

# Autism & Vulnerability

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**IF YOU'VE MET  
ONE PERSON  
WITH AUTISM, YOU'VE MET  
ONE PERSON  
WITH AUTISM.  
-STEPHEN SHORE**

# Traits not impairments

## Autism is:

Three main domains in ICD10:

- Social Interaction
- Communication
- Rigidity/focal repetitive interests

# Positive impacts of autistic traits:

## **Absorb and retain facts-**

excellent long term memory, superb recall

## **Observational skills-**

listen, look learn approach, fact finding

## **Attention to detail-**

thoroughness, accuracy

## **Deep focus-**

concentration, freedom from distraction

## **Visual skills-**

visual learning and recall, detail focussed

## **Methodical approach-**

analytical, spotting patterns and repetition

## **Novel**

## **approaches-**

unique thought processes and innovative solutions

## **Creativity-**

distinctive imagination, expression of ideas



## **Tenacity and**

## **resilience-**

determination, challenge opinions

## **Integrity-**

honesty, loyalty, commitment.

# One negative impact is Vulnerability.....

- To physical health conditions
- To mental health conditions
- To drug and alcohol misuse
- To deliberate self harm and suicide
- To abuse and exploitation

# Abuse

“To treat with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly.” *Oxford Dictionary*

# Institutional Abuse

## 'BULLIES' OF WINTERBOURNE



### WAYNE ROGERS, 30

SHORN-headed and tattooed, Wayne Rogers was unpopular with colleagues and 'feared' because he held himself as the alpha worker of Winterbourne View, according to a former staff member at the home.

'He did not appear the caring type, rather intimidating in fact,' he added.

The 30-year-old, pictured, dreamt of owning his own tattoo parlour, but one former co-worker said he seemed content with his 'easy' life. 'He

said he liked the job since [as] a senior support worker the money was decent and the work was easy,' he said.

'He seemed to care as little as possible, relying on his boss-like authoritative side to get things done. Instead of caring for patients, he essentially ordered them along.'

'Yesterday, his family were unapologetic.

Speaking from the door of his family home, in a leafy cul-de-sac in Bristol, a relative said: 'He can't say anything - he can't even defend himself.'

### ALLISON DOVE, 24

RELATIVES of Alison Dove, the only female carer to be arrested in connection with the abuse, said there were 'two sides' to the story.

But colleagues described Dove as 'bullying' and 'heavy handed' with patients.

A former co-worker said: 'I saw her strike back when a patient would touch her.'

### GRAHAM DOYLE, 25

GRAHAM Doyle first turned up at the hospital to apply for a job as a kitchen porter but was soon given the role of looking after patients.

A former colleague said of Doyle and the 'shock' staff being around with: 'They did not appear to come into work to care. They came in and bullied. It is a place they can exercise control.'



Transforming Care has made huge improvements of keeping people in sight and in mind and this will continue with the Long Term Plan.

# Abuse and Exploitation

- Financial abuse- stealing, cold calling
- Emotional abuse- manipulation, bullying
- Physical Abuse- domestic violence, bullying
- Sexual abuse- in childhood, in relationships
- Coercion - by people involved in criminal activity, by employers



# Survey reveals half of autistic adults 'abused by someone they regarded as a friend'

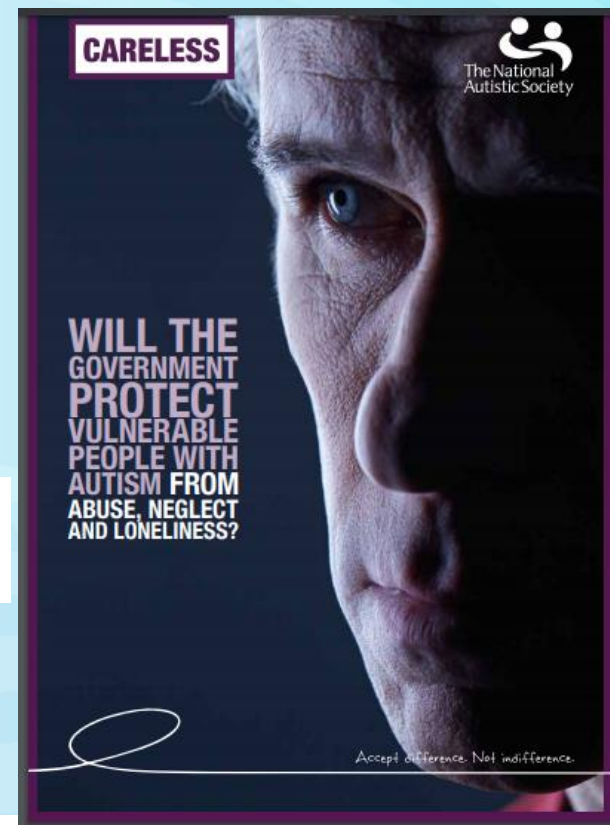
National Autistic Society calls for support to prevent abuse and neglect to be made explicit in Care Act regulations

