

A Panel Discussion on Neurodivergent Discourse

A chance to explore applications of and lessons from 'Movement Method'

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A Panel Discussion on Neurodivergent Discourse

Panel Objectives

- Identify opportunities for incorporating Movement Method principles into your own practice
- Propose scenarios/case studies for exploration by the panel

Panel Participants

Dr. Angels Almenar-Queralt
 Henrich Berkhoff
 David Doyle
 Dr. Temple Grandin
 Rowan Isaacson
 Rupert Isaacson
 Cade Long
 Dr. Megan McGavern
 Dr. Stephen Peters
 Dr. Bianca Rimbach

Moderator: Alex Northover (PhD Candidate)

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Invitation to reset and activate your parasympathetic nervous system

- Open your mouth as wide as you can
- With that position say the letter 'R'
- Repeat three or four times - you should trigger a yawn

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Questions from Attendees

"I am the parent of two ASD level 1 children. My youngest (10) struggles with emotional regulation/hyperactivity and impulsivity that none of the traditional drug therapy options has helped. This is impacting him at school behaviorally and with maintaining friendships. He is intellectually gifted in math and this issue with impulsiveness is not seemingly impacting him academically. What are some ways you might approach this? I will add we live on a farm with horses as well as other animals. I have been a professional horsewoman for over 30 years and was thrilled to see the three of you on a panel together! The farm has been a place of peace for him and perhaps you have some more ideas how this environment could help. Thank you."

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Questions from Attendees

"I am an occupational therapist working in early intervention. Young autistic children will often constantly be on the go. They run from one room to another and they constantly climb. What suggestions can I provide to working parents who come home after a long day of work and want to engage with their child?"

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Questions from Attendees

"I have a student that is 5 years of age. He is diagnosed with autism, has mastered the alphabet with recognition, sounds, can blend words together, can count to 100+, has learned sign language, and can recognize and understand different languages. However, he is not toilet trained and cannot speak in complete sentences."

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Questions from Attendees

"Children on the autism spectrum seem to struggle with the mechanics of handwriting. We know fine motor skills are decreased (in some), but what about visual perceptual skills? I feel like students with autism interpret visual information a lot differently than students without autism. It seems like the students can't "see" parts of a letter/number when initially learning to write and, therefore struggle with forming letters and numbers, the basics for beginning to write. But it seems many students can identify their letters/numbers as a whole (fully formed-like on flashcards). Is using technology a better means of written communication in schools? Many parents want their kids to go through the typical developmental process of writing and don't want to go straight to technology. However, when parents and teachers are on board with moving straight to technology, I am getting great success with improvements in written communication. Would love to have more research to back this up. Any thoughts?"

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Questions from Attendees

"How can we work to integrate Movement Method into the IEP plans for school aged children within the public school systems?"

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What do you consider the most impactful steps a clinician/clinical setting can take to better serve the autistic community?



Image adapted
from FlourishAustralia.org.au

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What do you feel are the most pressing health concerns for autistic people? How could Movement Method address them? What are the challenges?

The average life expectancy for autistic people is lower than UK averages. 71.7 years for men, 69.6 for women compared to 80 and 83 (O'Nions et al., 2024).

Autistic people are more likely to identify as having physical disabilities, mental health difficulties or chronic illnesses (Rydzewska et al., 2018)

70 – 80% of autistics struggle with poor mental health. They are 4 to 9 times more likely to end their own lives. 66% have considered it with 35% having tried or have a plan (Newell et al. 2023)

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Opportunities For Questions From The Floor

Thank you!

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References

Newell, V., Phillips, L., Jones, C. *et al.* A systematic review and meta-analysis of suicidality in autistic and possibly autistic people without co-occurring intellectual disability. *Molecular Autism* **14**, 12 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-023-00544-7>

O'Nions, E., *et al.* Estimating life expectancy and years of life lost for autistic people in the UK: a matched cohort study, *The Lancet Regional Health - Europe*, Volume 36, 2024, 100776, ISSN 2666-7762, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2023.100776>.

Rydzewska E, Hughes-McCormack LA, Gillberg C, *et al.* Prevalence of long-term health conditions in adults with autism: observational study of a whole country population *BMJ Open* 2018;**8**:e023945. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-023945>.

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