



# Starting Well Embedded Research Session

Embedded Research as an opportunity to build  
research capacity and partnerships in children  
and young people's mental health

*ARC KSS Research Week*

*19<sup>th</sup> June 2023*





**Emilia Robinson**

Research Assistant: Mental Health Support  
Team Clinic, Sussex Partnership NHS  
Foundation Trust

*ARC KSS Research Week*

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# Emilia Robinson

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RESEARCH ASSISTANT, MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM CLINIC

SPRINGBOARD AWARDEE

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

## Mental Health Support Team Research Clinic – our current projects...

### Secondary analysis of service data

Evaluate pre/post effectiveness of one-to-one interventions delivered by MHSTs. Explore the clinical characteristics of children and young people who refer to the West Sussex MHSTs.

Supported by clinical trainees

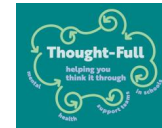
Supported by MHSTs

### External collaboration

Funded by Department for Education

Co-producing an outcome measure for the Whole School and College Approach. PhD student investigating transition between primary and secondary school and impact on body image.

SENSS PhD at University of Sussex



Member of MHST Special Interest Group

# ARC KSS Springboard Award

## Research Question

Exploring early psychological interventions implemented within 6 months after exposure to a potentially traumatic event, with a primary or secondary aim of relieving post-traumatic stress symptoms in children and adolescents.

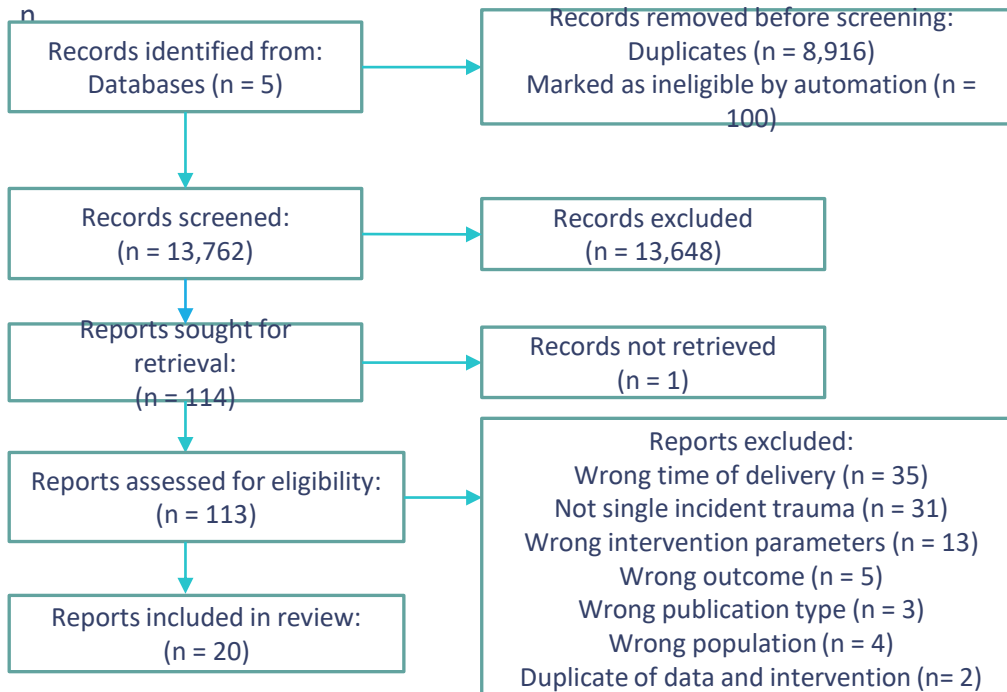
## Key findings

- 10 randomised controlled trials; 2 pilot studies; 2 uncontrolled implementations of protocols in a natural setting; 1 case study; 2 acceptability and feasibility trials; 2 experimental studies; and 1 protocol for a randomised controlled trial.
- Intervention types included: trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy; eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR); Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention; written exposure therapy; strength-based and resilience work; psychoeducation; psychological debriefing; and symptom monitoring.
- These interventions were delivered from as early as 24 hours after the event to up to 6 months post-trauma.
- The professionals who delivered the intervention included: clinical psychologists; Master's level clinicians; EMDR/CBT therapists; psychiatric nurses; community responders; lay counsellors; and the child/families themselves.

