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Title: Week 1: Wrap up (Autism MOOC)
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Mick Grimley
Hello everyone. Welcome again to the Autism MOOC. This week we’re going to be giving a bit of a wrap up about week 1. So what did you think about week 1 Emma?

Emma L. Donaldson
I think it was really exciting. What a wonderful response. The positivity from our participants has just been amazing.

Mick Grimley
Yeah, it’s been absolutely fantastic. So, what about week 1? What’s been happening in week 1 Emma?

Emma L. Donaldson
Firstly, what an overwhelming and truly exciting response we have had to the Autism MOOC! Both Mick and myself have been amazed by the diversity of participants from around the world, from parents and carers to educators, allied health professionals, grandparents, interested community members and many others, not forgetting many individuals on the spectrum. Our MOOC community certainly make up an eclectic mix of individuals with a wealth of experiences and approaches. It is this mix of individualism that is going to make this MOOC a rewarding and valuable experience for all involved. We really encourage you to take the chance to talk to others in the MOOC, learn from their experiences, support each other and make some lifelong connections for the future.
Mick Grimley

This week we focussed on an introduction to autism using the person first approach. We had videos by Donna Williams and Jeanette Purkis that gave us an insight into the lived experiences of individuals with Autism. Many of you said how much you enjoyed the videos. Take some time to reflect on the videos and how they are relevant for your own lives and others in your care.

Emma L. Donaldson

The thinking skill that we practised this week was person first. We provided you with two scenarios and asked you to put yourself in the shoes of either John or Jaya. Many of you approached the scenarios thinking of all the possibilities that led to the behaviours, some even commented in the voice of John and Jaya which was fascinating to read.

Mick Grimley

We also had commentary from individuals with autism who were able to give their perspective on the scenarios. All of the contributions were valuable and demonstrated the many person first possibilities.

Emma L. Donaldson

This week it was important to stay in possibility mode by thinking from the perspective of the person with autism. Some went straight into solution mode, which is not the skill we are practising yet, but quite understandable. It is human nature to try to solve the issue from your own perspective. Remember when you are using the person first approach you must look at all the possibilities before trying to solve the challenge. This is not an easy skill to grasp, so we will be practising and building on this vital thinking skill throughout the MOOC.

Mick Grimley

In your discussions this week a couple of important points came through.

Firstly, communication with all parties involved in any situation is vital. For example if something arises at school, then we need to ensure clear and open communication with all parties involved.

Secondly, it was emphasized that often in these situations there are clear teachable moments. However, it is important to try to widen them out if possible and maybe consider involving others such as teachers, support workers or siblings even. And of course try to keep thinking in person first mode.

Emma L. Donaldson

For those wanting to extend their learning, we have additional videos and resources each week. This week, Dr Karen Guldberg explores evidence based practice and the importance of listening to the lived experience. Karen’s video is in the Additional Resources folder.
Mick Grimley

This has been an amazing start to week 1, an introduction to autism. Stay positive, keep supporting each other – see you next week.

Emma L. Donaldson

That's all for this week's wrap up. As you go about your day to day this week, think about how you are putting the person with autism first and put yourself in their shoes.

Congratulations again on all of your hard work and what you have achieved by participating in week one. We look forward to seeing you in week 2!