

## **IASA's 10-Year Celebration**

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### **Responses to SAFE: an intervention for families of children with autism.**

Rebecca McKenzie (UK)

[rebecca.mckenzie@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.mckenzie@plymouth.ac.uk)

Topic: Research

Families of children with autism are often characterised by mental health problems, stress and poor coping skills. The reasons for this are unclear. It is proposed that parents of children with autism have often experienced trauma and insecure attachment in their own childhood which has an impact on their coping strategies and parenting models. This paper explores SAFE, an intervention designed specifically for these families. SAFE is based on attachment theory and systemic practice.

We developed and used SAFE based on principles of attachment theory including DMM with families of children with autism. In particular we used the Adult Attachment Interview as a precursor to therapeutic intervention. We discuss why SAFE is needed and how an attachment based intervention, including the Adult Attachment Interview is received by families where a member has a diagnosis of autism.

#### **How it used What it can contribute to the DMM**

Consequently, we reflect on how families might perceive and respond to interventions which are informed by attachment theory including DMM and how we can work with families to develop further work in this area.