

Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Neurodiversity & Mental Health:
Rethinking Support Across the Lifespan

Friday 19 September 2025
Saturday 20 September 2025

Conference programme

Bringing together researchers, clinicians, local organisations, and the neurodivergent community to advance mental health research across the lifespan

In collaboration with



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



Autism
CHAMPIONS CIC

Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Friday 19 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Saturday 20 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Welcome!

Welcome to the first Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre (OH BRC) Neurodiversity Conference.

This inaugural OH BRC Neurodiversity Conference was initiated by Andreia Costa, Project Manager - Training & Academic Career Development, in late 2024, inspired by her own lived experience and a vision for more inclusive research and support.

With the encouragement of several OH BRC Theme Leads, the idea evolved into a two-day event designed to spark meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

Conference Theme:

Neurodiversity & Mental Health: Rethinking Support Across the Lifespan

This conference brings together researchers, practitioners, community organisations and neurodivergent individuals to explore how we can better understand and support neurodivergent people across all stages of life. It aligns with OH BRC's strategic priorities in training, Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPIEP), and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and addresses a recognised gap in neurodiversity across the lifespan.

By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and amplifying lived experience, this event aims to:

- Strengthen partnerships between academia and the community.
- Inspire new research directions and potential future funding.
- Position Oxford as a leader in inclusive, impactful mental health research.

Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Friday 19 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Saturday 20 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

What to expect:

A supportive environment

To ensure a **welcoming and supportive environment** for all attendees, we are committed to creating a **neuro-affirmative space** that respects diverse needs, preferences, and communication styles. Below are some of the **measures** we've put in place across both days of the conference:

- Inclusive, neuro-affirmative language used throughout.
- Attendees are welcome to move freely, stim, and take regular breaks.
- Quiet room available all day with beanbags and gym balls.
- Outdoor space accessible for calm or fresh air.
- Sensory bags (earplugs, fidgets, sunglasses) available at registration.
- Red/green bracelets to indicate if you're open to conversation—changeable anytime.
- Red lanyards for those who prefer not to be photographed.
- Presenters will mark slides with ✓ or ✗ to show if photos can be taken/shared.
- Deaf claps used instead of applause; sound levels kept comfortable.
- Programme accessible via QR code on name tags; printed copies also available.
- Demystifying the Research Process workshop uses Mentimeter; post-its and pens provided for accessibility.

The organising team is available for support—look for **yellow** lanyards.

Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Friday 19 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Saturday 20 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

What to expect: Venues

Saïd Business School, Park End St, Oxford OX1 1HP



[Click for Access Guide](#)

Department of Psychiatry, Warneford Hospital, Headington, Oxford OX3 7JX



[Click for Access Guide](#)

Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Friday 19 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

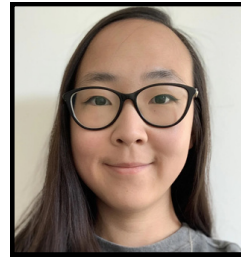
Saturday 20 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Meet the Organisation Committee



Andreia Costa

Project Manager - Training &
ACD Oxford Health OH BRC
Founder & Host
Neurodiverse Voices Project
& Podcast



Jiedi Lei

Paul Foundation Clinical
Research Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Clare Mackay

Professor of
Neuroscience
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Cathy Creswell

Professor of
Developmental
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Dee Nic Sitric

CEO Autism Champions



Angharad de Cates

EDI Academic Lead,
OH BRC
NIHR Clinical Lecturer,
University of Birmingham



Jonathan Totman

Clinical Psychologist
University of Oxford,
Student Counselling
Services



Emily Tammam

PPIEP Administrator
OH BRC

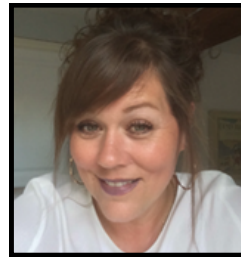
Neurodiversity Conference 2025

Friday 19 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm
Saturday 20 September | 9.30 am - 4.30pm

Colleagues who contributed to the conference organisation



Geri Campbell
Reception Manager
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Sarah Marr
Communications Manager
OH BRC



