



Deficit to Dignity: Bridging the Medical Model & Neurodiversity-Affirming Care

Presented by: Megan Helmen, PsyD, LP

Delivery method: On-Demand

Instruction level: Intermediate

Sponsored by: NCS Pearson, Inc.

Course Description

How can we expect autistic individuals to thrive when we define them by a set of symptoms? This session explores the tension between the traditional medical model and the neurodiversity movement. Clinicians must often meet diagnostic requirements while striving to provide humanized, strengths-based, identity-affirming care. This session introduces a framework for integrating both medical and neurodiversity-affirming approaches—empowering clinicians to deliver humanized care within medical settings. By blending theory with practical examples like providing feedback, report writing, and framing recommendations, participants will gain tools to bridge medical requirements with affirming, individualized assessment and care.

Learner Outcomes

After completing this learning track, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the core differences between the medical model and neurodiversity-affirming approaches in clinical practice
2. Apply a framework for integrating symptom-based and strengths-based perspectives in clinical feedback, report writing, and discussions with clients
3. Utilize the model to compose recommendations that aim to reduce symptoms, embrace individual traits, support strengths, and build self-advocacy

Time-Ordered Agenda

10 minutes	Introduction
10 minutes	Identifying traits versus symptoms
10 minutes	Integrative framework
10 minutes	Strategies for intervention
10 minutes	Case examples
10 minutes	Recommendations, Q&A, and closing remarks



About the Presenter

Dr. Megan Helmen is a pediatric neuropsychologist specializing in developmental disability evaluations since 2011. Dr. Helmen's approach combines clinical expertise and research-backed strategies with genuine connection and a sense of humor. She finds it a privilege and a pleasure to increase understanding of and compassion for the quirky, intense, sensitive, inquisitive kids of the world. In 2022, she founded Developmental Discoveries Neuropsychology, a practice dedicated to providing compassionate evaluations for kids and their families. Her evaluation process emphasizes seeing each child as a whole person, encouraging open dialogue and feedback, to ensure every child feels heard, understood, and valued.

Disclosure

Financial: Dr. Helmen will be receiving an honorarium for this presentation.

Nonfinancial—Member, board of directors, Association for Traumatic Brain Injury Specialists, but receives no compensation

NCS Pearson, Inc., the sponsor of this learning track, develops and distributes assessments and intervention tools for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

References

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