



Partnership for
Effective Programs
for Students with
Autism



Center for Autism
and Related Disabilities

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Autism and the Predictive Mind

Presented by: Peter Vermeulen, Ph.D.

Hosted by: UCF CARD

About the Presenter

Dr. Peter Vermeulen is the founder of Autism in Context based in Belgium. He is an international consultant and author of more than 15 books on autism. He has presented at conferences throughout Europe, Canada, and the USA including the 2019 CARD Statewide Conference. Dr. Vermeulen received his Bachelor's in Family Sciences 1985 and earned his Master's in Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences from the University of Leuven in 1985. In 2002, Peter earned his PhD in Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences from Leiden University. Currently, Dr. Vermeulen is the CEO of Autism in Context in Brussels, Belgium. Peter has presented internationally for years and directed numerous organizations.

Training Description

Target Audience: (Parents, teachers, and care providers of individuals with autism spectrum disorders)

Many ideas about the autistic brain are based on conceptions about the human brain that are outdated. The computer, as a metaphor for the brain, with its input, processing and output, has been very useful in the past, but seems to be incorrect in the light of recent discoveries in brain science. The brain is not a computer: the brain is guessing more than it is computing. The brain does not just receive information from the senses, it is actually using the senses to check its own guesses. Recent discoveries about the brain have led to a Copernican revolution, replacing the old idea of a receptive mind with the new idea of a predictive mind. That new idea invites us to take a different look at the autistic brain, but – more importantly – also to rethink some of the strategies we have been using in autism for decades. We will illustrate this in the areas of sensory issues, communication and emotion recognition, three areas known to be difficult for people with ASD.

Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify the shortcomings of the default idea about the human brain and how it processes information.
- Identify and describe how a predictive mind works.
- Identify the difficulties in prediction and coping with prediction errors for the autistic brain.

Autism and Happiness: Mission (Im)possible

Training Description

Target Audience: (Parents, teachers, and care providers of individuals with autism spectrum disorders)

Happiness has received little attention in the field of autism spectrum disorders. Outcome and effect studies, for instance, rarely take emotional well-being as a desired outcome. And when the focus is on well-being, it is often from a negative perspective, namely the lack of well-being and quality of life in autism. It is time to take a U-turn in our approach and change from an exclusive focus on what makes autism so different and from a negative, clinical and medical approach of happiness in people with autism (lack of distress) towards a shared and positive focus (we all want to be happy). In other words, let's move from neurodiversity to neuroharmony.

Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Explain that the outcome in autism spectrum disorders is not solely based on objective criteria for independent functioning but also on subjective quality of life criteria.
- Knowing the two aspects of happiness (hedonic and eudaimonic) and identifying the different key elements in these two aspects.
- Describe the two aspects of happiness (hedonic and eudaimonic) and identify the different key elements in these two aspects.
- Identify different strategies to enhance the emotional well-being and the life satisfaction of people with autism spectrum disorder.
- Describe the concepts of neurodiversity and neuroharmony in relationship to happiness.

Date:

April 20, 2020

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location:

Location TBD

Orlando, FL

Registration Deadline:

April 20, 2020

Register Online:

<https://pepsavermeulen20.eventbrite.com>

Registration is mandatory.

For more information contact:

ucfcard@ucf.edu or (407) 823-6011

Be sure to contact your ESE District Staff or Staff Development Contact to determine the process for receiving in-service.



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