Sophie Ray
Senior Communications &
Engagement Officer
OH BRC



Lizzie Carline
EDI Project Manager
OH BRC



Holly Haines
Research Assistant
OH BRC
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Esther Teo
Research Assistant
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Eva Periche Tomas
Postdoctoral Researcher
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Lena Beckers
Visiting MRES Student
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Diana Verley
PA & Research
Administrator
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Jasmine Blaine
DPhil Student
Oxford Centre for Human
Brain Activity (OHBA)
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

Schedule

Friday 19 September | 9.30am - 4.30pm

9.30am - 10am	Welcome and Registrations
10am - 10.10am	Welcome Keynote with Andreia Costa
10.10am - 10.30am	Opening Address with Prof. Rachel Upthegrove
10.30am - 11.30am	OH BRC Research Showcase Flashtalks: Adapting Mental Health Interventions to Support Neurodivergent Individuals Chaired by: Jonathan Totman
11.30am - 11.45am	BREAK: COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
11.45am - 12.45pm	Panel Discussion: Lived Experience in Action: Neurodiversity and Research Chaired by: Prof. Catherine Harmer
12.45pm - 1.45pm	LUNCH BREAK & NETWORKING
1.45pm - 2.40pm	Flashtalks: Accessing Mental Health Support Pathways & Understanding Co-occurring Conditions Chaired by: Holly Haines
2.40pm - 2.55pm	BREAK: COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
2.55pm - 3.30pm	OH BRC Research Neurodiversity Showcase Flashtalks: Exploring Mental Health and Neurodiversity: A Mechanistic Approach Chaired by: Esther Teo
3.30pm - 4.30pm	Closing Discussion: Working Together: Researchers, Neurodivergent People, and Families in Mental Health Research Chaired by: Prof. Cathy Creswell

Schedule

Saturday 20 September | 9.30am - 4.30pm

9.30am - 10am	Welcome and Registrations
10am - 10.10am	Welcome Keynote with Andreia Costa
10.10am - 10.30am	Inspirational Keynote: The Role of Advocacy and Community Support in Mental Health for Neurodivergent Individuals with Leandra Hamblin
10.30am - 11.15am	Panel Discussion: Day One Debrief: Key Insights Chaired by: Kerri Dempster
11.15am - 11.30am	BREAK: COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
11.30am - 12.30pm	Flashtalks: Neurodivergent Voices Shaping Mental Health Research Chaired by: Prof. Gaia Scerif
12.30pm - 2.00pm	LUNCH BREAK & GUIDED WALK Led by: Ian Straughair
2.00pm - 3.30pm	Workshop: Demystifying the Research Process Chaired by: Diana Verley, Jasmine Blaine, Holly Haines, Lena Beckers
3.30pm - 3.45pm	BREAK: COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
3.45pm - 4.30pm	Closing Discussion: Lived Experience in Research: Reflections, Impact, and Inspiration Chaired by: Prof. Cathy Creswell

Programme

Speakers Friday 19 September

Welcome (10am - 10.10am)



Andreia Costa

Project Manager - Training
& ACD OH BRC
Founder & Host
Neurodiverse Voices
Project & Podcast

Opening Address (10.10am - 10.30am)



Rachel Upthegrove

OH BRC Director
Professor of Psychiatry
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

OH BRC Research Showcase Flashtalks: Adapting Mental Health Interventions to Support Neurodivergent Individuals (10.30am - 11.30am)

Chaired by



Jonathan Totman

Clinical Psychologist
University of Oxford,
Student Counselling
Services

Presenters



Jiedi Lei

Paul Foundation Clinical
Research Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



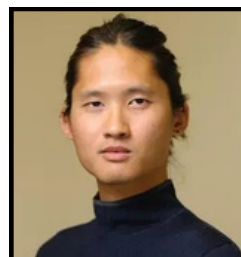
Polly Waite

Associate Professor of
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Lucas Shelemy

Research Clinical
Psychologist
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Alex Lau-Zhu

MRC Clinician Scientist
Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Eloise Stark

Clinical Research Fellow
Clinical Psychologist
University of Oxford, Centre for
Eudaimonia and Human
Flourishing, Oxford Health
Foundation Trust



Cathy Creswell

Professor of
Developmental
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology

Programme

Speakers Friday 19 September

Panel discussion:

