



ABA Therapy Harms Autistic Children

Autism is a genetic neurophysiological difference in how the brain processes information. Autistic children live in a specialized inner space that is entirely intellectual, free from emotional and social distractions. They observe the world in detail without any emotional attachment to what they see.¹

Autistic children learn more from computers and television than they can from human interaction. The autistic brain cannot be socialized.

Autism is not a disability. It is a different kind of ability. You cannot fix that which is not broken. Instead, you try to understand it to the best of your ability and accept it.

Therapies for autism are aimed at socializing the child. It cannot be done. The autistic brain works in a precise way that cannot be changed.

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the most common therapy that is forced upon autistic children. It is an intensive one-on-one program that aims to improve social skills by increasing desirable behaviors and decreasing problem behaviors. There is a vocal community of adults with autism (many of whom had ABA as children) who say that ABA damages mental health and treats them as though they are a problem to be fixed.² There is also a higher incidence of PTSD in autistic children who are exposed to ABA.³

ABA is based on the cruel premise of trying to make autistic people “normal”. Its message is that autistic ways of doing things are wrong and need to be corrected, and that the autistic child is broken and must be molded to be more palatable to non-autistic people. This mistaken belief is destructive of the child’s identity and self-worth.

ABA teaches autistic people that their needs are less important than pleasing other people. This makes autistic children overly compliant, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation and abuse. These children need to be taught how to express and get their needs met, not to be taught that their needs are less valid than the needs of people around them.

References

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3. Kupferstein H. Evidence of increased PTSD symptoms in autists exposed to applied behavior analysis. *Advances in Autism*, 02 January 2018.