

SDHI Workshop

Learning the Language: The Use of Intensive Interaction with people whose Severe Learning Disabilities are Linked to Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Distressed Behaviour

Dr Phoebe Caldwell

SDHI held an interactive workshop led by the renowned Phoebe Caldwell entitled Learning the Language: The Use of Intensive Interaction with people whose Severe Learning Disabilities are Linked to Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Distressed Behaviour. We began by limiting places to only 20, but the event was so popular that we moved venue and over 40 people attended.

Phoebe Caldwell is a Practitioner who has been working with people whose severe Autistic Spectrum Disorder is linked with Learning Disabilities and severe behavioural distress for thirty years. Her approach is a combination of Intensive Interaction and paying attention to those aspects of an individual's environment which are triggering hypersensory distress. For four years she was a Rowntree Research Fellow, looking at best practice. She has been one of the principal speakers at a BILD Annual Conference. She teaches management, therapists, parents, teachers, advocates and carers and is also employed by NHS, Social Services and Community and Education Services to work with people for whom they are finding it difficult to provide a service. Her approach is now taught in a number of University Courses to students who wish to qualify in services to people with learning disabilities. She is the author of four books, the last two, "You don't Know What Its Like" and "Crossing the Minefield" are specifically about ASD - and the training video "Learning the Language", all published by Pavilion Press.

The workshop covered

- Experiencing a different sensory reality
- Looking at ASD from the point of view of those who experience it
- Models
 - 'Build Up',
 - 'Coping Strategies' (Repetitive Behaviours and Exit Strategies - Avoidance and Aggression)
 - 'Fragmentation'
- The Pivotal Role of Stress - Scotopic Sensitivity
- Factors inducing Stress
 - Hypersensitivities to sensory experience:
 - Emotional Overload:
 - Boundaries:
 - Knowing What is Happening:
 - Speech - Understanding and Communication:
 - Time:
 - Change:
 - Choices and Hormonal Factors
- Intensive Interaction
 - Using a Person's 'Brain-Body Language ' to Communicate with them:
 - Observation and Attention
- Challenging Behaviour
- The Dual Approach: Reducing Stress and Looking for What has Meaning for a Particular Individual
 - Using Stereotypic Behaviour to contain threatening situations.