



## SESSION II

### *Role of social identity threat on the experiences of autistic individuals in healthcare environments*

**Oluwatobi (Tobi) Abubakare & Dr. Sarabeth Broder-Fingert M.D., MPH**

Thursday, July 13th, 2023 // 9:00 am EDT

#### **Course Materials**

The purpose of these materials is to help provide an introduction to the INSAR Institute session. The materials were designed to prepare students and trainees who are unfamiliar with this research with the general background to receive the most educational benefit from the session. Toward this objective, we have prepared the following: (1) learning objectives for this session, (2) key terms and concepts, (3) a selection of recommended resources. These materials are considered supplemental to the presentation. Register for this webinar and other sessions in this series at: <https://www.autism-insar.org/page/Institute2023>

In collaboration with Tobi Abubakare and Dr. Sarabeth Broder-Fingert, these materials were developed by **Meredith Pecukonis** (PhD Candidate, Boston University, USA; [mpecukon@bu.edu](mailto:mpecukon@bu.edu)), **Juliette Gudknecht** (Doctoral Student at Teachers College, Columbia University, USA; [jg4390@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:jg4390@tc.columbia.edu)), **Gabrielle Agnew** (Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX, USA;

[gabrielle.agnew@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:gabrielle.agnew@utsouthwestern.edu)), **Wainesten Silva** (Ph.D. candidate in Regional Development at the Federal University of Tocantins, Brazil; [wainesten@uft.edu.br](mailto:wainesten@uft.edu.br)), and **Dr. Jiedi Lei** (Clinical Psychology Trainee at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, UK; [jiedi.lei@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:jiedi.lei@kcl.ac.uk)).

### **Learning Objectives**

The INSAR Institute for Autism Research was established in direct response to requests from students and trainees for multidisciplinary training opportunities. The INSAR Institute team is also working to engage stakeholders. The INSAR Institute's priorities are to provide a (1) freely available, (2) multidisciplinary training platform for young scientists and others from various backgrounds that (3) allows for international participation.

The overarching goal of the INSAR Institute is to expose junior scientists to topics they are not currently engaged in, with the hope that basic scientists and clinical scientists may learn from each other to ultimately advance the understanding of autism. This year, the series is aimed at adopting a global perspective to showcase similarities and differences in the process of conducting autism research across a number of geographic locations and fields of research, including neuroscience, psychology, and public health.

This session, on the role of social identity threat on the experiences of autistic individuals in healthcare environments, is presented by Tobi Abubakare and will be discussed by Dr. Sarabeth Broder-Fingert. *At the conclusion of this session, participants will:*

1. **Increase awareness** of the mental health inequities autistic adults face in the context of perceived stigma and communication.
2. **Learn about** social identity threat and identity centrality theories.
3. **Develop an appreciation** for the application of social identity threat in autism research.
4. **Understand** the impact of stigma on identity and social interactions.

### **Key Terms**

**Identity threat** is defined as the concern people have in situations in which the positive image of their ingroup is threatened by the activation of negative group stereotypes, or by the devaluation or stigmatization of the ingroup (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002).

**Identity centrality** refers to the enduring relative importance an individual ascribes to a particular component or domain of their identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

**Stereotype threat** is defined as the uncomfortable psychological reaction that occurs when one faces prejudices regarding racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, or social status (Aronson et al., 2013). Stereotype threat can impact one's performance on certain tasks when activated.

**Stigma** originates from ancient Greek language which means "to carve, to mark as a sign of shame, punishment or disgrace." In contemporary thinking about stigma, Erving Goffman

defines stigmatization as the presence of a socially undesirable characteristic, which signals otherness. When this characteristic becomes conspicuous during a social interaction, it may act in a disqualifying manner for the identity of the person who bears it (Goffman et al., 2009; Economou et al., 2020).

**(Identity) safety cue** refers to a particular type of situational cue that communicates support for stigmatized identities and generates important implications for enhancing outcomes among stigmatized groups, such as heightened belonging, performance, trust, and engagement (Cipollina & Sanchez, 2019). Identity safety cues refer to aspects of an environment or setting that signal to stigmatized groups that the threat of discrimination is limited and their social identities are welcomed and valued (Kruk & Matsick, 2021).

### Recommended Readings & Resources

- Abubakare, O. (2022). An unexpected autistic. *Autism in Adulthood*, 4(4), 268-270.
- Aronson, J., Burgess, D., Phelan, S. M., & Juarez, L. (2013). Unhealthy Interactions: The Role of Stereotype Threat in Health Disparities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(1), 50–56.
- Aylott, J. (2000). Autism in adulthood: the concepts of identity and difference. *British Journal of Nursing*, 9(13), 851-858.
- Botha, M., Dibb, B., & Frost, D. M. (2022). “Autism is me”: An investigation of how autistic individuals make sense of autism and stigma. *Disability & Society*, 37(3), 427–453.
- Branscombe, N., Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, E. (1999). The context and content of social identity threat. *Sepsis*, 35–55.
- Bruce, H., Munday, K., & Kapp, S. K. (2023). Exploring the Experiences of Autistic Transgender and Non-Binary Adults in Seeking Gender Identity Health Care. *Autism in Adulthood*, 5(2), 191-203.
- Burgess, D. J., Warren, J., Phelan, S., Dovidio, J., & van Ryn, M. (2010). Stereotype Threat and Health Disparities: What Medical Educators and Future Physicians Need to Know. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 25(S2), 169–177.
- Cipollina, R., & Sanchez, D. T. (2019). Reducing health care disparities through improving trust: An identity safety cues intervention for stigmatized groups. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 5(4), 315–325.
- Economou, M., Bechraki, A., & Charitsi, M. (2020). The stigma of mental illness: A historical overview and conceptual approaches. *Psychiatrike= Psychiatriki*, 31(1), 36-46.
- Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and schuster.
- Kruk, M., & Matsick, J. L. (2021). A taxonomy of identity safety cues based on gender and race: From a promising past to an intersectional and translational future. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 7(4), 487.

- Natri, H. M., Abubakare, O., Asasumasu, K., Basargekar, A., Beaud, F., Botha, M., ... & Zisk, A. H. (2023). Anti-ableist language is fully compatible with high-quality autism research: Response to S inger et al.(2023). *Autism Research*, 16(4), 673-676.
- Nicolaidis, C., Raymaker, D. M., Ashkenazy, E., McDonald, K. E., Dern, S., Baggs, A. E., Kapp, S. K., Weiner, M., & Boisclair, W. C. (2015). "Respect the way I need to communicate with you": Healthcare experiences of adults on the autism spectrum. *Autism*, 19(7), 824–831.
- O'Hagan, B., Krauss, S. B., Friedman, A. J., Bartolotti, L., Abubakare, O., Broder-Fingert, S., & Augustyn, M. (2023). Identifying components of autism friendly health care: an exploratory study using a modified Delphi method. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 44(1), e12-e18.
- Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5), 797–811.
- Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 284-297.
- Turnock, A., Langley, K., & Jones, C. S. (2022). Understanding Stigma in Autism: A Narrative Review and Theoretical Model. *Autism in Adulthood*, 4(1), 76–91.
- Weir, E., Allison, C., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2022). Autistic adults have poorer quality healthcare and worse health based on self-report data. *Molecular Autism*, 13(1), 23.