Identification  
n

Screening  
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Included  
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**Stella Parkinson**

Highly Specialist Children's Occupational  
Therapist: East Kent University Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust

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Research  
week

**Stella Parkinson**

Highly specialist children's  
occupational therapist

**NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration  
Kent, Surrey and Sussex

**Embedded Researchers in Practice  
award:**

**Children and young people's mental health**

## **Project title:**

An Action Research project about how to improve the support by Primary School Teachers of children who are delayed in their readiness to write

## **Background and rationale:**

- Handwriting difficulties estimated to affect 10%-30% of children
- Recent national survey of teachers revealed negative impact of pandemic on handwriting
- Children's mental wellbeing and academic performance negatively affected by handwriting difficulties
- Studies (US) have highlighted gaps in teachers' knowledge of handwriting readiness from their training



## Research aim:

To examine whether teachers are given instruction in handwriting readiness when they undergo teacher training and how best to support them if they are not

## Research questions:

1. What do one cohort of early career Primary school teachers know about the handwriting readiness of children from their training?
2. How can collaboration between a small group of Primary School teachers and me as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist improve the support children who are delayed in their readiness to write get in class?

## **Phase one:**

- An online questionnaire of ECTs who qualified in the last 2 years
- Explores their training in handwriting prerequisites and their thoughts on this

## **Phase two:**

- Trialling a handwriting training session shaped by feedback in phase one
- 6 ECTs recruited during phase one
- Following this a focus group will gather feedback on the training

# Research findings so far – phase one results

- Questionnaire sent to 323 ECTs in Kent
- 124 responses
- 82% report no training in handwriting development
- 88% no training on handwriting prerequisites
- Of those who didn't, 79% would have found this either extremely or somewhat useful
- 90% were not taught how to identify children with handwriting difficulties
- 49% report feeling not confident with handwriting and handwriting difficulties

# Research findings so far – phase one results

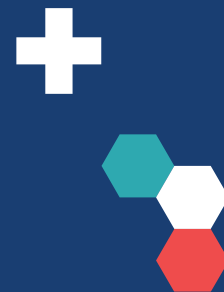
## Qualitative themes:

- Need help to identify which children need extra support
- Clear lack of confidence in teaching handwriting
- Unsure how to support children with handwriting difficulties
- Not aware of when children are/aren't ready to work on handwriting
- I 'have no idea where to begin' teaching handwriting

# Embedded researcher

- Being embedded – working knowledge of clinical issues arising
- Progress supported by established connections between health and education
- Clinical practice helping to inform university teaching
- Impact – increased awareness, strengthen collaboration between health and education, training session for group of ETCs

# Questions?



**Matthew Bushell**

Social Worker/Manager: Kent County Council

*ARC KSS Research Week*

*19<sup>th</sup> June 2023*



# **Matt Bushell Kent County Council Embedded Researcher Kent, Surrey and Sussex ARC - NIHR**

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

Social Worker/ Manager – Kent County Council  
Matthew.bushell@kent.gov.uk



# My Research Journey

2008 – lead a redesign of Kent County Duty Service using Lean methodology

2015-2019 Led Autism and Enablement research

2017 Worked with Health and Europe to successfully bid for Ensure peer support funds – supported this research into Autism

2018 Successfully bid for Building Capacity funds to complete postgraduate Research Methodologies

2022 Successfully bid for embedded researcher funding from KSS ARC 0.4FTE for a Care Leavers research project see below

# Advantages of being *embedded*

Main advantages are:

Can identify right questions and affect change through research to client benefit, and understand where issues are, as on front line talking to young people daily.

Can better complete PPI from within

Keeps day job interesting

Some young people interviewed may not have let me into their homes if I was an academic; they might not have opened up if I didn't have social work skills.

