

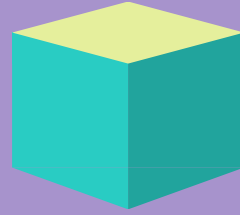
## ABOUT ANDY

Hi, my name is Andy. I have lived and grown up in Bury and I am autistic.

I was very academic in school but struggled with other aspects of school life. When I was younger I was desperate to fit in and be like everyone else.

But trying to be someone you are not is not sustainable. Despite getting the best GCSE's in my school (8 A\*s and 3 As), I really struggled at university which led to me dropping out during the second year of a Psychology degree; failing two of my first semester exams and not attending the other two.

Since then, I have realised the only way I can be happy and thrive is to stop trying to fit in and accept myself as I am, and I want as many SEND children and young people as possible to realise this too so they can live the happiest lives they can.



### GET IN TOUCH!

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**ASK ME ABOUT 'THE  
UMBRELLA GANG' -  
A FREE COMIC FOR  
CHILDREN AGED 6-  
12 ABOUT  
NEURODIVERSITY**

**INCLUSION  
AMBASSADOR/ SEND  
ADVOCATE OFFER FOR  
SCHOOLS**

ANDY SMITH  
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# MY PRIORITIES

**Wellbeing:** SEND children and young people want the same things as everyone else, but they have more barriers to achieving them. I aim to actively identify and remove those barriers so that SEND young people have the same opportunities to thrive. One of the main barriers is **self acceptance:** It is important that SEND children and young people accept being different, rather than being ashamed of it. But this is difficult when there is not a positive open dialogue about their differences. Self acceptance is also so much harder when the people around you don't accept your differences, so that is a focus of my work too.

**Coproduction:** Coproduction is about making sure young people are not just listened to, but that action is taken based on their views; whether this is on an individual level, at school or across the Local Authority

# WHAT I CAN OFFER:

## 1:1 or group self advocacy work

*Referral via education, health or social care*

This involves talking to young people directly about their differences through the social model; enabling them to better understand themselves and how they can be better supported to feedback to the people around them. Examples of feedback include a CPD session, a video or a meeting, where the young person can share directly, I can do it on their behalf or we can do it together.

This is not just about making sure the young person is better supported, but to promote self acceptance; particularly useful for young people who are ashamed of or hate being different. It's good to talk through this with someone who has been there!

## CPD and Assemblies

*Arrange via email*

I can currently offer CPD on:

- Autism
- Neurodiversity
- Sensory Processing
- Selective Mutism

All of the CPD is coproduced with young people and is focused on what is important to them, rather than what others think is important for them.

This can include involving young people in delivering or giving input into the CPD. **I also deliver programmes and talks to young people directly**

## EHCP VIEWS

*Referral via education, health or social care*

If a child is struggling with sharing their views in the EHCP process or does not understand why they need an EHCP, I can support them with this.

**FIND OUT MORE VIA MY PAGE ON THE  
LOCAL OFFER:**

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/2BDIY3Z](https://bit.ly/2BDIY3Z)