

Part 2



Understanding
risk-
understanding
motive-
understanding
other minds



MIND THE GAP

Understanding other minds

Instinctive social behaviour 'intuition'

(With grateful thanks to Margaret Dewey, Lorna Wing and Uta Frith)

The Informal Test of Social Know-How: Margaret Dewey

Rate the following behaviours how you think others will see them;

- A. Fairly normal in that situation**
- B. Rather strange in that situation**
- C. Very eccentric in that situation**
- D. Shocking behaviour in that situation**

In the park

Keith age 27 was a file clerk who worked in an office in the city. At noon he took lunch to a small park and sat on a bench to eat it.

Often he tore part of a sandwich to bits scattering it on the ground for the pigeons []

One day a baby carriage was parked next to his bench with a crying baby in it. A woman was swinging an older child nearby but did not hear because the swing was squeaking. Keith had learnt that babies sometimes cry because a nappy pin had come undone.

Rather than bother the mother Keith quickly checked the baby to see if he could feel an open pin []

- A. Fairly normal in that situation
- B. Rather strange in that situation
- C. Very eccentric in that situation
- D. Shocking behaviour in that situation

In the airplane.

Emily, age nineteen, overslept on the morning of her airplane trip.

When she woke up there was just enough time to dress and get to the airport, so she skipped her breakfast. ()

At noon, the stewardess came around with lunch, but Emily was so hungry that one portion did not satisfy her. She watched a little girl across the aisle toy with her food, complaining 'I can't eat it'.

Apparently her father didn't want any more because he told the child to just leave it.

Emily leant across the aisle and said, 'If your little girl doesn't want her tray of food could you pass it over for me ' ()

- A. Fairly normal in that situation
- B. Rather strange in that situation
- C. Very eccentric in that situation
- D. Shocking behaviour in that situation

In the elevator

Charlie 23 had been out of work for several months. On this day his hopes were high because he was on his way to apply for a job that seemed just right for him.

As he rode up in the elevator a stranger said pleasantly “nice day isn't it” []

Just then Charlie happened to see his reflection in a mirror near the elevator buttons. His hair was sticking up and he had no comb with him.

He turned to the friendly stranger and said “may I borrow your comb please?” []

- A. Fairly normal in that situation
- B. Rather strange in that situation
- C. Very eccentric in that situation
- D. Shocking behaviour in that situation

The lunch-time nap.

Frank, age 19 found employment with a company that cared for people's gardens, carrying his lunch in a box.

At noon, Frank washed his hands under the hose and sat in a shady part of the garden to eat. ()

Since he was allowed an hour for lunch he sometimes took a nap by curling up behind a bush. ()

One day it began raining at noon. Frank knocked on the door and asked permission to eat inside in the dry.

The lady said he could come in and as she was busy with her children decided not to bother her further. He located the bathroom by himself and washed his hands. ()

Then he found the dining room by himself and ate his lunch. ()

He cleaned his crumbs from the table and looked around the house for a place to rest. ()

The living room carpet was nice and thick and so he decided to curl up and go to sleep behind a large chair. ()

- A. Fairly normal in that situation
- B. Rather strange in that situation
- C. Very eccentric in that situation
- D. Shocking behaviour in that situation

Q.2

Are autistic
people more
likely to be
victims of
crime ?

Overview

Survey

Case examples

Victims and witnesses



So what is it
about autism?

- Are autistic people more likely to be victims of crime ?