Great support from the ARC

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# Challenges of being *embedded*

Main challenges are:

Have a day job and backfill hard to find

Skills in day job needed as not enough social workers

Poor relation: Not being part of an educational institution have less access to opportunities

How do you bid as a LA worker and as a lead researcher not having a PhD

Convincing internal stakeholders about merits of research

How do you know when next funding is coming and be able to plan (same for all researchers not fully employed I am sure)

# Some examples of research I have led or co-led

# ENSURE

**How can we close the gap between socially excluded people and the community, resources, professionals and system that can support them?**

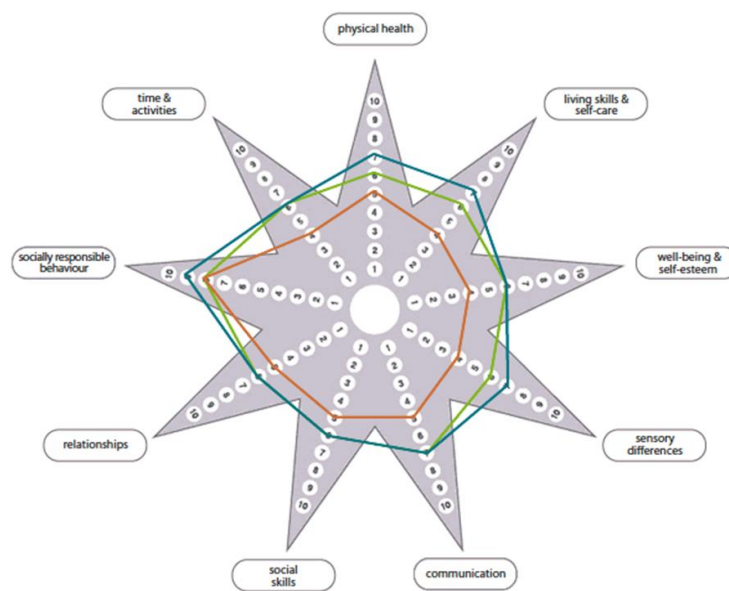


# ENSURE

**Successful research project with autistic adults supported by autistic adults – now commissioned as Touch Base, so applied research**

