

It doesn't have to be like this:  
How an understanding of autism by the  
police officer can reduce the need of  
arrest.

AT-Autism Rough Justice Conference  
13/12/18

Kleio Cossburn

# About Me

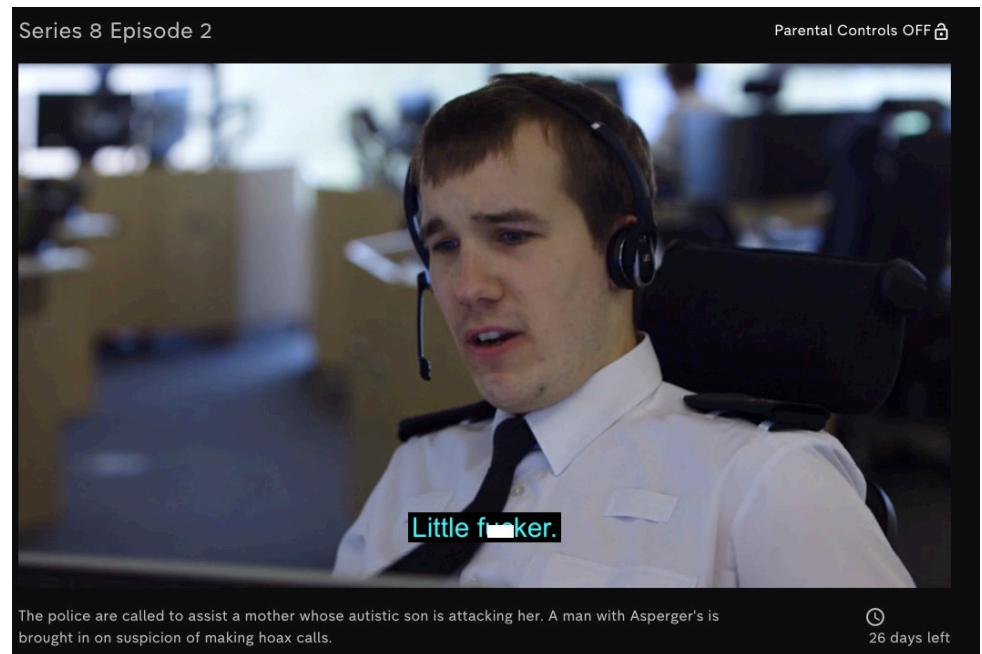
- \* Former Police Officer
- \* Bachelor of Science
- \* Postgraduate Certificate in Autism
- \* Master of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- \* Research Interests: autistic individuals caught up in the Criminal Justice System; autistic user involvement in autism training for criminal justice professionals.

# Implicit Bias, Explicit Bias & Police Decision Making

# 999 What's your emergency ?

Series 8 episode 2

- \* The police may be the first & only point of contact for a family.
- \* Biases influence behaviour, judgment & decision making.

