / Welcome / Housekeeping
- 8:15** - Intro to neurodiversity paradigm and terminology
- 8:30** - Social vs medical model of disability
- 9:00** - What is autism, anyways?
- 9:30** - Break
- 9:45** - Autism prevalence
- 10:00** - Neuroscience of autism
- 10:45** - Break
- 11:00** - Shifting from the pathology paradigm to the neurodiversity paradigm
- 11:30** - Lunch
- 12:30** - Stigma and implicit bias in general autistic population
- 12:45** - Stimming
- 1:00** - Masking/camouflaging of autistic traits and associated health outcomes
- 1:15** - Break
- 1:30** - Double empathy problem
- 1:45** - Considering intersectionality and needs of multiply-marginalized autistic communities: BIPOC/PGM, LGBTQIA, and non-speaking autistic people
- 2:15** - Mitigating common barriers to accessing healthcare in the autistic population
- 2:45** - Q&A
- 3:00** - Adjourn day 1

Day 2:

- 7:30 am PST** - Zoom opens 30 mins before course for registration and setup
- 8:00 am PST** - Start / Welcome / Questions from day 1
- 8:15** - PT's role in facilitating access to diagnosis and/or understanding of support needs
- 8:45** - Screening and referring for common co-occurring conditions: EDS/HSD
- 9:15** - Screening and referring for common co-occurring conditions: Mental health concerns
- 9:30** - Screening and referring for common co-occurring conditions: Other
- 9:45** - Break
- 10:00** - Prevalence of pain and pelvic health concerns in the autistic population
- 10:15** - Considerations for PT assessment and intervention: Sensory
- 11:00** - Considerations for PT assessment and intervention: Motor/movement
- 11:30** - Lunch
- 12:30** - Considerations for PT assessment and intervention: Hypermobility and dysautonomia
- 1:30** - Considerations for PT assessment and intervention: Mental health, cognitive style, motivation
- 2:30** - Conclusion
- 2:45** - Q&A
- 3:00** - Adjourn and course evaluations