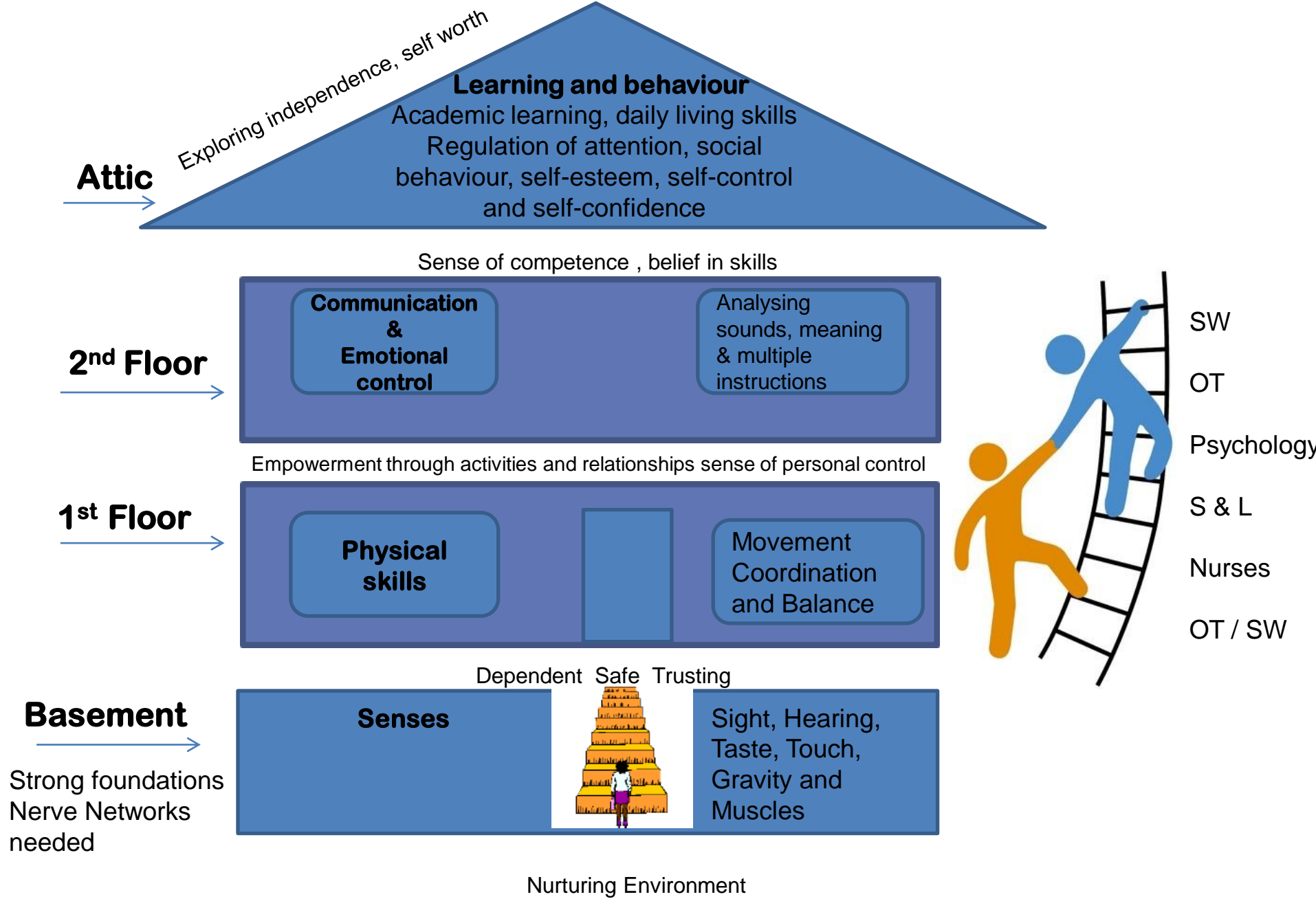
# Autism and Enablement

- Started 2013 with inhouse enablement workers
- Built into a one year (2017) Occupational Therapy Research project
- All research completed by myself and 2 practitioners with no wider support
- 12 week intervention
- Using Spectrum (Outcome Star)
- Wildly successful



# Enablement framework (Model) building up from the basement

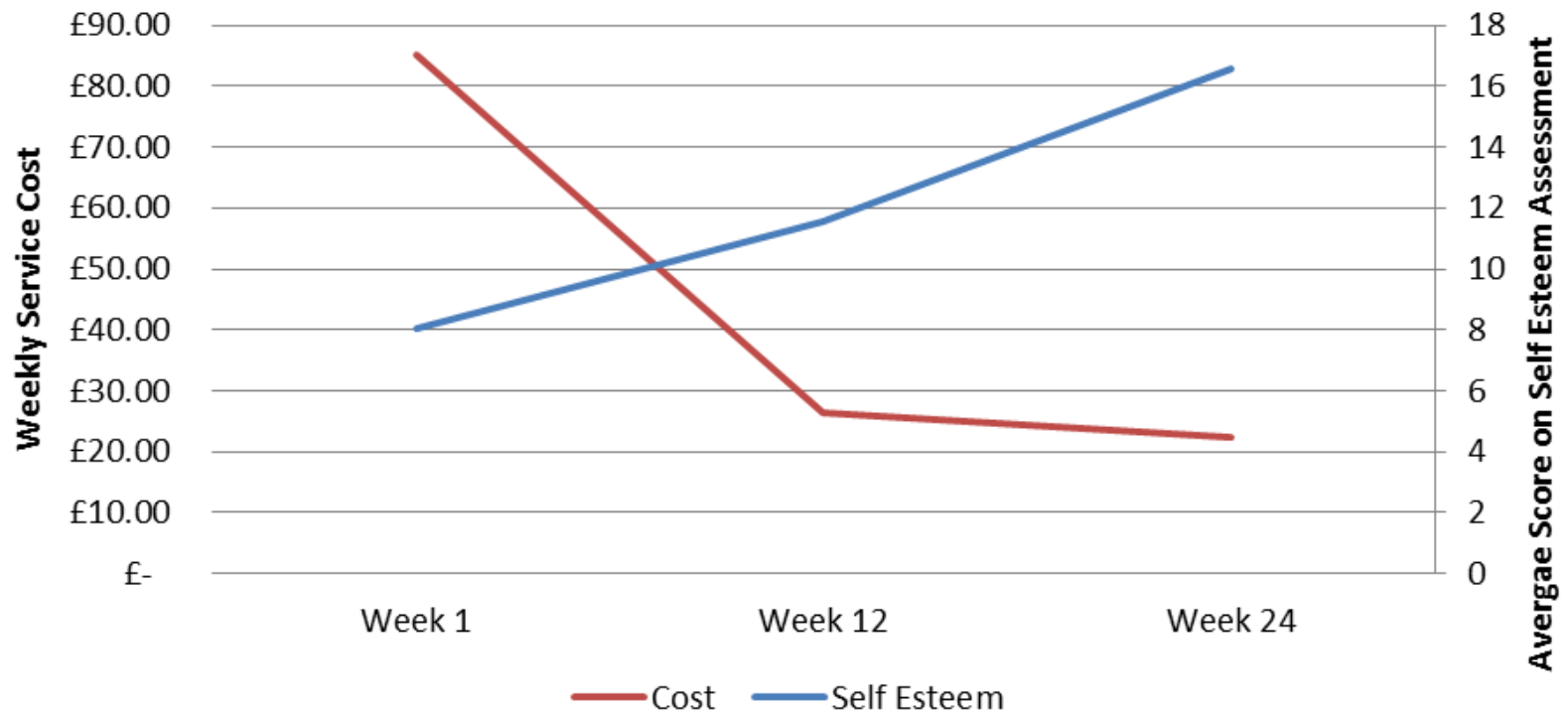
Adapted from Ayres, Williams-Shellenberger, Mucklow, Erikson.