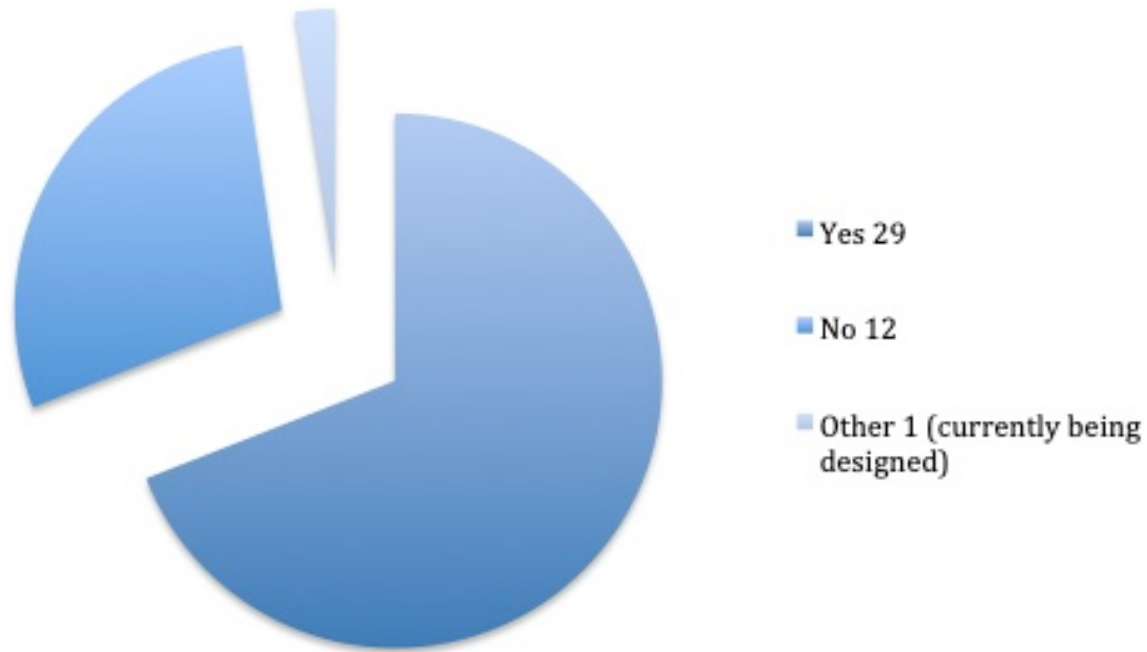


# Freedom of Information Requests

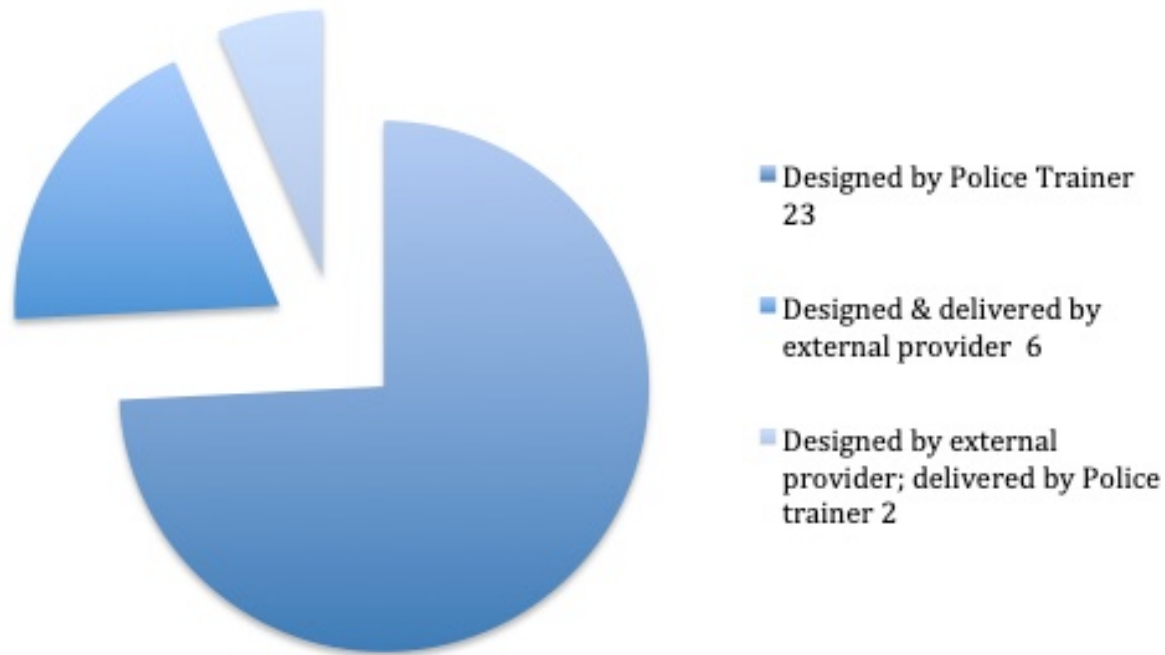
## June, 2018.

