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# ELEVATING STRENGTHS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE THROUGH CRITICAL AUTISM STUDIES

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References on request



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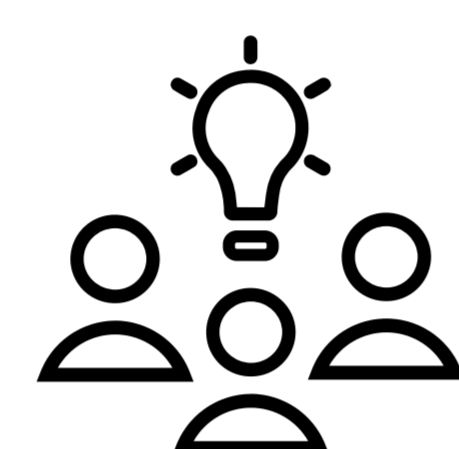


Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

## INTRODUCTION

Critical Autism Studies (CAS) is an interdisciplinary field examining autistic experiences, which 'questions deficit-based definitions of Autism' and explores how 'culture intersects to produce disability'.

Often led by autistic individuals, CAS delves into **under-researched areas**. By questioning medical models and including autistic voices, CAS provides new insights into **strengths-based perspectives** on autistic lived experience.



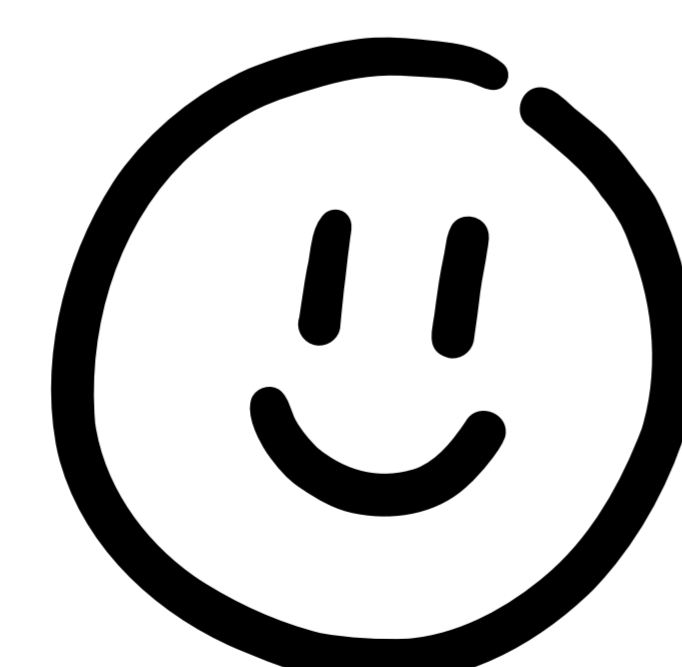
## METHODS

Each of us, as researchers, delved into **distinct ways of integrating CAS into our research methodologies**. CAS principles influenced all three research projects, underscoring the significance of amplifying autistic voices and adopting neurodivergent-friendly terminology



## NATHAN KEATES

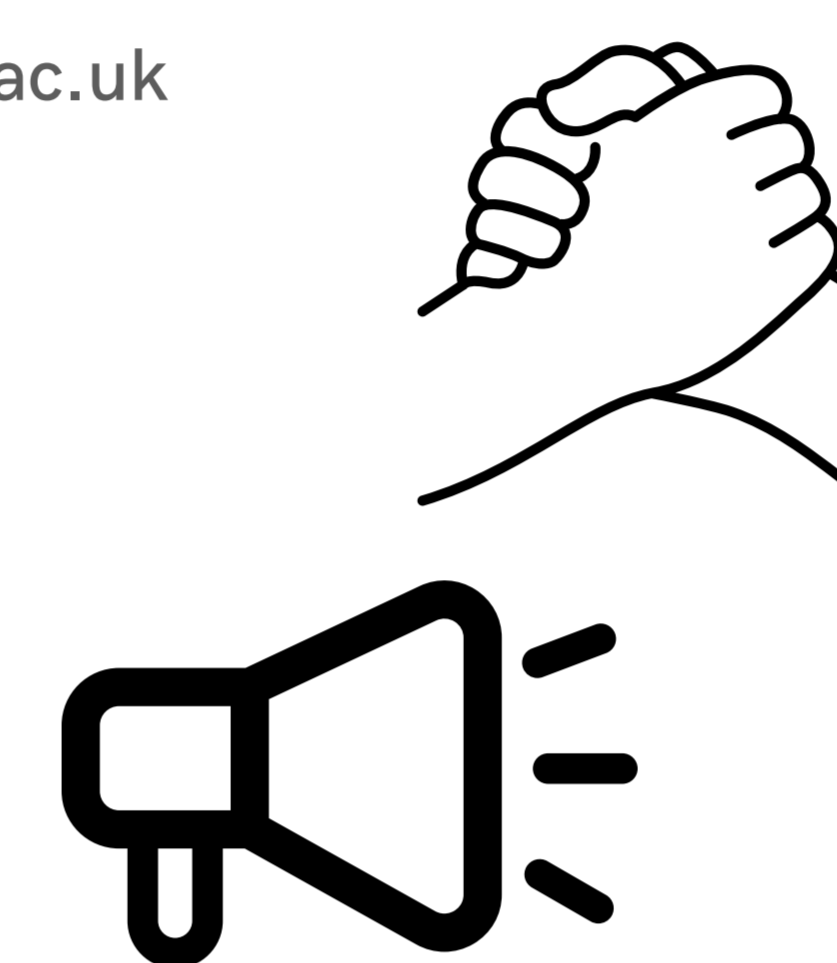
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"My research includes the potential strength-based approach in a specific theatre practice, elucidating how **improvisational comedy** might **provide autistic space** and could reduce anxiety. Through a focus on autistic lived experiences during this project, the work remained positioned within critical autism studies and a metaphysical framework of the neurodiversity paradigm."

