

Assert

NEWSLETTER

My ASSERT half-marathon

By Oliver Pendlington

It was a big day of my life. My first Half-Marathon. I was running for Assert, the charity that helps people on the Autistic Spectrum like myself. I was excited and nervous before the run, hoping I would at least finish it.

The 13 mile run was itself pretty tiring but fun. I actually found it hard to run too fast because I did not want to exert myself. I did more of a fast jog at times because I was getting weary. But I could do it because of how fit and strong I was from all my training (courtesy of Sam and the Hove Hornets).

I felt tired but triumphant when I finished the HM. I had just accomplished a big achievement in my life and was proud of my efforts. My time was 01:53, just below 02:00 (which I had set myself). Everyone was very proud of me and my reward was a hearty lunch at the Lion & Lobster! What a day!



Free Yoga classes for ASSERT clients



Yoga is a safe and effective way to increase physical activity, especially strength, flexibility and balance. There's some evidence that regular yoga practice is beneficial for people with high blood pressure, heart disease, aches and pains – including lower back pain – depression and stress.

These classes are a nice way to be with people without having to socialise too much. They are open to any fitness ability and no previous experience of yoga is needed. The classes are autism friendly with space, no background music and dimmed lighting. The yoga teacher has previous experience of running classes for adults with High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome and there will be Assert staff and volunteers available to provide extra support if needed.

If you have any questions or would like to find out the dates and times, you can contact Catherine by: Texting: 07879567881, Emailing: lifeskills@assertbh.org.uk or Phone: 01273 234850

Cure? No thanks!

By Sarah Faulkner

Neurodiversity advocates argue that people with Autism shouldn't be forced to fit into society but that society should change to include and accept them. They would like to see the world expand its ideas of what is 'acceptable behaviour'. Although some people with Autism have mixed feelings about having the condition, the majority are thought to feel positive about the idea of neurodiversity. A neurodiversity advocate might say that Autistic people should not be forced to make eye-contact - the rest of us could learn to understand that lack of eye-contact is not simply 'rudeness' but within the range of acceptable behaviour. It is questioned why society cannot embrace and even celebrate the innovative and unusual ideas that the Autistic mind has to offer!

The 'social model' of disability considers that disability is mainly a social issue rather than a medical one. The traditional way of describing disabilities had been known as the 'medical model'. The social model instead looks at the importance of society's accommodations of those with conditions/disabilities.

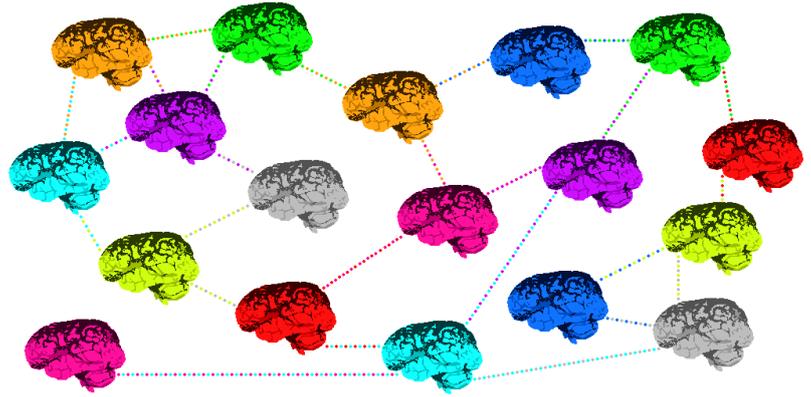
Neurodiversity advocates would rather have money spent on finding effective forms of alternative communication for Autistic people who don't speak and on support services which can best enable people to live their lives rather than on finding a cure.

"Some of the unique wiring in autism allows for some very original minds, if they are given the wherewithal to function," said Eva Feder Kittay - a philosophy professor at Stony Brook University, USA.

What are your thoughts on this topic? For more on this, take a look at the following web article:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/02/25/they-don-t-want-an-autism-cure.html>

CELEBRATE NEURODIVERSITY



EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT MIND, A DIFFERENT WAY OF BEING. DON'T SUPPRESS THESE DIFFERENCES. ACCEPT AND SUPPORT THEM.

© 2005 Vincent Camley a.k.a. The Almighty Doer of Stuff. All rights reserved.

Benefits Advice and Support service gains extra funding



Member submissions for the newsletter needed! If you have an article, story, poem, or just a general musing on life that you would like to be considered for submission to the newsletter, please send it in! It can be on any topic, how about your special interest? Please email these to Laura at laura@assertbh.org.uk

Assert are pleased to announce that they have been successful in gaining funding from Reaching Communities, which is part of the Big Lottery Awards. This funding will allow us to continue to run our Benefits Advice and Support Service. We will also be able to extend the provision that we can provide to people, including providing evening appointments for those seeking help with accessing and maintaining their benefits. A list of dates will be published by the end of March. This is fantastic news and will ensure that Assert can continue to offer this service until at least 2018. The extended provision will begin on 1st May 2015.