# Self Esteem Results (2)

**Average Service Cost per Week compared to the Self Esteem Results gathered at Each Assessment Period**



# Personal Outcomes

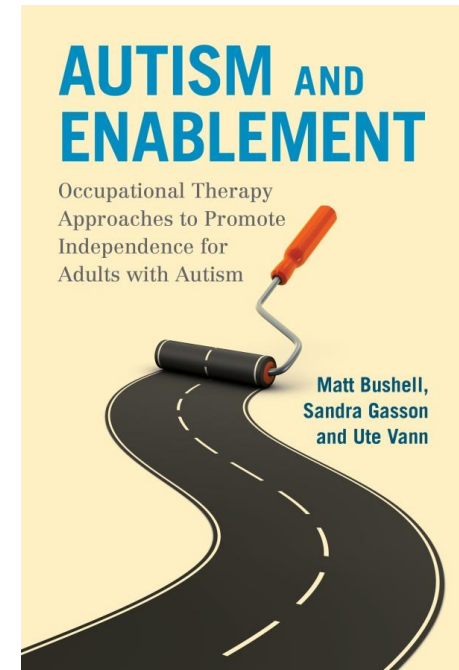
- 1 man came off long term MH medication
- 1 man said in exit interview I was ready to end my life before enablement, but feel more positive now
- 2 mothers had their Childrens Services involvement ended because they were managing so much better
- 3 people stated that they had slept through the night for the first time in their lives
- 1 man was sustained in his work role

# Autism and Enablement 5 years on

2023 accepted as a core offer for  
Inhouse KCC Adults

An offer within the 2021 Adults  
Health neurodevelopmental  
pathway

Sold our book about the  
approach on 5 continents



# 2023 Research – OT in Leaving Care

Exploring whether Occupational Therapy interventions could assist care leavers in meeting their personal outcomes, by improving functional skills and emotional regulation.