Victims of crime

- How many victims?
 - Seven times more likely to be a victim of crime (Kurry et al 1993)
 - Numbers not known
 - Autistic people with ID may be vulnerable to arrest for 'challenging behaviour'



Victim



**V
S**

Victims of crime NAS survey 2013 - 800 RESPONDENTS

o ABUSE

- o 81% SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED VERBAL ABUSE,
 - 47% REPORTED VICTIMS OF A PHYSICAL ASSAULT.
 - 28% HAD EXPERIENCED EXPLOITATION, THEFT OR FRAUD
 - 28% HAD POSSESSIONS OR PROPERTY DAMAGED
 - 65% HAVE EXPERIENCED HATE CRIME MORE THAN 10 TIMES.
- **73% DIDN'T REPORT THE CRIME TO POLICE**
 - OF THOSE THAT DID, 54% SAID IT WASN'T RECORDED AS A HATE CRIME
 - 40% SAID POLICE DID NOT ACT ON THEIR REPORT
 - 62% DID NOT THINK POLICE HAD TAKEN THEIR DISABILITY INTO ACCOUNT
- **'ALARMING NUMBER' EXPERIENCING BULLYING**
 - ONLY 6% **HAD NOT** EXPERIENCED ANY BULLYING OR ABUSE.
 - 24% HAD BEEN VICTIMS OF CYBER BULLYING



