

Niki Jones

Health & Care Professions Council Number:

SL30488

Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists Number:

RC0032881



Clinical Manager & Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

Personal Profile

I am an enthusiastic Clinical Manager and Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist whose special areas of interest include Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), complex communication as a result of acquired brain injury (ABI) and the use of an individualised and adapted delivery of the Brick-by-Brick® programme (previously known as LEGO®-based therapy) to develop communicative competence. I pride myself on offering relatable support to children and young people with communication challenges, their families, and teams, and ensuring that all input provided is neuroaffirmative and person-centred. I approach all of my interactions in a trauma informed manner harnessing the principles of trauma informed practice (TIP).

I am currently in the fifth year of my doctoral studies at Manchester Metropolitan University and enjoy actively contributing to the developing evidence base for ABI, AAC and the Brick-by-Brick® programme. I am also a co-creator of 'MyAbility: Autism', a resource to support professionals in developing a young person's self-esteem and identity post ASC diagnosis.

Professional Qualifications

2018-Present: (Manchester Metropolitan University)

PhD in Health Professions – *'Delivering individualised packages of adapted LEGO®-based therapy: changes in the communicative competence of paediatric AAC users and the experiences of them and their communication partners'*

2017-2018: (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Postgraduate Certificate with Merit in Augmentative and Alternative Communication

2008-2012: (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Bachelor of Science in Speech Pathology and Therapy

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Publications and Conference Presentations

- *'MyAbility: A clinical approach to support positive self-identity'*
Presented at: Clinical Psychology Forum, November 2021
- *'An adapted delivery of the Brick-by-Brick™ programme to develop communicative competence in children with acquired brain injury (ABI) who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems'*
Presented at: Virtual World Congress on Brain Injury, Jul 2021
- *'The Role of Speech and Language Therapy in Supporting the Development of Self-worth and Identity in Children and Young People with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)'*
Presented at: Virtual World Congress on Brain Injury, Jul 2021
- *'MyAbility: Feasibility Study of clinical tool to improve positive self-identity in young people following traumatic brain injury, autism and cerebral palsy diagnosis.'*
Presented at: 2nd Cognitive-Communication Disorders Symposium, April 2021
- *'MyAbility: A clinical tool to promote positive self-identity for Traumatic Brain Injury, Autism, Cerebral Palsy in young people'*
Presented at: 2nd Cognitive-Communication Disorders Symposium, March 2021
- *'Building a way back from the brink: methodological reflections of mixed- methods research paused by a pandemic'*
Presented at: Postgraduate Conference on Interdisciplinary Learning 2021 (hosted by Lingnan University, Mar 2021
- *'Considerations for Adapting LEGO®-based therapy to Develop Communicative Competency'*
Publication: Communication Matters Journal, Apr 2020
- *'The Novel Use of LEGO®-based Therapy to Develop Communicative Competency in Children Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems'*
Platform Presentation: Association of Simulated Practice in Healthcare Conference, Nov 2018
Publication: BMJ Simulation and Technology Enhanced Learning 4, Nov 2018
- *'The Use of Adapted LEGO®-based Therapy to Develop Communicative Competency in Children who Attend a Specialist Educational Provision and Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems (AAC)'*
Platform presentation: Communication Matters Conference, Sept 2018

Training Completed:

Formalised training programmes including:

- Brick-by-Brick™ Programme – Initiate, Facilitator and Trainer levels
(currently a licensed UK Brick-by-Brick™ trainer)
- Elklan – 0-25's with Complex Needs *(trainer status achieved)*
- Bricks for Autism® – Facilitator and Trainer levels *(trainer status achieved)*