# OT in Leaving Care research

Jan – June 23

Collaboration with Canterbury  
Christchurch University

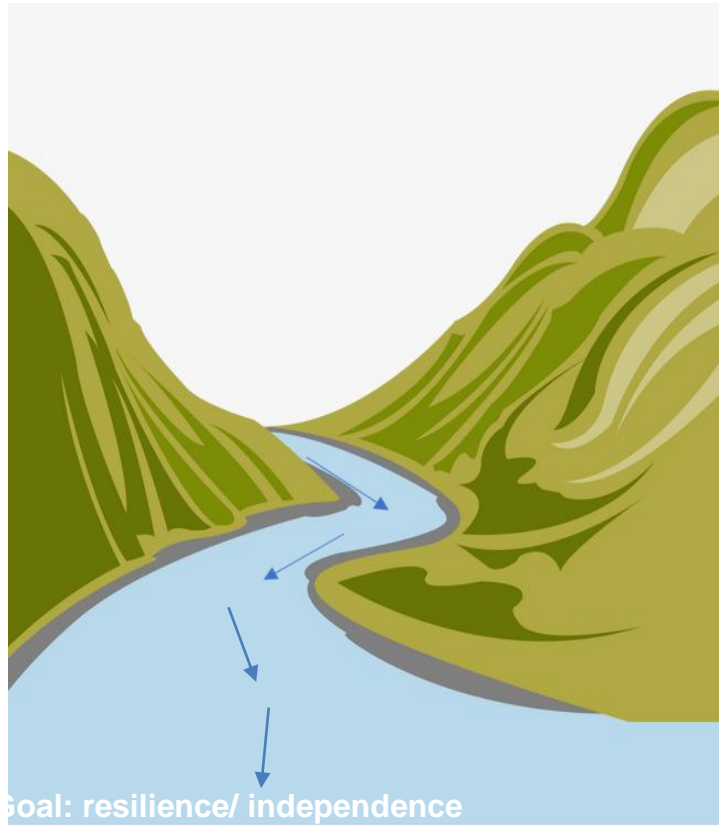
Funding for my time 0.4, OT supervisor,  
equipment etc from Kent, Surrey and  
Sussex ARC



Based upon previous enablement  
approach researched in autism

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# KAWA model



## Key:

**Water in river:** The flow of a persons life

**River banks:** Support networks

**Rocks:** Barriers to function



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# What is Occupational Therapy (OT)

OT's look at the activities a person 'needs' and 'wants' to complete on a daily basis.

