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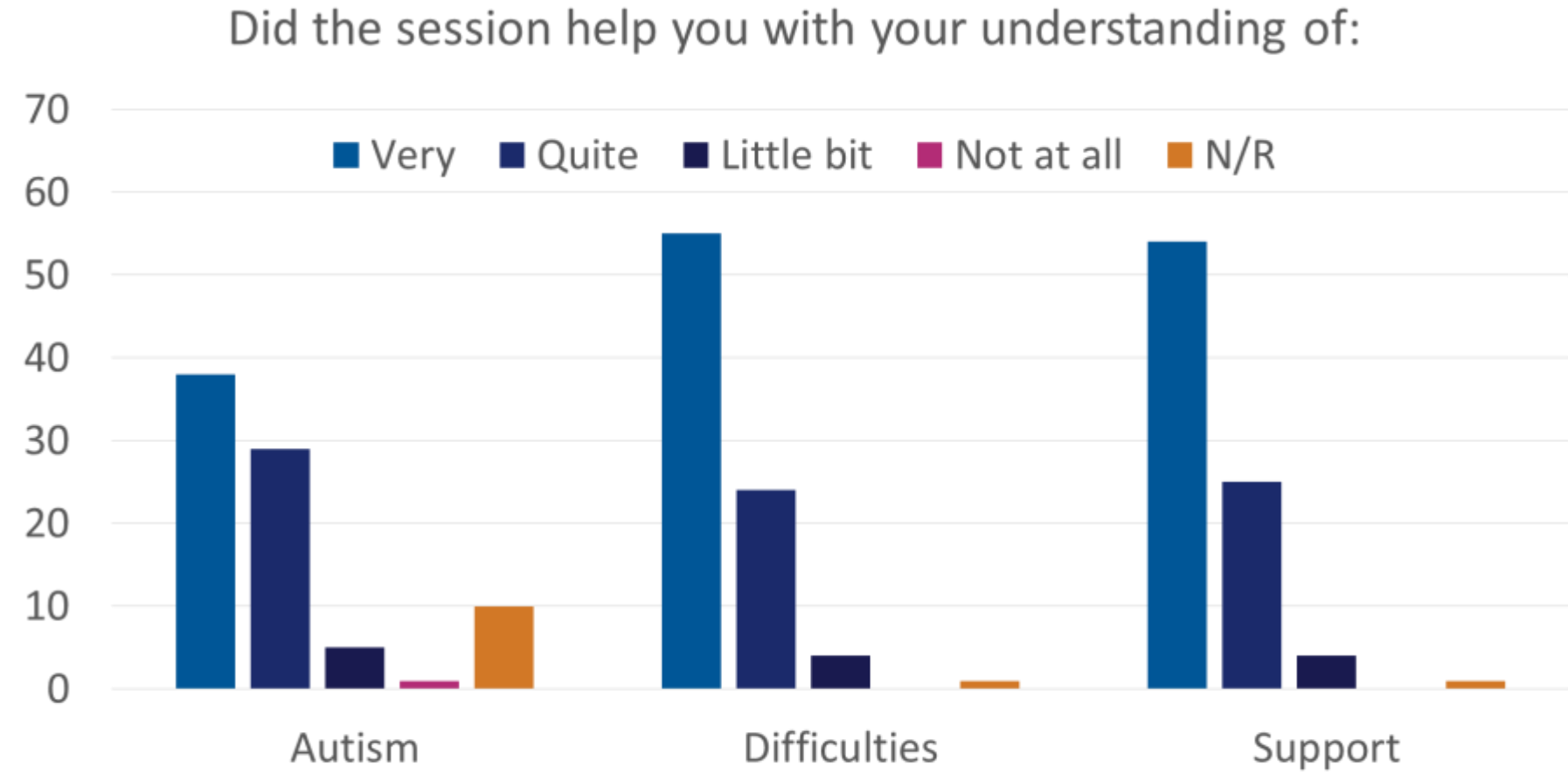
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Improving the support of
autistic individuals in police
custody through autism
training

Supporting Autism in the Criminal Justice System



- Nottinghamshire police (n=84)



Nottingham Autism Police Partnership (NAPP)



Objectives of Nottingham Impact Accelerator project

Police training



Presentation/video



Toolkit

Policy



Local



National

Initial meetings (x 2)

- Introductions
- Background/ aims of project

Training materials

- Priority areas for content/environment changes
- Format of toolkit and video

Policy

- Identification of where changes most needed and at which level (local/national/legislative)

Review of training material drafts

- Review of content and format of toolkit
- Update of newly designed custody suite

Final review and soft launch

- Viewing and final review of all training resources

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Areas where difficulties experienced by autistic individuals:

- 1) Not knowing what was happening
- 2) Understanding legal rights
- 2) Understanding police questions
- 4) Communication
- 5) Sensory - Being touched/ lighting/ noise
- 6) Impact on mental health (anxiety)



Training Video




Tool-kit resources for police officers


- A**CTUALLY I'M AUTISTIC
- U**NDERSTANDING EACH OTHER
- T**HINKING DIFFERENTLY
- I**NFORMATION
- S**ENSORY DIFFERENCES
- M**ENTAL HEALTH

Understanding Each Other


- Autistic individuals and custody staff may encounter barriers to communication which affect how they understand each others thoughts and feelings.
- You should make adjustments to how you communicate such as avoiding ambiguous language and asking clear and direct questions i.e. what is your full address?
- Autistic individuals may also need more time to process what is being said. You should give them extra time to process information.



