

'Autism and your Practice' with Caroline Hearst

**Saturday 11 March, 10.30-16.30, cost £60
(Numbers limited to 18)**

This course offers an overview of autism and covers the ways in which the traits of autism impact on lives. Do you have some clients you struggle to understand? Who just don't respond as you'd expect? Who are clearly intelligent and yet fail to manage many everyday tasks?

Autism is a surprisingly common condition that is often undiagnosed and unidentified; when this is the case for a client, treatment rarely goes smoothly. Autistic people have unique strengths and challenges, but because of their atypical development they often have difficulties understanding themselves and managing their lives so they seek therapy. However, if the therapist doesn't understand autism the therapeutic relationship is unlikely to offer the sort of assistance required. It is very difficult to help autistics with their difficulties and presenting issues if the underlying autism is not recognised or well understood - the usual approaches to such problems can be ineffective and even detrimental. Becoming aware of and understanding autism is vital if you want to be able to identify autistic clients and help them navigate a way to a more fulfilling life.

The Course Covers:

- An overview of the autism constellation, including experiential exercises to give a taste of how autism is experienced by those with the condition;
- How and why autistic people experience emotions differently and communicate differently;
- How and why autistic people respond to information in unusual ways;
- The issues autistic people might have with flexibility and organisation;
- Some reasons why autism is often not identified.

The course provides information and is interactive and experiential. Participants have an opportunity to experience something of what autism feels like and to discuss this and their involvement with autistic or potentially autistic clients.

Caroline Hearst trained as an art psychotherapist and self-identified and achieved a diagnosis of autism in adulthood after years of personal therapy. She raised two sons, one of whom is autistic. She uses these experiences and her background in adult education to provide enjoyable and informative sessions that increase understanding and acceptance of autism.

In addition to offering sessions about autism to health professionals and psychotherapists Caroline runs a 10 week education and peer support programme for adults who identify as autistic or wonder if they might be autistic and support groups for autistic adults. She has written about autism in specialist and general publications (most recently in the October 2016 issue of "Private Practice") and is the founder and a director of AutAngel CIC and serves on the National Autistic Society Forum and Reading Autism Strategy Board.