## OT Process

Referral



Assessment



Goal Setting



Intervention



Review

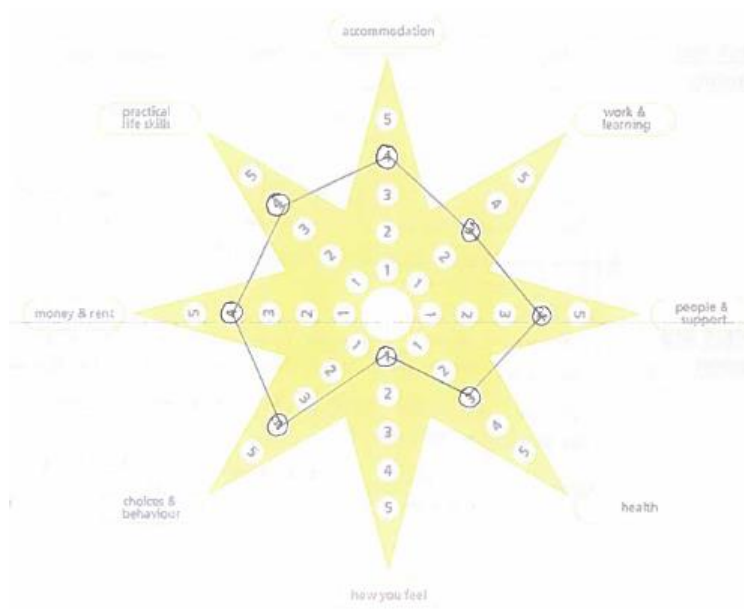


Closure

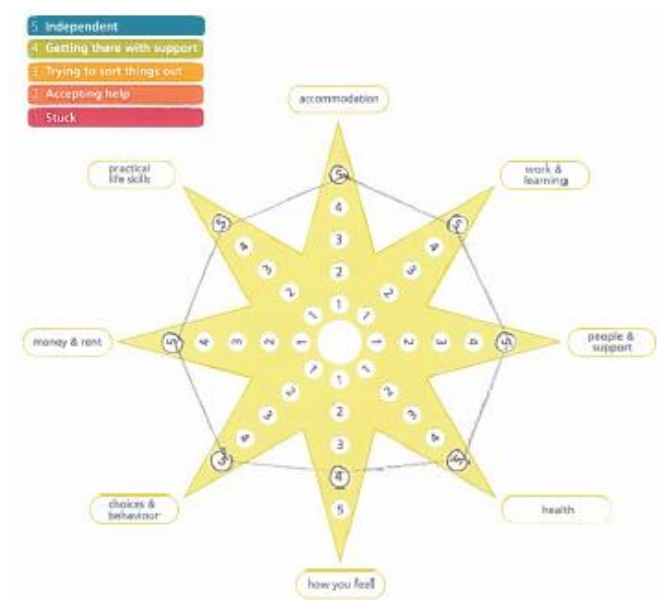
OT's assess the barriers to participation and work with the person to improve their engagement in a variety of ways such as:

- A compensatory approach (equipment, technology, or adapting the task)
- An educational approach (occupationally focused educational programmes for groups)
- An acquisitional approach (supporting the person to acquire new skills)
- A restorative approach (supporting the person to restore their health and function)

# Comparison of stars before and after OT intervention



18/01/2023

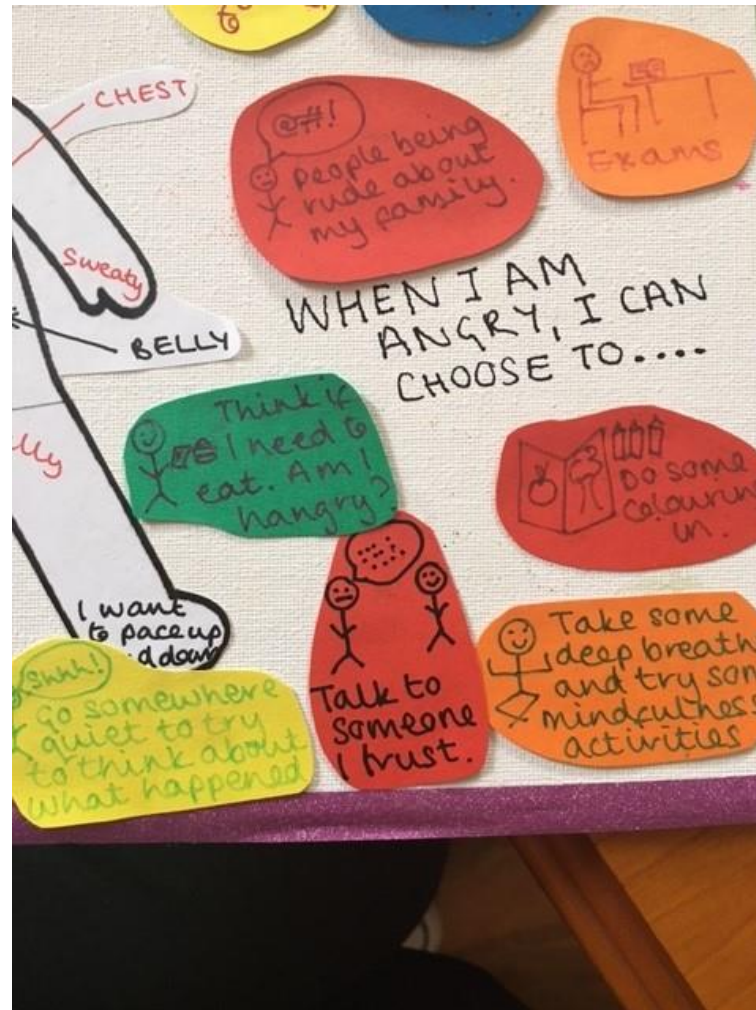


10/03/2023





# An example of some personalised work



# Final point

Social care research is a premium, and it shouldn't be agreed unless there is a realistic applicable client benefit predicted and service users feel it would be so.

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# Questions?



# Q&A