COMMUNICATON BARRIERS



CLEAR LANGUAGE



PROCESSING

PERSONAL SEARCH

















- Autistic individuals may have sensory processing difficulties making them under or over sensitive to touch. Anxiety can also make it more difficult to cope with this.
- They may be anxious about what will happen during the search and may not be prepared for this.
- It may not be clear why they need to be searched, particularly if they have already been searched by police officers before coming to police custody.
- Autistic individuals may also be worried about handing over their personal property and what will happen to it.

- ✓ EXPLAIN WHAT WILL HAPPEN
- ✓ USE VISUAL AIDS
- ✓ EXPLAIN WHY THEY NEED TO BE SEARCHED
- ✓ OFFER REASSURANCE

Tool-kit resources for autistic individuals

THE CUSTODY PROCESS

This is an example of what might happen during the custody process. There are four stages: i) booking-in ii) processing iii) detention iv) interview. Not all stages may take place or happen in this order. You can ask if you are unsure about anything.

BOOKING-IN	PROCESSING	DURING DETENTION	INTERVIEW
 <p>You will be taken to a charging desk where you will be told why you have been arrested and why you need to be detained.</p>	 <p>You may have to do a Smartwater test. The lights will be turned off and a UV light will come on to check for Smartwater.</p>	 <p>You may need to be examined by a doctor or nurse to check for injuries, to talk about your health or to take more samples.</p>	 <p>You may be taken to a room to be asked questions. If you have a solicitor and Appropriate Adult they can be with you.</p>
 <p>You will be asked questions about yourself and any medical conditions you may have. You will also be risk assessed.</p>	 <p>You will be asked to record an image of your fingerprints and palm using machines. These will help identify who you are.</p>	 <p>You may want to speak to a solicitor on the phone or in person. You may also be taken to a room to talk to them.</p>	 <p>You will be read your rights and cautioned. This explains what can be used in evidence against you in court.</p>
 <p>You will be asked if you want i) to notify someone you have been arrested and ii) a solicitor. An Appropriate Adult may also be called.</p>	 <p>You may have to give a DNA sample from inside your mouth. A sample of saliva may also be taken to check for illegal drugs.</p>	 <p>You will be kept in a police cell. A detention officer will check on you and ask if you need anything (i.e. food or drink).</p>	 <p>You will be asked about the suspected offence and what happened. Your solicitor may advise you how to answer.</p>
 <p>You will have to hand over personal property (i.e. wallet, phone, shoe laces, belt and watch). You will also be searched.</p>	 <p>You may have a photograph or video image taken of you. This will help others identify you.</p>	 <p>You may be kept in the cell overnight. You can be detained for up to 24 hours. This can be longer subject to approval.</p>	 <p>The police will decide if you have committed a crime and whether to release you, caution you or charge you.</p>

PERSONAL SEARCH

FRONT

BACK



WHAT ARE MY LEGAL RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS?

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 is the main law which safeguards the rights and welfare of individuals who are detained in police custody as suspects of a criminal offence. You have several rights which the police officers must respect in law. There are also other entitlements which you have in police custody that are subject to the decisions of police officers.

SOLICITOR



- A solicitor is a person qualified to give you advice on the law and your rights as a suspect of a criminal offence. You have a right to free legal advice from a solicitor while in police custody.
- You are entitled to talk to a solicitor about your arrest and the offence in private. They will offer you advice about what has happened and advise you how to answer questions in the police interview.
- You should not just refuse a solicitor because there may be a delay before they can come to the station. A solicitor can also help you even if you believe you are innocent.

APPROPRIATE ADULT

AA

- An Appropriate Adult is an independent person who must come to the police station to help support vulnerable detainees. You can suggest a family member, social worker or volunteer to be your AA. If it is not possible for them to act as the AA, the custody sergeant may choose instead.
- They will observe what is happening, help with communication and any concerns you have and ensure you are being treated fairly. They must be present while certain processes are carried out. If they cannot be there when these are carried out, they will be repeated when they arrive.

NOTIFYING SOMEONE OF YOUR ARREST



- You can have someone notified that you have been arrested and brought to police custody. You can choose to call a family member, friend, partner or someone else who has an interest in your welfare.
- You can also make a phone call while you are in police custody unless the custody staff decide that there are reasons which prevent this. This will be explained to you.
- It is important to remember that anything you say during this phone call may be listened to by someone else and may be used as evidence. You will not have to pay for the phone call you make.

Challenges of implementing changes

Police training

- Time
- Money
- Consistency across forces
- *Effectiveness
- *Requires disclosure

Custody Environment

- Time
- Money
- Space

Policy

- Is there a need for a policy for mandatory autism training?



Summary of key points

- Meetings with police and autistic stakeholders together essential
- A range of training/toolkit materials may be more valuable to suit the different needs of police staff, officers and autistic individuals.
- Training is critical, but changes to police environment, processes and policy also needed.
- Consideration of neurodiversity more broadly [equality, diversity and inclusion] and universal design may be valuable ways forward.

Nottingham Autism Police Partnership (NAPP)



For more info contact: Dr. Chloe Holloway,
University of Nottingham

lpzch@exmail.Nottingham.ac.uk

