

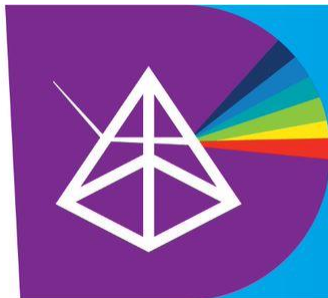
# NEURODIVERSITY IN PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND EARLY PARENTING

A joint venture with Hutt Maternity  
and the Wellington branch of the New  
Zealand College of Midwives

IMAGE: MRMW. (2020, AUGUST 2). NEURODIVERSITY SYMBOL [IMAGE]. WIKIPEDIA.  
([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Neurodiversity\\_Symbol.svg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Neurodiversity_Symbol.svg)). CC BY 1.0

Catherine Trezona,  
national manager  
Altogether Autism

**ALTOGETHER  
AUTISM  
TAKIWĀTANGA**



**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

# Altogether Autism



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information  
and advice in  
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# Trusted information

Informed by

- lived experience
- clinical best practice
- published research

# Researching the Research



## **Emily Acraman (B.A. – Psychology) – Researcher**

Emily joined the Altogether Autism team as a researcher in early 2019. She graduated from the University of Waikato in 2009 with a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree majoring in psychology and human development and then completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology.



## **Ashe Yee – (B.A. – Psychology) – Researcher**

Ashe joined the Altogether Autism team as a researcher in late 2019. She graduated from the University of Newcastle in 2016 with a Bachelor in Psychology (First Class Honours).

She is passionate about delivering evidence-based information to families in need, and in fighting against the spread of misinformation about autism. Ashe has previously worked at the University of Waikato as a researcher on the Counting Ourselves transgender health project, and was a co-author on the resulting publication.

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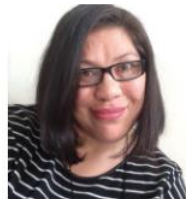
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## Consumer Advisory Group

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**The members appointed are:**



### **Rebekah Corlett (Ngati Porou)**

As a parent of an autistic 11 year old, Rebekah has used her background in journalism and public speaking to advocate for equitable opportunities and outcomes in education.

She has previously held positions as a consumer panel member for Autism NZ, and a board of trustees member for a specialist school.

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## Professional Advisory Group



**Tanya Breen M. Soc. Sc. (1st hons.); Dip. Psych. (Clin.); MNZPsS; MICP**

As a consultant clinical psychologist in private practice in New Zealand, Tanya Breen often appears as an expert witness in criminal cases where autistic people are charged with criminal acts. She also undertakes autism diagnosis, assessment and intervention/support with individuals and their families, and provides professionals with autism training.

Need More Information?

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# Autistic motherhood

Three key themes emerged

- Maternal instinct
- Support systems
- Sensory strategies

# 1. Maternal Instinct

- Experienced strongly by our Autistic Advisors who are also mothers
- At times competed with sensory sensitivities
- 86% of autistic mothers found parenting rewarding (Pohl et al., 2020)
- Often judged on parenting skills and decisions (Gardner et al., 2016)
- Maternal not necessarily being cuddly, but doing what is best for baby; reaching out for help demonstrates being deeply maternal



# 2. Support Systems

- Practical – housework, cooking, etc
- Looking after baby
- Support and encouragement

# 3. Sensory Strategies

- Check sensory environment (birthing room and at home)
- Reduce other sensory inputs
- Sensory challenges – smells (who else can change the nappy?)
- Sensory challenges - sound (midwives speak quietly, use noise-reducing ear plugs)
- Sensory challenges - touch (ask before touching, describing what the touch may feel like, only touch when medically necessary)

# References

Gardner, M., Suplee, P. D., Bloch, J., Lecks, K. (2016). Exploratory Study of Childbearing Experiences of Women with Asperger Syndrome. *Nursing for Women's Health*, 20(1), 28–37.

<https://doi:10.1016/j.nwh.2015.12.001>

Pohl, A. L., Crockford, S. K., Blakemore, M., et al. (2020). A comparative study of autistic and non-autistic women's experience of motherhood. *Molecular Autism* 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-019-0304-2>

Rogers, C., Lephherd, L., Ganguly, R., Jacob-Rogers, S. (2016). Perinatal issues for women with high functioning autism spectrum disorder. *Women and Birth*, 30(2), 89-95.

<https://doi:10.1016/j.wombi.2016.09.009>

Thanks also to Altogether Autism's Autistic Advisors



# Autistics for Autistics zoom groups



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## Learning to be ourselves

### Life Stages

- Early Childhood
- Primary Aged
- Teenagers
- Adulthood

### Who For

- Autistics of Aotearoa
- Autistic People






Need More Information?

Ask us a question



# Autistics for Autistics zoom groups

<  OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2021 >

  Collapse All  Expand All

OCT

8

Fri

## By Autistics for Autistics Zoom Group (Friday 1-2pm) @ Virtual

Oct 8 @ 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**Purpose of the Group:** The Autistics' Zoom Group is a place for safe sharing, connection, and understanding. The group is run by and for autistics.

**What:** By Autistics, For Autistics  
Zoom Room Hui.

**Why:** To provide autistic people with a safe place for connection and understanding

**When:** Fridays 1-2pm

**Who:** for autistic adults, run by two autistic hosts (host is Paul Freeman, co-host is Jolene Stockman, both on our [Consumer Advisory Group](#))

This is a free event but places will be limited to 20 people.

Instructions for joining the Zoom room will be sent by email. You

will need a device that connects to the internet and a web browser. Let us know [info@altogetherautism.org.nz](mailto:info@altogetherautism.org.nz) if you require help to learn how to use Zoom.

 CATEGORIES: [AUTISTICS FOR AUTISTICS](#)



New Meeting ▾



Join



Schedule



Share screen ▾



## Zoom Room Hui

To provide autistic people with a safe place for connection and understanding

**Fridays 1-2pm**

[www.altogetherautism.org.nz](http://www.altogetherautism.org.nz)  
or [info@altogetherautism.org.nz](mailto:info@altogetherautism.org.nz)



[Read more →](#)



# Not all disabilities look like this



## Assisting adults and children with hidden disabilities

Not all disabilities are visible – some are not immediately obvious, such as autism, chronic pain, dementia, anxiety, visual or hearing impairment. Living with a hidden disability can make daily life more challenging for many people, but it can be difficult for others to recognise, acknowledge or understand the challenges you face.



### The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower makes you visible

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you need additional support, help or a little more time.

Life Unlimited Charitable Trust and its sub brands Altogether Autism and Mobility Centre are the authorised New Zealand distributor. To find out more visit:

[www.lifeunlimited.net.nz/sunflower](http://www.lifeunlimited.net.nz/sunflower)



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## An enormously popular response

This simple, yet effective design has now been widely adopted in the region by organisations including:



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