by Chloe Stothart on June 16, 2014 in Adult safeguarding, Adults, Autism, Care Act 2014

The poll of over 1,300 people with autism or their carers showed high levels of abuse, neglect and loneliness suffered by autistic adults.

It said over a quarter had money or possessions stolen by someone they thought of as a friend and 37% had been forced or manipulated to do something they did not want to do.

The survey also found 44% of respondents stayed at home because they feared abuse or harassment.



# “I feel as though I have never fitted in”

Limited social network and support for advice and reassurance.

Stimming, intense focal interests and meltdowns can make the autistic person seem odd or intimidating to others

Difficulty in conventional empathising which can result in people believing an autistic person is uncaring or insensitive.

Difficulty in recognising social conventions could result in misjudging a situation and inadvertently offending people.



# “People tend to communicate with information I don’t have.”

Difficulty understanding humour, banter, sarcasm, metaphor and vulnerable to teasing and bullying



Interpreting things literally-taking people at face value

Being misinterpreted as rude, disinterested or blunt can lead to conflict situations

Difficulty in reading non verbal communication makes it harder to pick up on people’s intentions.

# “Things should be done properly”

Being rule bound can cause difficulty if others don't apply the same moral code or follow the same rules and the autistic person can be seen as judgemental or interfering.



Methodical completion of tasks will often result in the task being completed to an excellent standard and so people can ask for more

Uncertainty about rules in relationships or inexperience can increase vulnerability to exploitation

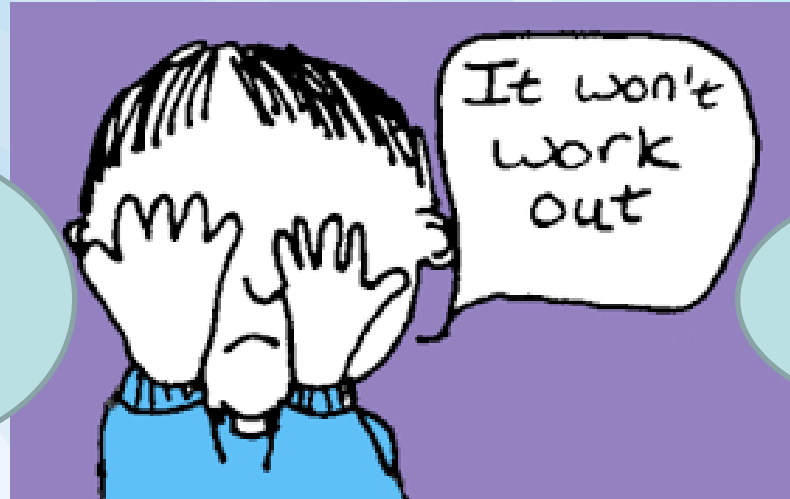
Believing that others will have the same moral code as them so may not recognise exploitative behaviour

# The effects of low self esteem

Wanting to belong

Wanting to please

Wanting to have friends



No one likes me

I'm weird

I'm not good to be around

If someone is then abused or exploited and recognises it:

**"It's probably my fault"**

# Difficulties asking for help



“I don’t know who to ask for help”

“I don’t know how to ask for help”

“I should be able to cope”

# Gordon's story

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2\\_ZcH05THE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2_ZcH05THE&feature=youtu.be)

# What would help an autistic person who is vulnerable to abuse and exploitation?



# A proper diagnostic assessment



# Improved access to Health, Social Care, Education and Employment for autistic people...



and reasonable adjustments to maximise engagement and positive outcomes

# Don't inadvertently abuse- Ask and record what will cause distress



This can be particularly significant for autistic people who are in acute distress or are getting older and are declining cognitively

# Use a strengths based approach



If someone has enough self esteem and confidence they can ask for help when they need it



# Thank you

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