Victims of crime

Steven Watts

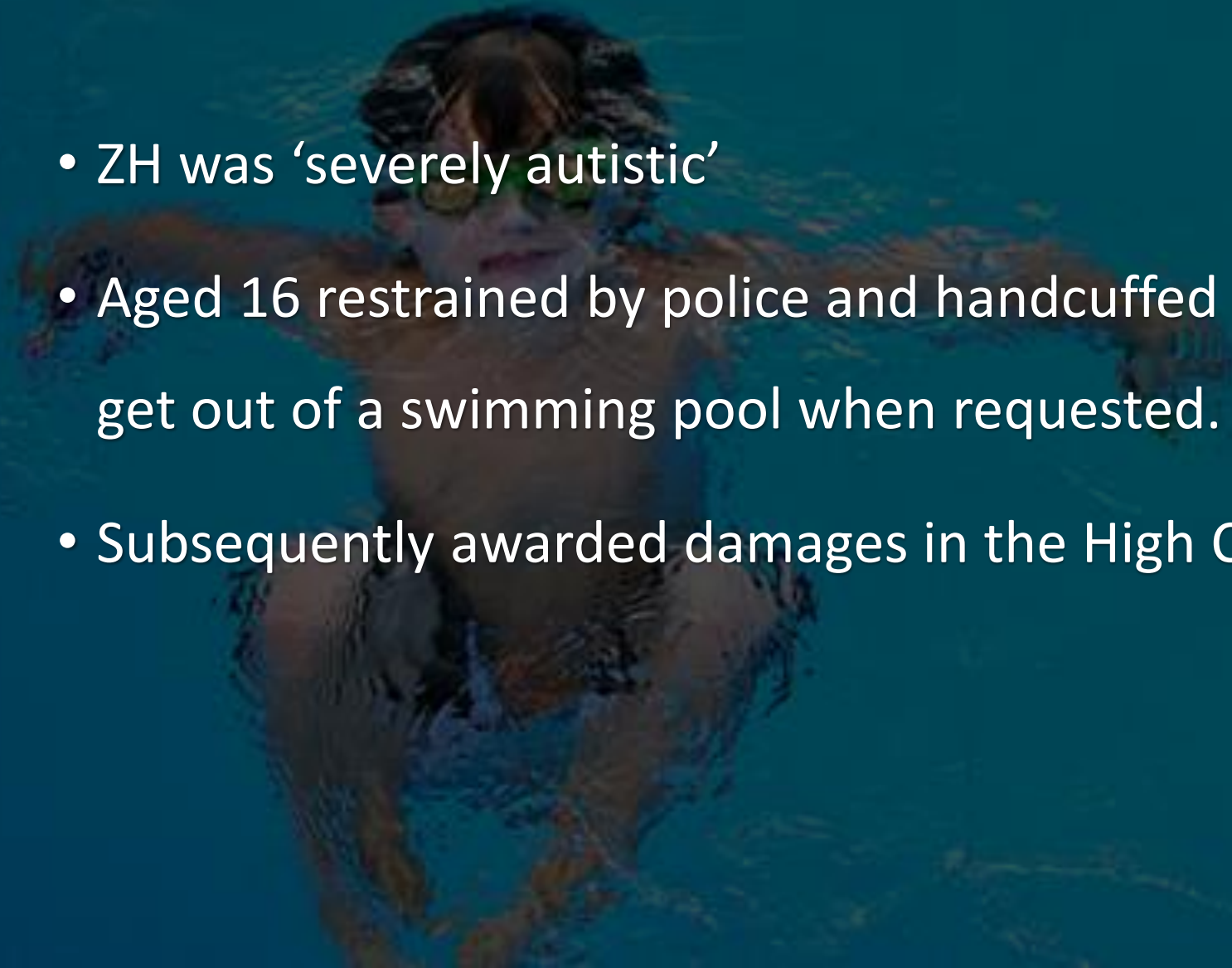


Adrian Palmer



Victims

- ZH was 'severely autistic'
- Aged 16 restrained by police and handcuffed because he would not get out of a swimming pool when requested.
- Subsequently awarded damages in the High Court