Lived Experience in Action: Neurodiversity and Research (11.45am - 12.45pm)

Chaired by



Catherine Harmer

Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience
Associate Head of Department
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

Panellists



Alex Richardson

Ambassador of the
National Autistic Society



Dee Nic Sitric

CEO Autism Champions



Kerri Dempster

Research Participation
and Inclusion Facilitator,
NIHR South Central
RRDN



Kimberley Ashwin

CEO Autism Oxford UK



Richard Liverman

Leading advocate for
inclusive practice in
education and the
workplace, with a focus
on neurodiversity



Kay Louise Aldred

Development Lead
Neurodiverse Connection

Programme

Speakers Friday 19 September

Flashtalks: Accessing Mental Health Support Pathways and Understanding Co-Occurring Conditions (1.45pm - 2.40pm)

Chaired by



Holly Haines

Research Assistant
OH BRC
University of Oxford,
Department of
Psychiatry

Presenters



Polly Waite

Associate Professor of
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Simona Skripkauskaitė

SRC/ADR Research Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Cathy Manning

Associate Professor of
Psychology
University of Birmingham



Rebecca Murphy

Clinical Research Director,
The Centre for Research
on Eating Disorders at
Oxford (CREDO)
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Clare Mackay

Professor of
Neuroscience
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

Programme

Speakers Friday 19 September

OH BRC Research Showcase Flashtalks:

Exploring Mental Health and Neurodiversity: A Mechanistic Approach (2.55pm - 3.30pm)

Chaired by



Esther Teo

Research Assistant
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

Presenters



Alexandra Hendry

Associate Professor
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Edoardo G. Ostinelli

Consultant Psychiatrist
Senior Researcher
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Ben Seymour

Professor of Clinical
Neuroscience
Nuffield Department of
Clinical Neurosciences



Eri Ichijo

Stipendiary Lecturer in
Psychology & Assistant
Dean
University of Oxford, St
Hugh's College

Programme

Speakers Friday 19 September

Closing Discussion:

Working Together: Researchers, Neurodivergent People, and Families in Mental Health Research (3.30pm - 4.30pm)

Chaired by



Cathy Creswell

Professor of Developmental
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp. Psychology

Panellists



Kimberley Ashwin

CEO Autism Oxford UK



Angharad de Cates

EDI Academic Lead, OH
BRC
NIHR Clinical Lecturer,
University of Birmingham



James Stacey

Clinical Psychologist
Oxfordshire
Neurodevelopmental
Conditions Pathway
Oxford Health Foundation
Trust



Richard Liverman

Leading advocate for
inclusive practice in
education and the
workplace, with a focus
on neurodiversity



Kay Louise Aldred

Development Lead
Neurodiverse Connection

Programme



Speakers Saturday 20 September

Welcome (10am - 10.10am)



Andreia Costa

Project Manager - Training
& ACD OH BRC
Founder & Host
Neurodiverse Voices
Project & Podcast

Inspirational Keynote (10.10am - 10.30am)



Leandra Hamblin

Neurodiversity Advocate
Founder of SENTipede

Panel Discussion:

Day one debrief: Key insights (10.30am - 11.15am)

Chaired by



Kerri Dempster

Research Participation
and Inclusion Facilitator,
NIHR South Central
RRDN

Panellists



Jiedi Lei

Paul Foundation Clinical
Research Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Clare Mackay

Professor of Neuroscience
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Cathy Creswell

Professor of Developmental
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Jonathan Totman

Clinical Psychologist
University of Oxford,
Student Counselling
Services

Programme

Speakers Saturday 20 September

Flashtalks:

Neurodivergent Voices Shaping Mental Health Research (11.30am - 12.30pm)

Chaired by



Gaia Scerif

Professor of Developmental
Cognitive Neuroscience
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp. Psychology

Presenters



Jamie Douglas

Associate Director of
Children, Young People
and Families Response



Susan Liverman

Founder of The Kindful
CIC



Dionysios Kyropoulos

ADHD Coach & Trainer
Specialist Study Skills and
Strategy Tutor at Oxford's
Disability Advisory
Service



Dee Nic Sitric

CEO Autism Champions



Andreia Costa

Project Manager -
Training & ACD OH BRC
Founder & Host
Neurodiverse Voices
Project & Podcast

