

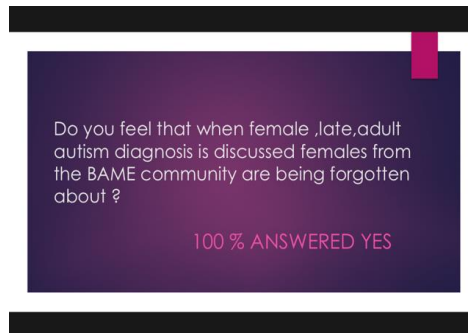


17th September 2016

FAO : CEDAW secretariat
The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Via Email : cedaw@ohcr.org

Dear CEDAW ,

Following the letter is in response to the request of general comments for Article 19 . Epidemic of Knowledge campaign is a United Nations civil society campaign named after the award winning disability and females documentary of same name to promote ,include and safeguard those on the Autistic spectrum , in particular women and girls who's Autism may present in a fashion that is overlooked and often not recognised due to clinical and social misogyny.Epidemic of Knowledge aims to ensure all those with vulnerability are safeguarded regardless of gender,race ,social class, country.



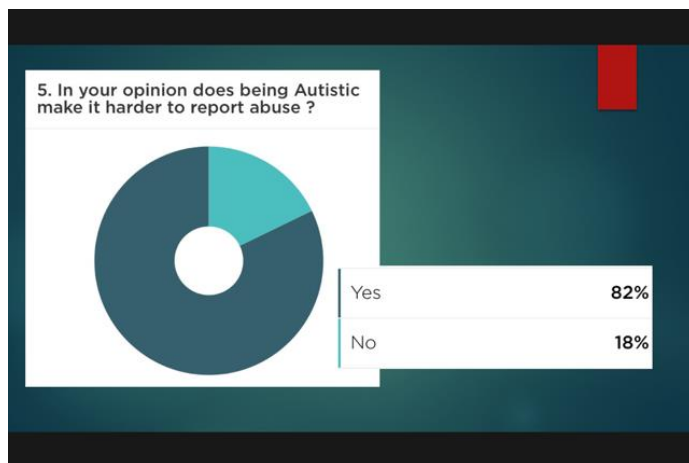
Autistic females are all too often overlooked and left with safeguarding inequalities due to lack of diagnosis and lack of support , the results of which are lifelong and an injustice to not only their personal well being and rights but also to the rights of the children they care for ,who in many cases are also Autistic themselves.

In the UK today females are recognised as being a major part of the Autism statistics ,however, as recently as 2008 this was not always the case ,in other countries this is often still a misunderstood yet vital issue.

As a British Autism advocate ,our “Importance of timely Autism diagnosis and support to safeguard Autistic community from abuse “ research shows that sadly ,prior to diagnosis 91% of Autistic people have encountered abuse . Autistic people are also far more likely to be abused by those posing as a friend or a loved one as opposed to a stranger . After diagnosis,and understanding of own vulnerability 73% of the Autistic community either experienced no abuse at all or had experienced abuse but were able to report the abuse appropriately or safeguard themselves from other intentions .

This is vast improvement as 82% of the Autistic community feel that being Autistic makes reporting abuse harder.

Similarly , the lifeline provisions such as helplines for women in need are all too often by telephone when research shows that the overwhelming majority of people on the Autistic spectrum , even those with speech, feel unable to use a telephone for help in a time of crisis.



Some helplines offer a text or email service however for web leading helpline charities the response time to a phone call is within three rings and the response times to a text or email is 4-12 hours. The inequality of service to those most likely to require support is the most delayed which of course needs prompt rethinking in order to safeguard Autistic lives .It would make an advantageous change to be mindful of this situation in the *protection and redress* element of paper.

Most health and safeguarding education for girls takes place within the child's school setting , however we know all too well that women and girls have hurdles in education ,be it poverty,cultural expectations or disability .

This is not a situation that is contained to “developing countries “ even in the UK many Autistic females are unable to access education in a mainstream or SEN setting ,many are deemed too capable for SEN yet are unable to cope and flourish in the mainstream settings due to their condition being misjudged or unsupported.

This inequality in education leads to many Autistic women and girls being educated at home , therefore ,once again being denied equality in safeguarding and sexual health awareness in comparison to their schooled peers.

The most vulnerable again being the most overlooked on a government level .
(Please see britishautismadvocate.simpl.com to see how we are trying to remedy this in the UK)

The consequence of invisible disabilities such as Autism being unrecognised and unsupported for women and girls are long lasting and distressing ,leaving too many vulnerable and left behind .

With kindest thanks for reading

Carly Jones British Autism advocate

Founder of The Olley Edwards academy UK

Director of Epidemic of Knowledge

Britishautismadvocate.simpl.com