- Talk Tools
- Parent Child Interaction (PCI) – Michael Palin Centre for Stammering
- Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS)
- Intensive Interaction
- Clinical Practice Educator training
- Safeguarding (including Prevent)
- Mental Wellbeing in Children and Young People
- Attendance at a range of short training sessions and seminars on topics including:
 - [AAC and Assistive Tech](#): Communicator 5, LAMP, Revolutionising Assessment and Access with Eye Gaze, Access and Engagement for Special Education, Makaton, ACE Centre training days on developing high tech communication skills and iPad accessibility, Grid 3 Expert
 - [Formal assessments](#): CELF-5, Raven's
 - [Sensory processing and emotional regulation](#)
 - [Working in the medico-legal sector](#)
 - [Therapy approaches](#): Attention Autism, Neurologic Music Therapy, Trauma and trauma informed practice (TIP)
 - [Health conditions affecting communication](#): ASC, hypermobility, ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome and tic disorders, acquired brain injury (ABI),
 - [Management training](#)
- Attendance at the National Institute for Health Research writing retreat 2022 (including a range of research themed seminars)
- Attendance at a range of postgraduate workshops on research methods and evidence based practice

I have strong links with a number of specialist educational provisions across the North-West of England; most notably in Merseyside. I work in partnership with a range of international companies including Play Included™ and Tobii-Dynavox and deliver/co-deliver training alongside other professionals within these organisations. I am a trained Clinical Educator for speech and language therapy students from Manchester Metropolitan and the University of Manchester.

I have attended and presented at a range of national and international conferences and events including:

- The Communication Matters Conference (presenter in 2018, attended in 2022)
- Virtual World Congress on Brain Injury (2021)
- Postgraduate Conference on Interdisciplinary Learning (2021)
- The Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare Conference (2018)
- The British and Irish Orthoptic Society

Work Experience

January 2021 – Present: ATtherapy, Clinical Manager (Band 8)

I enjoy supporting our team of therapists, assistive technologists, and assistants, and encouraging them to lead the way in innovative speech and language therapy practices. I am proud of the strong working relationships I have formed with the multi-disciplinary teams that we work alongside and appreciate the opportunity to highlight to them the level of excellence displayed by our team members. I look forward to developing our neurodivergent-inclusive workplace further, and providing an environment that supports and champions equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

July 2019 – Present: ATtherapy, Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist (Band 7)

I have a varied caseload including children and young people with complex needs, Learning Disability, Autism (ASC) and Acquired Brain Injury (ABI); many of whom use AAC. I work with children and young people across the North-West of England and Wales who are developing their communication skills, from early communicators to those targeting their higher level language skills and emotional and behavioural regulation. I am the ATtraining Lead and manage the scheduling and delivery of multiple training packages and free CPD webinars across the year. I deliver training in the Brick-by-Brick™ Programme across the UK and am a proud ambassador of Play Included and the LEGO® Foundation.

May 2016 – August 2017, January 2019 – Present: Pearson Assessment, Psychological Tester (Child and Adult Workforce)

I previously recruited participants and collected then collated data for the standardisation of the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF) 5 assessment; an updated version of a frequently used speech and language assessment. As a result of my participation in the CELF-5 project I have been asked to take part in Pearson's latest standardisation project for the Raven's 2 assessment.

September 2012 – July 2019: Lansbury Bridge School & Sports College, Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

My role as the school funded speech and language therapist involved working with children and young people aged 3-16 years with Education, Health and Care Plans. Clients I supported during my time in the role had a range of developmental disabilities including Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and PMLD, as well as acquired brain injuries. I led AAC assessment teams in considering potentially successful high-tech devices for pupils to develop their functional communication skills as well as supporting the introduction and development of uses of no and low tech forms of communication. A large part of my role was the creation and delivery of training courses for parents, school staff and agencies such as respite centres, social care teams and student teachers/volunteers. This included the delivery of accredited Elklan training courses as well as providing informal training sessions on topics including total

communication, LEGO®-based Therapy, aided language stimulation, Colourful Semantics and effective communication partners.

August 2008 - September 2012: Warrington Disability Partnership, Personal Assistant

Whilst studying for my A Levels and Undergraduate degree I took on the role of Personal Assistant to two young people with Autism who used AAC to support their communication. My role involved supporting them within their homes and within the wider community, including access and engagement in social groups such as local disability playschemes. Supporting young AAC users in this way enabled to gain an understanding of the challenges many AAC users face in communicating with a range of communication partners in different environments and in communicating functionally in environments such as the swimming baths where access to preferred methods of communication may be logistically challenging.