Programme

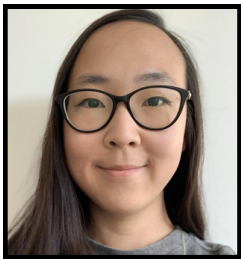
Speakers Saturday 20 September

Workshop:

Demystifying the Research Process (2pm - 3.30pm)

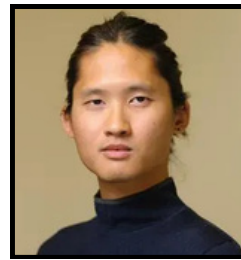
An interactive workshop designed to break down barriers around academic research and make it more accessible and inclusive. The session will explore why people get involved in research, what skills and adaptations can support them, and how opportunities for engagement can be widened. Through interactive tools like Mentimeter, participants reflect on their perceptions of research, learn about inclusive and innovative methods, and discover ways communities can co-produce research.

Presented by



Jiedi Lei

Paul Foundation Clinical
Research Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Alex Lau-Zhu

MRC Clinician Scientist
Fellow
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp.
Psychology



Kerri Dempster

Research Participation and
Inclusion Facilitator, NIHR
South Central RRDN

Chaired by



Diana Verley

PA & Research
Administrator
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Holly Haines

Research Assistant
OH BRC
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Jasmine Blaine

DPhil Student
Oxford Centre for Human
Brain Activity (OHBA)
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Lena Beckers

Visiting MRES Student
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry

Programme

Speakers Saturday 20 September

Closing Discussion:

Lived Experience in Research: Reflections, Impact, and Inspiration (3.45pm - 4.30pm)

Chaired by



Cathy Creswell

Professor of Developmental
Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford,
Department of Exp. Psychology

Panellists



Clare Mackay

Professor of Neuroscience
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Holly Haines

Research Assistant
OH BRC
University of Oxford,
Department of Psychiatry



Eloise Stark

Clinical Research Fellow
Clinical Psychologist
University of Oxford,
Centre for Eudaimonia and
Human Flourishing
Oxford Health Foundation
Trust



Andreia Costa

Project Manager - Training
& ACD Oxford Health BRC
Founder & Host
Neurodiverse Voices
Project & Podcast



Susan Liverman

Founder of The Kindful
CIC



Kerri Dempster

Research Participation
and Inclusion Facilitator
at NIHR South Central
RRDN

Participate and Get Involved

Ways to get in touch

The Oxford Centre for Emerging Minds Research:
Achieving better outcomes for children, young people, and families

Our Mission:
To conduct world class research that contributes to a world where differences between people are understood and accepted, strengths are capitalised on, and mental health difficulties are prevented or addressed early.

 **Emerging Minds**

With thanks to the generosity of The Paul Foundation

mhdevelopment@psych.ox.ac.uk



andyresearch@psy.ox.ac.uk



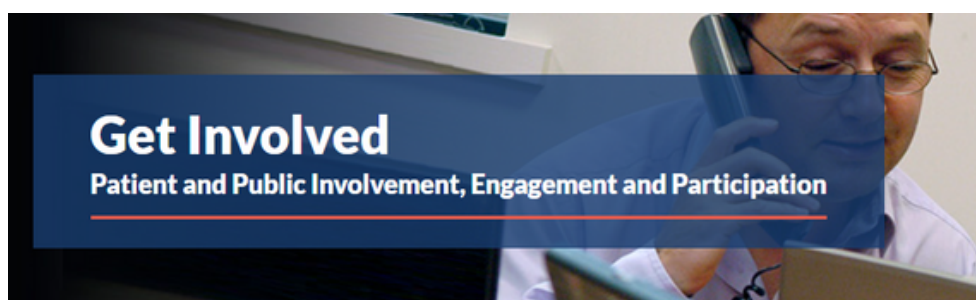
wisdom.network@psy.ox.ac.uk



parentcarerresearchnetwork@psych.ox.ac.uk



bepartofresearch@nihr.ac.uk



PPI.OHBRC@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Thank you for attending the Neurodiversity Conference 2025



Any questions? Please contact us via
neurodiversityconference@psych.ox.ac.uk