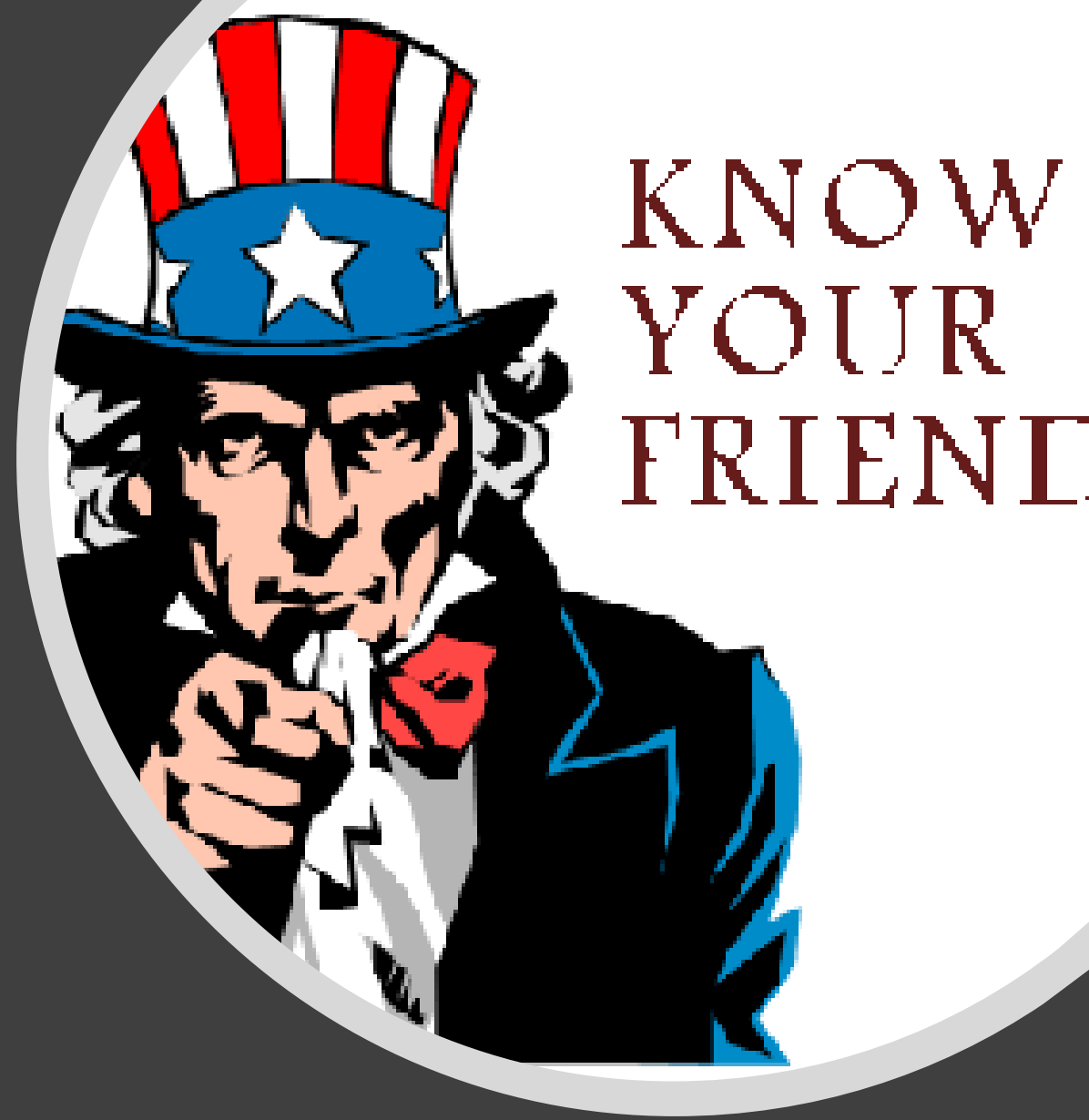


Victims of crime

- **‘Mate crime’.** Autistic individuals are more vulnerable to mate crime defined as :-

‘the exploitation, abuse or theft from any vulnerable person by those they consider to be their friends. Those that commit such abuse or theft are often referred to as ‘fake friends’.

- Also implicated in offending behaviour
 - Coerced into offending- seeking approval- intimidated



Sexual abuse

- Characteristics of autism increase vulnerability to sexual exploitation
Edelson 2010
- Autistic females three times more likely to be sexually abused
Pettersson 2018



Witnesses

- Autistic witnesses often (wrongly) seen by CJS as unreliable
- As with offenders and victims the CJS is often unprepared, hostile and frightening
- They might not 'present well'
 - To police
 - To the Courts



Maras et al 2017

Witnesses

You say you saw the defendant
and co defendant in the vicinity
of the café are you quite sure
about that? You can't be sure
can you? I put it to you that you
are mistaken



Witnesses

Can you tell the Court in your
own words ?.....

What went through your
mind?...

Do you not consider that to be
unusual?



Q.3

What happens
to autistic
people in the
justice system
and what might
help ?

What happens?

What might help?

What happens?

- Autistic people found across all areas of CJS
 - Police. Custody, interviewing and disposal difficult
 - Courts. Process and sentencing options problematic
 - Prisons. High risk of abuse, injury, mental health crises- stay longer
 - Secure hospitals. Recognition patchy. Stay longer
 - Probation –aftercare and rehabilitation challenges – novel interventions needed
 - Professional role -Developments with autistic police officers



What might help?

- **Anticipate**
 - Understand the person and their 'style' of thinking.
 - Identify predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors in offending or victimhood
 - Reduce social isolation – Create opportunities for affiliation and relationships



What might help?

- Respond
 - Reasonable adjustment across CJS (Universal Design/ Access for all)
 - Autistic-informed support e.g. 'assertive' outreach/mentoring
 - Teach context-based strategies -not 'behaviours' or 'social skills'
 - Adapt existing programmes e.g. CBT; SOTP
 - Local Appropriate Adult schemes



What might help ?

