

We are Sue Fletcher-Watson and Francesca (Franky) Happé. We are writing a book about psychological theories of autism, and we would like to ask you to contribute a piece of writing for the book.

This document aims to explain what we're looking for and address some likely questions. Please contact Sue or Franky by email or phone if you have any further issues you'd like to discuss.

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What is the book about?

The book aims to provide an introduction to various attempts to describe autism at a psychological level. It introduces various different types of psychological theory, reviews the evidence in favour of, or against these, and draws conclusions. At the end of each chapter we introduce some "current debates" relating to that chapter – these are open questions which we don't know the answers to yet. The book is intended for psychology students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, but might also be read by clinicians, autistic people and their allies (e.g. family, friends, colleagues). You can get a sense of the book from reading the attached Overview document.

What are you asking me to do?

We are sending you one chapter from the book, as well as a general overview showing how the different chapters fit together. We would like you to write a short piece at the end of this chapter, giving a personal viewpoint on the issues covered. Please send us your writing by email, or if you prefer, you can send a hand-written letter in the post. You could even record what you want to say and we will type it up for you. It is up to you. Please let us know if you need any technical support.

When do I need to do it?

We would like to receive your piece of writing within three weeks of receiving this document please. Let us know if you need more time (especially if you received this just before Christmas!).

What should I write about?

We suggest that you read the chapter you've been sent and then write a short piece – no more than 400 words please – which acts as a reflection on what you've just read. Examples of what you might say include:

- A specific story or illustration from your life which supports something we've said in the chapter e.g. *"In this chapter the writers discuss the importance of the sensory experience of autistic people. In my case, I find loud noises very hard to bear..."*

- A specific story or illustration from your life which contradicts something we've said in the chapter e.g. *"The theory of mind account of autism has never made any sense to me. In my experience, autistic people..."*

- A reflection on the 'current debates' which we put forward at the end of the chapter – how would you answer these questions? Do you agree they are important?

e.g. *"The writers say we need to know more about autistic people as they age but I think they don't go far enough. In fact..."*

Why are you asking me to write something?

Rather than just asking people to contribute in a tokenistic way, we have tried to invite specific people to contribute to specific chapters based on what we know about you and your life already. This might be drawn from things you've written before, your community role, or because one of us knows you

personally. Our goal is to showcase a range of autistic voices from people of different genders, ages, and backgrounds.

Are there any rules about what I can and cannot write?

Yes. Just a few – we don't want to constrain you – but we do need to think about the goals of the book etc.

1. Please don't make any very generalised statements about autism. Instead, please speak about your own experience or the experiences of your friends and family. For example, we would rather you didn't say "*Autistic people think X...*" but it is fine if you say "*I think X...*" or "*My autistic friends think X...*". The reason for this is that we are publishing an academic text for students. Any generalised statements need to be supported by citations from the research literature. We need to demonstrate good academic writing for the student readers which means avoiding making general statements about autism without support from research evidence.

NB: If there is research evidence that you're familiar with, that you would like us to mention and cite in the main part of the chapter, please feel free to recommend this. We are happy to tweak the chapter text, to provide the context you need to say what you want to say. We're also keen to include research that you've found important or influential.

2. Please try to stick to the word limit of 400 words. If you go much over, we will work with you to make cuts.
3. Please don't make criticism personal. If there is a theory you don't like or a piece of evidence you disagree with, please challenge the theory / evidence and not the person who published it. You should include nothing libellous or unlawful, and your contribution should respect the privacy of any individuals mentioned.
4. Please have a conversation with one of us if you are unsure or unhappy about these rules. We want to include your viewpoint in as unconstrained a way as we can manage so if you are feeling censored please let us know so we can talk about what you want to say and find a way to include that.

What about language?

You can use whatever language you want to talk about autism: i.e. identity-first, person-first, terms like "Aspie" or "Autie" are fine. We will have a language statement at the start of the book explaining the language we've chosen but we won't impose this on you. Of course, we don't want language which is demeaning to autistic people such as "suffers from autism" and we strongly request that you avoid use of functioning labels. If you want to discuss your choice of language please get in touch.

Can I be critical?

Yes! Absolutely. The whole point of these sections is to help students reading the book understand how psychological theory and models relate to people's lived experiences in the real world. Sometimes this means confronting the fact that a theory makes people feel bad and we want student readers to understand and learn from that.

NB: We hope that reading the chapter we've sent you does not make you feel bad and apologise if that is the case. We have tried to be matter-of-fact about the theories and also to recognise the problematic nature of many of them in relation to autistic people's lives. Some of this reflection is gathered into later chapters rather than being addressed in each chapter. You can read these if you wish.

Will I get editorial approval of the final book?

Not the whole book, no. Here's a round-up of your rights in relation to the book:

1. When you send us your contribution to the chapter, we might suggest some changes. This will be a conversation, not at order, and you will have final approval of these. IF YOU DON'T APPROVE THE FINAL VERSION OF YOUR TEXT YOU CAN CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW IT FROM THE BOOK.
2. You will have a chance to read the whole book in its final manuscript form. We will give you at least two weeks to read it (the book will be quite short). You can give us feedback on content in the book but we won't guarantee to make changes. IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE BOOK AS A WHOLE, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

Will I earn anything?

Yes. We would like to pay each contributor a one-off writer fee of £50 for their time. This is a standard writer fee for contributions to outlets like the *Thinking Person's Guide to Autism* website. Your fee is payable on contribution of a piece of writing suitable for inclusion. If you later choose to withdraw your writing you will not be liable to pay back your fee. You will not receive royalties from future book sales.

Will I be listed as a co-author?

No, but you will be named (with your permission – you can contribute anonymously if you prefer) in two places. First, we will list all of the community contributors in the acknowledgements section at the front of the book. This list will be in alphabetical order by surname and include your preferred title (or no title if you wish). Second, we will introduce your section in the book with a one-line description provided by you. e.g. "Jane Smith, Autistic activist and teacher".

If you have any questions which have not been answered in this document, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help. I hope you will accept our invitation to contribute to the book in this way. Even though this is in many ways a traditional academic text book, we think it is important to include voices from the community throughout and we really appreciate your contribution to that.

What about copyright?

Contributors will retain copyright for their work. However, in return for the writer fee, the authors allow the publishers the right to produce and publish their contribution in the book, and any abridgement, adaptation, new edition or translation of the book, in all forms and media, and in all languages throughout the world.