

Unsafe, Unheard & Misunderstood:

Trauma & Neuro-differences

Suggestions for Support

Cause 1: Sensory Trauma - Overwhelm & Learning to Hide Sensory Needs

- Full Acceptance + No Judgement from *others* (first) and *self* (next)
- Building the ability of others to understand neuro-differences
- Pre-warning before distressing input, etc.
- Previewing a schedule and allowing choice
- Learning to give permission to be authentic self (choosing 1 out of 3 activities to attend; setting realistic/kind expectations)
- Alternative methods of brain-body regulation. For example:
 - Chiropractic
 - Therapeutic Massage
 - Listening/Auditory Therapies
 - Hippotherapy
 - Aquatic Therapy

Cause 2: Social Trauma - Bullying, Isolation, Feeling Different & Masking

- Full Acceptance + No Judgement from *others* (first) and *self* (next)
- Building the ability of others to understand neuro-differences
- Social Mentors
- Offering opportunities to build Social Connection that are centered around interests and meaningful activities

Cause 3: Compliance Trauma - Dangers of Normalization & Surface Behavioral Approaches

- Full Acceptance + No Judgement from *others* (first) and *self* (next)
- Building the ability of others to understand neuro-differences
- Use alternative approaches to 'behavior'—one that considers deeper explanations
- Use a strength-based approach and explicitly celebrate each person
- Use approaches that help a person explore their inner experiences

Cause 4: Neurological Trauma - Communication/Language Differences, Dealing with Uncertainty, Striving to Keep Up, Information Processing Differences, Interoception Challenges

- Full Acceptance + No Judgement from *others* (first) and *self* (next)
- Building the ability of others to understand neuro-differences
- Find communication supports that work for each individual
- Make life as predictable as possible
- Meet a person where they are at
- Learning to give permission to be authentic self (staying at the party that is sensory overwhelming vs. leaving and letting others down)
- Teach self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-understanding
- Develop interoceptive awareness
- Build self-esteem through positive experiences
- Emphasize the strengths of neuro-differences

Cause 5: Medical Trauma - Being Misunderstood by Medical & Mental Health Providers

- Full Acceptance + No Judgement from *others* (first) and *self* (next)
- Building the ability of others to understand neuro-differences:
 - About Me Form
 - AASPIRE toolkit - <https://autismandhealth.org>
 - My Interoception Workbook (Interoception Advocacy Cards)
 - Teach the providers to address the person with autism (not just caregiver)
- Develop Communication & Regulation Strategies for Appointments
 - Stay Safe and Self Advocate Campaign is: <http://autismstaysafe.org/>