

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **A SELF-DETERMINED FUTURE WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME. SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACHES**

E. Veronica Bliss and Genevieve Edmonds  
London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
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This short, easily read book presents an overview of solution focused therapy and its application for people with Asperger Syndrome (AS). The book benefits from being co-written by someone with a diagnosis of AS and a psychologist. Their combined experiences and expertise have allowed them to write a very insightful account of how people with AS manage in their day-to-day life in a "neurotypical" (as those without AS are referred to in the book) world. The authors highlight that many of the problems or challenges faced by those with AS are due to the fact that the "neurotypical" world can be rigid and fail to realise that if small changes were made people with AS could make a valuable contribution to society more easily. Through a humorous and sensitive approach and the use of anecdotes the book clearly illustrates these difficulties and also how solution focused therapies can provide alternatives.

The book highlights reasons that people with AS and "neurotypicals" can find it difficult to understand each other and why offence can be caused without either understanding why. It highlights

the importance, especially from the point of view of service provision, of checking exactly what a certain behaviour means to the individual with AS, not simply describing the behaviour and then blaming it on the AS. An interesting comparison is made between the way in which professionals understand AS (triad of "difficulty in making and maintaining social relationships, difficulty in communication and an impairment of imagination") and the way people with AS may understand AS ("a triad of information processing problems, cognitive differences and sensory/perceptual differences"), essentially an emphasis on the outward observable symptoms of AS versus an emphasis on neurological and biological differences.

The book uses anecdotes to illustrate the principles and practice of solution focused therapy and its potential in aiding people with AS effect changes in their lives. The final chapter provides resource sheets and scoring sheets to aid solution focused therapy.

This book is not a detailed manual of solution focused therapy or AS nor is it meant to be. However the style in which the book is written makes it accessible to professionals and lay people alike. It should provide an interesting read for all those who have contact with people with AS whether in a personal or professional capacity and give excellent insight into the world as viewed by those with AS.

*Linda Findlay*