By Sarah Bourne



Where do hamsters come from? Hamsterdam!
Did you hear about the Greek who couldn't make houmous and taramasalata? There was a double dip recession!
Why don't lobsters give money to charity? Because they are shellfish!
My clock only has an hour hand and a minute hand. I'm thinking of going to the second hand shop!

PEER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Following overwhelming enthusiasm at our AGM, the first peer support group meeting has been organised. This is taking place on Friday 20th March and will run from 6.15 until 7.45.

If you would like to attend please RSVP to Debbie Taylor on the following email address:

Debstar0205@yahoo.com

This will be taking place in the conference room at Community Base. Please come to the south wing entrance, turn on the intercom and dial 1555 to gain access. The conference room is on the 5th floor. This group is being facilitated by two Assert trustees, Emily Fell and Debbie Taylor. There will be no Assert staff facilitating this group. Hot drinks and squash will be provided. The topic for the first meeting will be

Is it better to be diagnosed younger or when you are older?

Has diagnosis made a difference? What are the differences? What have you learnt about yourself & others?

At this first meeting there will be the opportunity to give feedback about regularity and timings of meetings. There will also be a discussion about future topics to be discussed. The group will also establish ground rules for the group at this first session.

ASSERT activities update

We have had a great start to the year with activities.



In January we ran a cookery class, there was some brilliant food produced and everyone enjoyed eating the food they made together after as a group. We are hoping to run more cookery classes in the future as this one proved so successful.

In February we had a film and popcorn evening with the chosen movie being 'Snow Cake' - We will review this film in the next newsletter. Upcoming activities include Laser Quest, Pottery painting and more crafty fun!

If you have any ideas for activities please email Kat at

activities@assertbh.org.uk



Have you borrowed a DVD or book from the Assert library? If yes please can you return it (once you have finished with it!) so that other members can borrow them. Many thanks!

At the ASSERT AGM, we were asked if it would be possible for ASSERT members to receive copies of the minutes of the Autism Stakeholder meetings, held at the council. If you would like a copy of these, please email laura@assertbh.org.uk and she will send a copy over for you.

Benefits Update

By Laura Priestnall, Benefit Liaison

Like everyone else in the country, here at ASSERT we have been giving lots of thought to the upcoming election, and what it might mean to those in receipt of welfare benefits. It's a very uncertain and worrying time, but the team here will keep our knowledge as up to date as possible, and will report on any implications after the election has finished. If you're not sure who to vote for, or what party policies you agree with, this online quiz might help:

<https://voteforpolitics.org.uk>

I have continued to support ASSERT members with PIP and ESA applications. If you want to apply or have a query about these benefits, please email me at laura@assertbh.org.uk



As you will have already seen, the Benefits Service has received funding for another 3 years, taking it up until 2018. As part of this I am now working an additional day a week, so every day apart from Wednesday. I would like to say a massive thank you to Sarah B for all her hard work on the funding bid (many many bags of crisps were consumed, and there may have been a few swear words while she completed the form). I am thrilled that I will be in place to support more ASSERT members over the next few years as part of an extended service.

ASSERT AGM

The Assert AGM took place on Friday 20th February. This was well attended with 36 people present. The official business was followed by a buffet and refreshment break. Debbie Caulfield then gave a talk on her experiences of being autistic. This was really insightful, thank you Debbie for giving such a wonderful talk. There was then an open discussion where members had the opportunity to discuss various topics with the group. This discussion led to an overwhelming enthusiasm for a peer support group to take place on a regular basis to allow members the opportunity to discuss various issues that are important to them. Thanks to everyone for attending.

By Sarah Bourne



Would you like to help raise extra money for ASSERT, just by shopping online? If you install a toolbar from a company called Give as you Live, every time you make a purchase online a percentage of what you spend could get donated to ASSERT. If you go to the following website:

<http://www.everyclick.com/assertbh/1099257/0>

And click 'ways to donate' you will see an option to install a Give as you Live toolbar. Then ASSERT can start receiving more funds via this. If you have any questions please give the office a call and we can talk you through how to do it. Thank you!

Can you make sure that you add the ASSERT email addresses to your 'safe senders' email list? We have had quite a few members report that emails from ASSERT have been going into spam folders, meaning people are missing out on updates about activities or other information. Thank you!