# Police Training in Autism

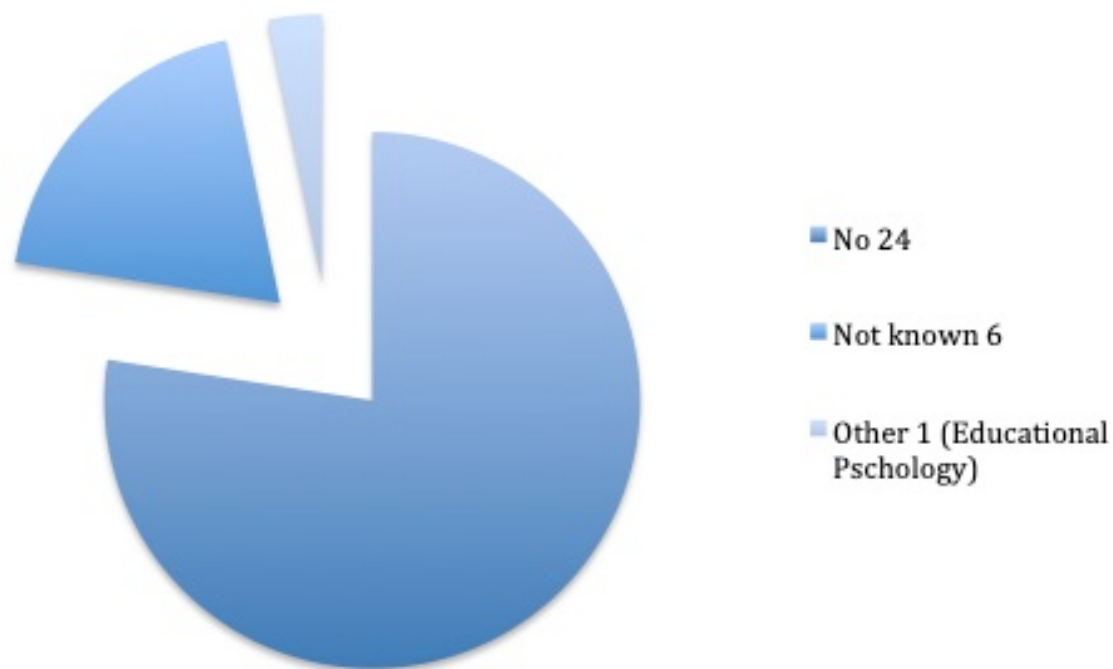
FOI Request June 2018



# Who Designs the Autism Training?



# Does the Trainer Hold an Autism Qualification?

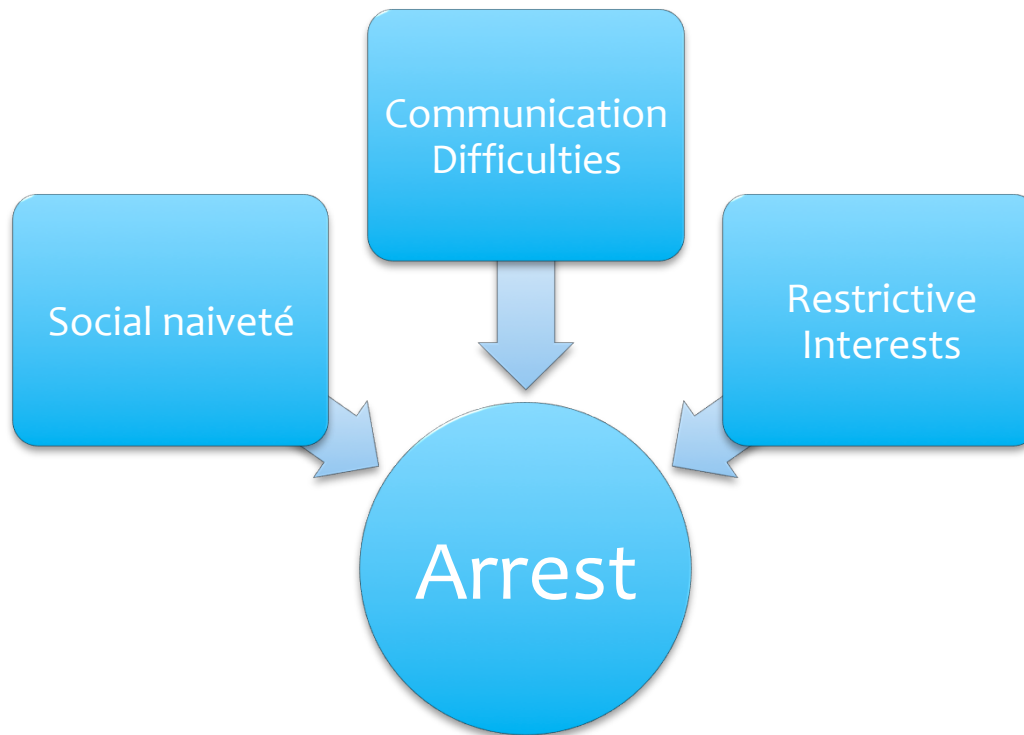




# Personal Experience

The image features a solid blue background. At the bottom, there is a white wavy line that creates a sense of depth, with several overlapping, semi-transparent blue layers beneath it, suggesting a horizon or a stylized landscape.

# Prisoner Reception Interview Team



# How my Perspective Changed

Immediately  
Prior to the Incident

One

Immediately After  
the Incident

Two

During Police  
Procedure

Three



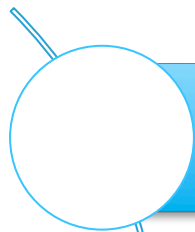
Your experience of the CJS is different depending upon which side of the desk you're sitting.

# Rural Beat Officer

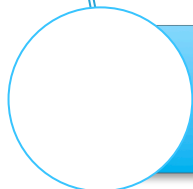
# Do I know or suspect this individual is autistic ?



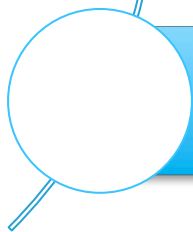
Some Police Forces have adopted an Autism alert/awareness card



Do I need to apply handcuffs ?



Has the individual been sprayed with PAVA ?



Is a Spit-guard going to be used ?



If yes, explain what is happening and why.

## Incident One

Aaron (not his real name) arranged to meet a friend outside a sporting venue. The police approached him and after a short conversation searched his bag using section 47 A (3) of the Terrorist Act.

# Suspicious behaviour?

Wearing a high visibility Jacket



Wearing a rucksack on your front



An autistic individual may have a perfectly logical explanation as to why they are doing something in a certain way.



## Incident Two

Tom (not his real name) had a learning disability and a diagnosis of autism.

He was reported to the police, by a family member, for being in possession of a Knife.

## Incident Three

Jo (not his real name) was a looked after child. He was reported to the police by staff members on multiple occasions for 'smashing' up his room.

Jo was unable to negotiate with the other children and quite often became frustrated.

# Future Research

**What do autistic people who have come into contact with the Criminal Justice System say about these interactions?**

- How might these interaction have been ‘improved’
- How can officers be trained to deal sensitively with autistic people

# Contact Details:



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