



SPIKY PROFILES AND SACRED CALLINGS

Dr Sophie Landa
Clinical Psychologist
The Integrated Psychology Clinic

1



SESSION PLAN

Why think about profiles?
Some examples from the Torah
How can this approach help?

2

SOME KEY TERMS

Neurodiversity: the idea that not all brains work (or should work) exactly the same way

Neurodivergence: when someone functions differently to most other people across some domains

Neurodevelopmental diagnosis (e.g. autism, ADHD): a diagnostic label applied when a person has a collection of traits or behaviours that suggests they are neurodivergent across several domains, in ways that are considered stable, and that cannot be explained by other factors



3

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT

There has been a huge increase in diagnosis of neurodevelopmental and mental health conditions – and there are still very long waiting lists

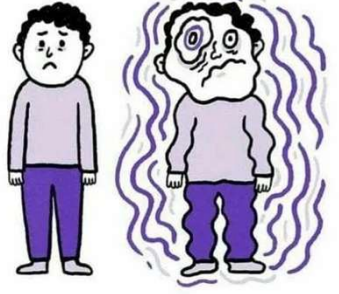
There has been an overall increase in persistent school absence since the pandemic (17.6% in 2025), particularly in young people with additional needs

There is ongoing and heated debate about the increase in diagnosis, and Wes Streeting has ordered a review

Image from the "Not Fine In School" blog

"BUT YOU LOOK FINE"

HOW I LOOK HOW I FEEL



4

MIND THE GAP

Many schools and workplaces still struggle to meet the needs of neurodivergent people, even when they have received a diagnosis

Young people who mask well can easily slip through the cracks

Things can sometimes get even more confusing when someone has received multiple diagnoses!



5

WHAT'S THE POINT OF A PROFILE?

Allows us to return to the core idea of neurodiversity and look at the whole person

A less pathologizing approach than the idea of a spectrum from "mild" to "severe"

A snapshot in time – it's not fixed!

Autism Spectrum

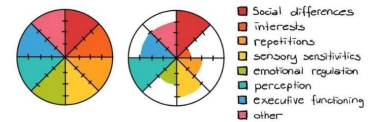
The Autism Spectrum is NOT linear



less autistic

very autistic

The Autism Spectrum looks more like:



Terms like "high functioning", "low functioning" are harmful and outdated.

Autism_sketches

6

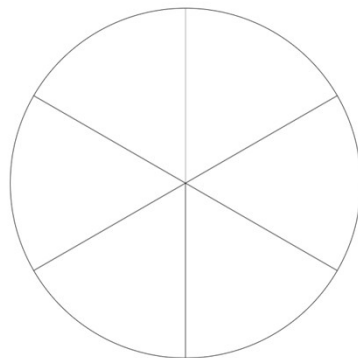
HOW TO DEVELOP A PROFILE

No fixed rules!

What question/s are we trying to answer?

What domains are relevant to help us understand this person's strengths, difficulties and needs?

Zoom out: does this profile look relatively round, is it on or off centre, and does it have "spikes" in or out?



7

ABRAHAM, SAUL AND MOSES

How do their profiles help us understand their biggest successes and failures?

Did their profiles change across their lifetimes?

How did their environments interact with their relative areas of strength and weakness?

What might have gone differently?

8

HOW CAN WE USE THIS APPROACH?

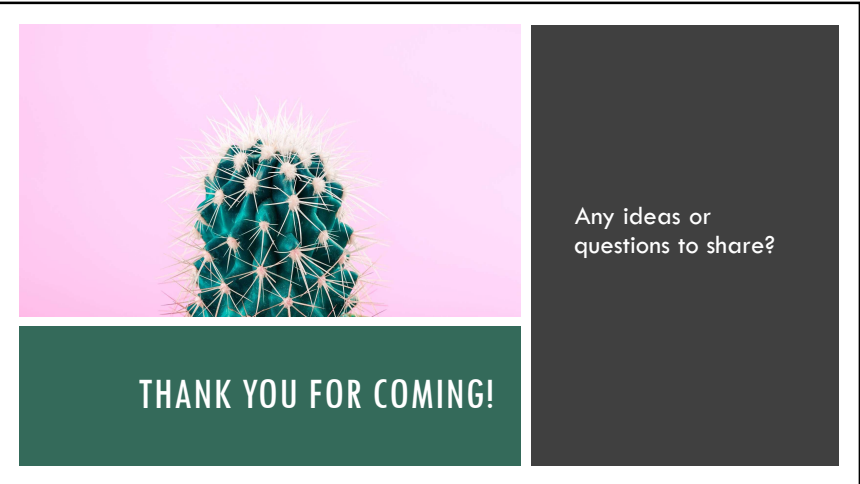
Empathy: just because a person can do x doesn't mean they can do y

Growth and development is always possible

Useful questions:

- What areas can/should we work on?
- How can we amplify strengths?
- What should we prioritise, and what can we let go (at least for now)?
- How can we get creative in overcoming challenges?

9



10