



## RDI - Relationship Development Intervention® in the UK

### Why settle for less?

Remediation is really about going to the centre of the issue and dealing with it so that it is no longer a problem. We talk about remedies for various things; colds, anxiety, and psychological disorders, yet when it comes to Autism some people are settling for less. This may be because many are not aware that autism can be remedied. Well, I'm writing this article to share this awareness with you all, so that you can begin to understand that you no longer need to settle for less; there is a way to deal with the autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) central issues rather than compensating around them.

In Relationship Development Intervention (RDI®) that is exactly what we are doing; we are providing a remedy for the main difficulties presented in ASD. We have discovered the CORE deficits in all individuals with ASD, therefore we are able to concentrate on strengthening these deficits so that they no longer impair the individuals quality of life. You are probably wondering how this is done? Well, through lots of research and hard work the RDI® community and Dr Gutstein have created a systematic objectives curriculum that follows the development of neuro-typical infants through childhood, each of these objectives can be related to making progress in one of the core deficit areas. With the support of a consultant breaking these objectives

down even further, into achievable bite size chunks, parents can begin to work on these with their child (no matter how old their child is).

### What are the 'core deficits' areas?

- The inability to share experiences and emotions with others.
- The inability to learn from mistakes and prior episodic memories.
- The inability to be aware of ones self.
- The inability to be creative and flexible in everyday life.
- The inability to problem solve in everyday dynamic situations.

To some extent, all individuals on the spectrum will have difficulties with most of these areas. A gradual process is needed to help change the neurology in individuals on the spectrum so that they too can use dynamic intelligence in everyday life situations.

**Elisa Al Malah**

RDI® Programme Certified Consultant

### **Alysia's Story – Our Journey** pt 1

Before learning about RDI® we had tried various treatments and approaches i.e. ABA, Neurofeedback, Fast ForWord, Auditory Integration Treatment and bio-med all of which helped with some areas of Alysia's autism but didn't reach the core issues....

Jumping ahead Alysia was fast approaching her teens, decisions had to be made on schooling and we felt that there just wasn't a match for her needs and the provisions on offer, we also realised staying Mainstream with support wasn't an option. We were still doing ABA, but by now I felt truly trapped by having to schedule everything around her ABA programme with the training of new tutors, covering sickness and the lack of spontaneity in our lives. I also had two other children's futures to think about. I began to look for other therapies and treatments via the Web, which was still relatively new back in 2003 / 4. In my mind I was thinking that I was looking for something that would jump the social hurdle, then I found RDI (Relationship Development Intervention®).

In February 2004 I read a post on an ABA forum where a mother had basically written a book review on 'Relationship Development Intervention with Young Children' by Dr S Gutstein. I ordered and read this book along with Dr Gutstein's book 'Solving the Relationship Puzzle' and felt that I had found the missing piece. (These books are now grossly out of date with the on-going development of RDI®.)

March 2004 - I had us booked up to attend a RDI® 4 day Parent Workshop in Atlanta in the August, followed by a visit to a RDI® Consultant in Virginia, Sarah Honda. We had taken the attitude that if we don't try we will never know and we weren't disappointed. Our view on what we trying to achieve changed radically.... no longer did we believe that we were looking for a magical socialising fix, but that we were in for the long haul moving away from teaching static skills and moving onto building Alysia's emotional development. No longer just teaching

skills that may never be utilised in everyday life, unless a replicate of the learnt situation was available – when let's face it in real life how often does that happen?

We learnt, that as Alysia's parents, we would be able to work towards getting Alysia back on to a healthy emotional developmental track in which she would be able to deal with the ever-changing dynamic world we live in, without the need of a team of people coming in and out of our house. Where she would be able to think on her feet, move away from repetitive / safe behaviours and become increasingly independent, as we guided her along that path. \*

During the four day parent training we were asked to take a look at our current communication style and it became clear that we had got into the habit of questioning and commanding whenever we were talking to Alysia. We were encouraged to use statements 'declarative language' and then wait up to 45 seconds for a response. This was our turning point and our buy into RDI® - more about that in the next newsletter.....

**Sharon Bradbrook-Armit - Parent and RDI® Programme Certified Consultant**

*\* Our understanding of RDI® has continued to grow as the RDI® Programme itself has also developed and grown. When we started the main focus was on the child, where now the initial focus is on helping the parents to look at where things have broken down in their relationship with their child and explore the changes that they may need to make before attempting to use the RDI® programme with their child. Child targets were also compartmentalised, where now they are spread across developmental stages in the RDI® curriculum, which is related to age and emotional, social and cognitive developmental milestones based on neuro typical development.*

## Project / Interaction Corner

**Halloween** is round the corner – design a pumpkin face and do it together

### Project Elements

There are many steps to this activity and you can think of more or do less depending on the ability of your child. Remember to guide your child and do it together.

- ◇ Preparation for the shopping trip to buy the pumpkin
- ◇ Collaboration on choosing the right size pumpkin and what kind of face to have
- ◇ Drawing the face on
- ◇ Cutting the face out
- ◇ Scooping the insides
- ◇ Deciding and researching what to do with the insides
- ◇ Collaboration on where to put the pumpkin.
- ◇ It's a project!

### **Autumn Interactions**

**Things you can do together with with leaves...**

- ◇ Clearing – picking them up together and putting into a wheelbarrow
- ◇ Sweeping together either both with brooms or one sweeping and one scooping
- ◇ Running and jumping in them
- ◇ Running / walking through them
- ◇ Picking up and throwing together or similar to a snowball fight

### **Going for a walk together...**

How about collecting seasonal things while taking the same route collect the following on different days:

Conkers, acorns, golden leaves, red leaves, dried leaves, bare twigs

### **Creating together**

Use the objects you have collected to make a collage, a simple picture, or use to create something unrelated like twig people wearing leaf clothes etc.

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## Contact Details

If you would like to learn more about RDI® and how using it could help someone in your family, please contact either:

**Elisa Al Malah- Think Autism Ltd**

[elisa@thinkautism.co.uk](mailto:elisa@thinkautism.co.uk)

**Sharon Bradbrook-Armit – Thinking in Shades of Grey Ltd**

[tisog@btinternet.com](mailto:tisog@btinternet.com)