



Autism, Education, Stress & Low Arousal

– a unique one day course for schools and educational settings

This newly developed one day training package draws upon the acclaimed *Saturation Model* (Morewood et al, 2011) developed by the lead trainer as part of a whole-school approach to supporting autistic students in mainstream schools, fused with emotional regulation and low arousal approaches developed by Studio III (McDonnell & Deveau, 2018).

As a new training package which draws on the clinical expertise of Professor Andy McDonnell and the practical whole-school systems established and evaluated by Gareth D Morewood, 2019 will see this unique training offered for the first time to schools in the UK and abroad.

Delegates will expect to receive a strong evidenced-informed training day, considering the challenges young people face in educational settings and in their community, along with clear strategies that are proven to have a significant impact upon learning, engagement and with the reduction of behaviours of concern.

The day will focus on individual students' areas of need, classroom pedagogy and also whole-school approaches as identified in the research undertaken by the lead trainer along with the development of an understanding of stress, emotional regulation and arousal.

As this training is developed and delivered by Gareth D Morewood personally, there is an opportunity to tailor sessions to individual schools/settings/country systems and specific challenges. Prior to the day further detail will be requested to ensure this has maximum impact and a strong long-term legacy.

For more information or to book a training day please email info@gdmorewood.com

About the trainer: Gareth D Morewood is the Educational Advisor for Studio III (www.studio3.org). Previously he has worked for 25 years in U.K. schools; the last 17 of which were as SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) in a large, inclusive secondary school in the North West of England.

Gareth has extensive 'front-line' experience supporting schools, families and working directly with young people in the U.K. and abroad; most recently Chile, Dubai, Portugal, Scandinavia and Ireland. Gareth has a significant body of published works, films and resources, which can be found on his website (www.gdmorewood.com).

As part of his role as an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, Gareth has worked on a range of projects; predominantly to do with the inclusion of young people with complex needs and in supporting autistic learners in their local schools as part of the wider inclusion agenda. Gareth is Co-Director of the Studio III LASER Programme, developed from this initial One Day Course. The first LASER courses will run during 2020.

Gareth tweets @gdmorewood and his website can be found at www.gdmorewood.com.

References

McDonnell, A. & Deveau, R. (2018) Low arousal approaches to manage behaviours of concern. *Learning Disability Practice*. doi: 10.7748/ldp.2018.e1882

Morewood, G. D, Humphrey, N. & Symes, W. (2011) Mainstreaming autism: making it work. *Good Autism Practice Journal* 02.12.11, 62-68.

The Saturation Model

Interventions should be assimilated within a broader approach designed to facilitate full inclusive participation in the school and society. In order to be sustainable, strategies need to be integrated into existing practices in schools, an area that I have extensive experience, previously having supported Essex LA with the development of 4 regional autism hubs in a specialist consultancy role and working with both British and American International schools in Santiago, Chile.

A comprehensive plan based on preventive approaches to maximise the welfare in school of autistic students and students with challenging behaviours should be the starting point for all schools from which the personalised approach for individual students is developed.

The *Saturation Model* was developed during our 4 year ESRC Research project and published in the 2011 peer-reviewed paper [Mainstreaming Autism: making it work](#).



Morewood, Humphrey and Symes (2011)

The training supports the development of this model as the foundation for bespoke CPD and direct work across schools and communities, considering the following key elements:

- Developing the school environment
- Flexible provision
- Direct support and intervention
- Policy development and embedding practice
- Training and development of staff
- Peer education and awareness
- Creating a positive ethos

The development of these key themes from the original research provides a holistic approach to supporting autistic young people, schools and their families as part of an integrated whole-school and community approach.

The Low Arousal Approach

The Low Arousal Approach is based on the notion that people with challenging behaviour often have trouble regulating affect. They often react to other's affects by experiencing and expressing the same affect. Affect is always contagious, but most people learn to differentiate between their own and other's affects early in life. Some people don't. They don't know if an affect they feel is their own or somebody else's. That can result in anger if somebody else is angry and telling off the one who tells you off.

We also know that challenging behaviour often occurs when someone experiences a high intensity of affect. Nobody fights when they are relaxed and easy-going. Calm and self-control is connected, and we want young people to be in control of him- or herself, so that they can cooperate with us and therefore be in a better place to learn and engage with their communities.

We also need to use this knowledge in monitoring our own affect levels. We need to not only be calm ourselves, but also be aware of the risk of affect contagion from the young person and others. We must use methods that protect them and us from an increase in affect intensity, both in the way we talk to and relate to the young person and in our methods concerning challenging and even violent or self-harming behaviour.

The Low Arousal Approach is about creating a caring environment characterised by calm and positive expectations aiming to decrease stress and challenging behaviour. The methodology leans heavily on changing staff and parent's thoughts and conceptions and on body language, physical distance and conflict evaluation and provides an additional evidence-base for ongoing development of training materials and support of schools and settings.

Further Reading

McCreadie, M and McDermott, J. (2014). 'Tuning In' client practitioner stress transactions in autism. In G Jones and E Hurley, (Eds.) *GAP: autism, happiness and wellbeing*, BILD publications, pp24-31.

McDonnell, A. A., Waters, T., and Jones, D. (2002). Low arousal approaches in the management of challenging behaviours. In D. Allen (Ed) *Ethical approaches to physical interventions: Responding to Challenging behaviours in people with Intellectual Disabilities*. Plymouth: BILD, pp. 104 – 113.

McDonnell, A. A., McCreadie, M., Mills, R., Deveau, R., Anker, R., and Hayden, J. (2015). The role of physiological arousal in the management of challenging behaviours in individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 36, 311-322.

McDonnell, A.A. (2010). *Managing aggressive behaviour in care settings: Understanding and applying low arousal approaches* Oxford: Wiley Publications.

Morewood, G. D. (2018) in Bartram, D. *Great Expectations: leading an effective SEND strategy in school*. John Catt Publications.

Morewood, G. D. (2019) *Understanding Emotional Regulation in the Context of Whole School Inclusive Systems*. INCLUVISION Magazine, published by JSS School, Dubai.

Woodcock, L., and Paige, A. (2010) *Managing family meltdown*. London UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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