## KATRINE CALLANDER

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## CONCLUSION

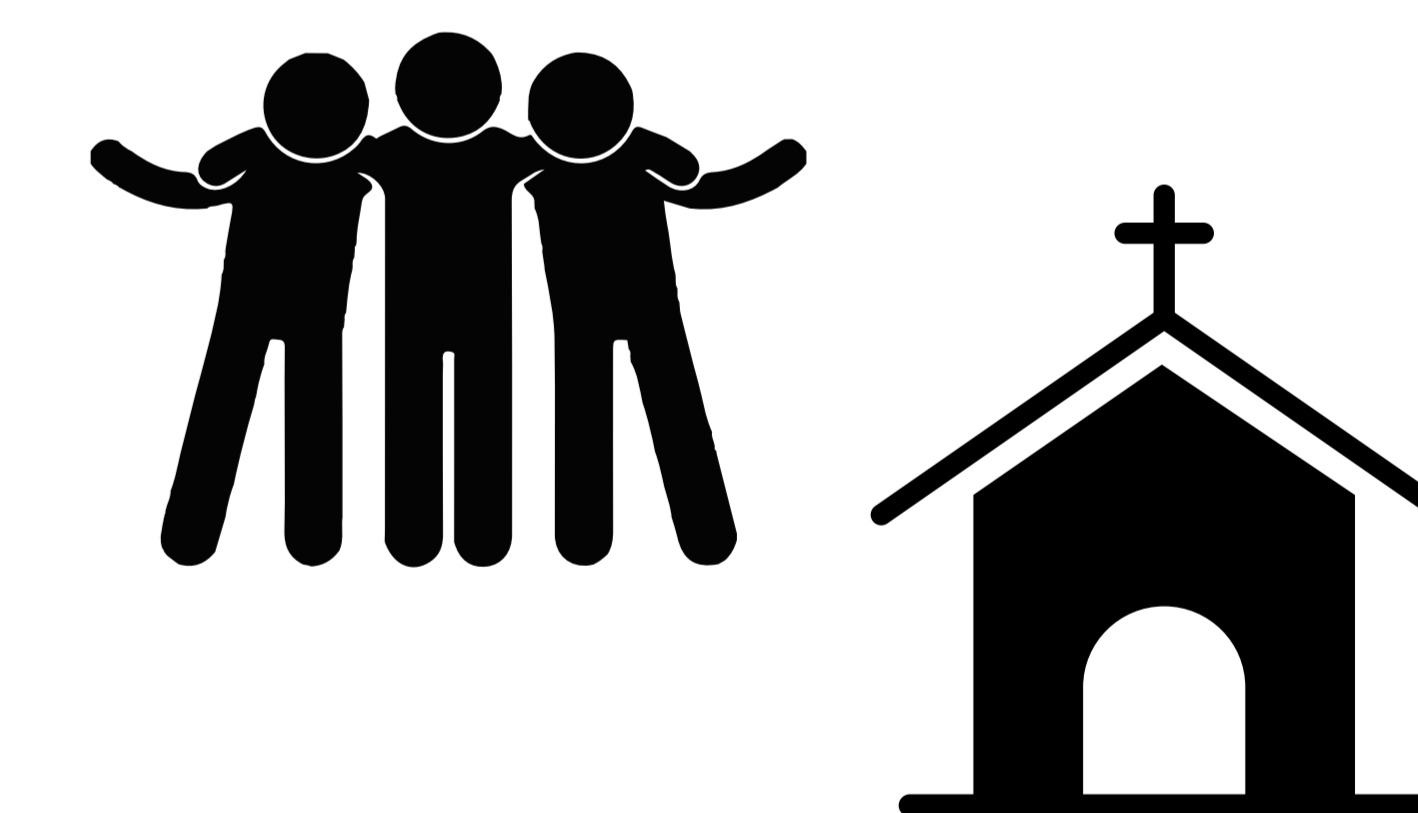
The interdisciplinary nature of these projects enriches the research landscape by integrating insights from psychology, sociology, education, religion and beyond, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of autism across different contexts. This expands the scope of research and influences policy-making and practice

## CROSS-CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PROJECTS

- Fostering Strengths-Based Approaches rather than deficits.
- Centring the perspectives and experiences of autistic people in research and discourse.
  - Interdisciplinary Integration to enrich understanding.
- Deepen understanding of autistic people's social, cultural and personal complexity.
- Guiding policy-making and practice to consider the nuance of autistic lived experience.

## KRYSIA WALDOCK

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"Autistic people '**disrupt**' **neuronormative behavioural expectations** that exist within churches and mosques and can be argued to be '**impossible subjects**' within religious settings. Autistic identity can disrupt the ability to perform the normative religious role identity and is perceived as '**unable to be included**'. Being socially included and experiencing feelings of belonging are contingent on meeting neuronormative behavioural expectations. Hence, Autistic people may create their own sense of belonging through **various forms of neuro-queer spaces and practices in religion.**"