PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES FOR STRENGTHS BASED AUTISM PRACTITIONERS

2025

Professional Guidelines for Strengths-Based Autism Practitioners

The Positive Psychology Guild (PPG) is dedicated to the development of occupational standards for Strengths-Based Autism Practitioners. Our professional guidelines provide a minimum standard of ethical conduct before, during, and after client engagement for professional practice.

Key Terms

What are Strengths-Based Approaches Towards Autism?

Strengths-Based Approaches consider several positive paradigms, which include a person-centred/led approach, always orienting towards hope as opposed to fear. Within these approaches, awareness is always considered alongside acceptance. Inclusion, equality, diversity, and equity are all important themes to be researched, developed, and applied.

The above approaches facilitate wellbeing for autistic individuals alongside parents, carers, friends, peers, colleagues, and those who are supporting autistic individuals in the attainment of their goals, needs, wants, and aspirations for the future. It encourages individuals with autism and those who support them to connect with their personal strengths, and cultivate happiness and better relationships.

"Autism Awareness & Acceptance outreach and activities educate people, organisations, and communities about autism, and promote the acceptance of autistic individuals in all aspects of life and work" (Coker, 2019).

What is a Strengths-Based Autism Student?

A Strengths-Based Autism Student is an individual who is enrolled within a structured piece of Autism training, such as a course, training session, or workshop, whether taught or online. The student may be enrolled in one of PPG's courses on Autism or in an external course that is in alignment with a strengths-based approach.

What is a Strengths-Based Autism Practitioner?

A Strengths-Based Autism Practitioner is someone who raises awareness, standards, and promotes person-centred/led approaches within multiple domains such as care, coaching, training, facilitation, leadership and management, mentoring, teaching, research, counselling, and psychotherapy.

A Strengths-Based Autism Practitioner should hold at least a UK level 3 qualification in Autism or Special Educational Needs (or the equivalent) and posses the research skills required to draw on evidence-based approaches when working with their clients. They should also hold a recognised and reputable qualification in their area/s of Special Educational Needs Practice (e.g. certificate, degree or diploma) and be working in line with current UK national standards and strategies.

What is a Strengths-Based Autism Client?

A Strengths-Based Autism Client is an individual or organisation who engages in Strengths-Based Autism Approaches with a qualified practitioner whether paid or otherwise. Interventions/interactions may include coaching, training, facilitation, leadership and management, mentoring, therapeutic, or psycho-educational skills and approaches.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is often referred to as the science of human flourishing beyond the absence of illness. It is a scientific approach to wellbeing and educating people, organisations, and communities on how to thrive (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Sheldon & King, 2001). It encourages people to connect with their inner strengths and cultivate happiness, flow, meaning, love, gratitude, accomplishment, growth, and better relationships (Seligman, 2011). Positive Psychology draws on multi-disciplinary perspectives from Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Theology, and Spirituality, the latter of which include secular and non-secular components (PPG Matrix, 2025).

What is a Positive Psychology-informed approach to Autism?

A Positive Psychology-informed approach to autism is a person-centred/led and strengths-based approach that draws upon that which is strong as opposed to that which is wrong, in line with the neurodiversity paradigm. It also fosters a culture of inclusivity, compassion, and self-compassion towards a world where each autistic individual is accepted and valued.

Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct

As a Strengths-Based Autism Practitioner, I hereby commit to:

- Honestly presenting my skills, experience, and qualifications within Autism research, theory, and practice to my clients and potential clients, and to any other audience engaging in my work;

- Agreeing on a contract outlining service costs and expectations, and the nature of a professional relationship with my clients in advance of any service delivery;

- Disclosing any existing conflict or known potential for conflict with my clients in advance of any service delivery, or as soon as the knowledge of this arises;

- Providing knowledge to my clients on aspects relating to Autism that are relevant to their personal and/or professional growth, so that they may develop an awareness and understanding of this field, emphasising Strengths-Based, Person-Centred/Led Approaches;

- Supporting my clients in developing a resilient and positive outlook whilst allowing space for processing of negative situations and emotions that can accompany the reality and challenges of being an autistic individual;

- Supporting my clients in the development of life skills such as positive communication, managing anxiety and stress, and identifying support needs and strategies as part of a life-long process;

- Working in line with UK national standards and strategies on Autism, and contributing where possible to their development;

- Respecting client confidentiality at all times unless I believe a client is an immediate threat to themselves, or to other people, in which case I will report the situation in an appropriate manner to the relevant authorities;

- Respecting equality and diversity as defined in law including any protected characteristics and in consideration of evolving best practice;

- Respecting professional boundaries in line with occupational standards. This includes but is not limited to exploitation, manipulation, ridicule, and inappropriate personal relationships, and inappropriate financial gain;

- Following the 6 Core Practitioner Values, which are: Safety & Wellbeing, Equality and Diversity, Authenticity, Integrity, Positive Communication, Energy & Presence.

- Respecting my own professional boundaries and cultivating a practice that includes care for myself as well as care for my clients;

- Maintaining clear, correct, and confidential records of my client work;

- Referring clients to appropriate service providers should I be unable or unwilling to offer my professional support;

- Running a strengths-based practice and correctly referencing any sources I use in my research and/or to support the promotion or visibility of my work;

- Committing to my ongoing professional development within Autism and other related fields.