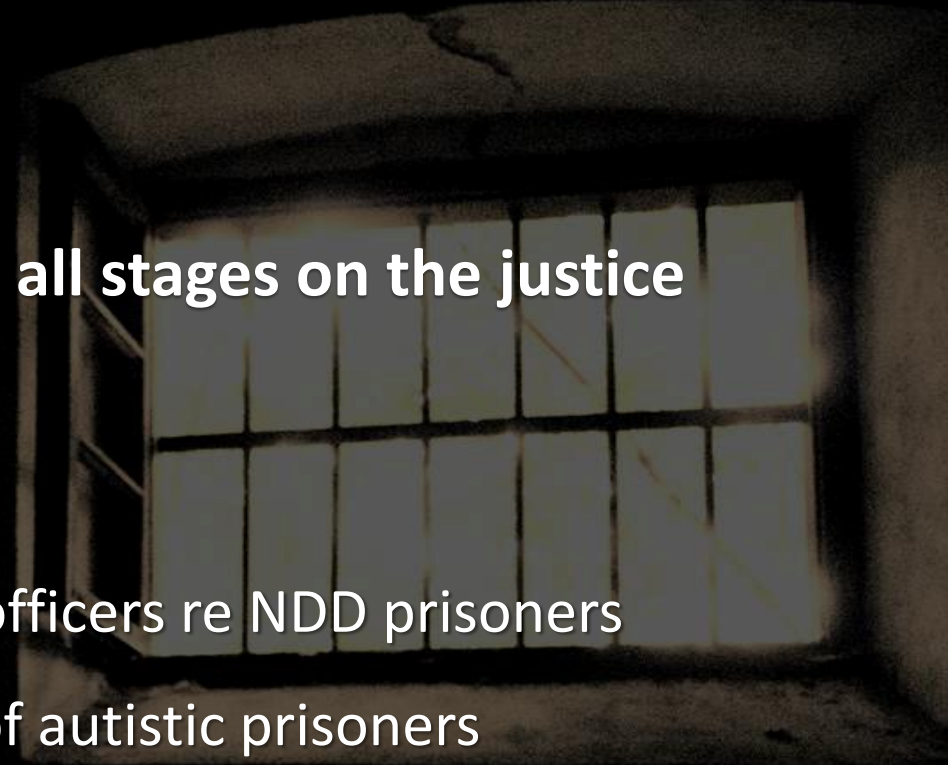
- **Better understanding of the nature of autism at all stages of the justice system**
 - Police and law enforcement
 - Autistic - informed training leading to reasonable adjustment in accommodating autistic people
 - Sensory environment/ interviews (questions)
 - Recognise and support needs of autistic colleagues

What might help ?

- **Better understanding of the nature of autism at all stages of the justice system**
 - Courts
 - Autistic-informed training for legal professionals and judiciary in autism leading to reasonable adjustments to accommodation and process.
 - Court appointed intermediary –helps court and autistic person understand the process and questions. Written questions –adjustment to court layout
 - Recognise and support needs of autistic colleagues

What might help ?

- **Better understanding of the nature of autism at all stages on the justice system**
 - Prisons
 - Autistic-informed training and awareness of officers re NDD prisoners
 - Therapeutic programmes adjusted to needs of autistic prisoners
 - Recognise vulnerability to bullying and ill treatment
 - Likely to stay longer
 - Robust joined-up aftercare
 - Recognise and support needs of autistic colleagues



What might help?

- Better understanding of the nature of autism at all stages of the justice system
- High-Secure hospitals
 - 2 - 5% in high-secure care
 - Greater awareness . More specialisation within high-secure hospitals
 - SPELL framework and autistic –informed training for nurses and doctors
 - Overlap with prison
 - Autistic patients spend longer in detention

Murphy 2018 : Hare et al 1999

What might help ?

- Better understanding of the nature of autism at all stages on the justice system
 - Probation
 - Autistic informed training of staff and development of accessible to progs for rehabilitation and prevention -Particular regard to autistic presentation, social isolation and need for 'assertive' support.
 - Access to adapted offender programmes e.g. SOTP, drug alcohol, employment, relationships, anger management drug and alcohol.
 - Recognise and support needs of autistic colleagues

Summary

- Autistic people in all parts of the CJS : Victims, Offenders, witnesses and staff
- Few diagnosed at time of first contact
- More likely to be victims of crime but some offences are linked to autism
- Mixed evidence from prevalence studies. No significant over-representation of offending
- Co morbid psychiatric and NDD may be less important than social factors
- Questions about Cybercrime- 'autistic traits' not autism? Implications for all offenders?
- No 'autism defence'
- Interventions poorly developed and more autism-informed approach: Reasonable adjustment and programmes needed: e.g. mentoring
- Exceptionally vulnerable in prison
- The debate and narrative must avoid demonising autistic people

Thank you

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