

# Jo Gillam

## Disability/Autism Consultant & Trainer

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### How I can help you

If your team would like to be more inclusive, I offer training & practical advice. With a background in the education, charity, local authority, cultural & heritage sectors, I know about the constraints & opportunities you have because I've experienced them myself. I offer introductory in-person & live online training on disability access generally & on some specific access needs. I specialise in museums/galleries with suggestions tailored to those settings but my introductory courses are also suitable for any teams who want to be more disability inclusive. I also provide site assessments for autism & sensory needs, make recommendations, & devise bespoke resources such as visual stories & activity plans. Please ask me for details of my consultancy services. Below you can find out more about me, my courses, & what clients have to say about them.

### Introductory training for all levels of staff & volunteers

My friendly, informative courses are aimed at people with little or no experience of the topics. They cover prevalence, terminology, some of the challenges often faced by disabled people, ideas for improving access, & the importance of involving service users. They increase participants' confidence through greater understanding, encourage further enquiry, help individuals to make positive personal changes & to work towards shared objectives afterwards. The emphasis is on everyone being of equal value while having different needs, & that being D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent is not the barrier to access. Some courses include bespoke resources. Feel free to discuss what is covered.

Although the training is designed for in-person delivery which can be more interactive and personal, the half-day courses can be adapted for live delivery online.

### One-day Awareness courses

- **Disability** - The intention is not to go into detail about any specific conditions (although some will be given as examples) or to create artificial impressions of disability 'experiences'. Rather, I aim to give a sense of the diverse range of conditions, the wide range of access barriers, & to illustrate of how some barriers can be tackled. We briefly touch on key legislation.
- **Autism**

**Half-day Awareness courses** – A lot of useful information is packed into each course so participants usually find it easier to digest no more than one course per day.

- **Disability** - A brief introduction to encourage teams to think about the importance of disability access & how to start improving it.
- **Neurodiversity** - An overview of what neurodiversity means & how you can make your service/ environment more welcoming to neurodivergent people. Note. Autism is specifically covered in separate training.
- **Autism**
- **Learning Disabilities**
- **Dementia**
- **Sensory Differences** - As the above conditions can include sensory differences, this course includes some of the same suggestions for improving access, while incorporating additional detail & a case study of how to improve access when a particular sense has been reduced or lost.

## What the training is like

Each course is structured around a PowerPoint presentation interspersed by discussion & participatory activities. Expect training that is relaxed, thought-provoking, interactive & enjoyable. I use examples from my personal & professional experience to make connections with & to give insights to participants. As much information as possible is packed-in to make the most of participants' valuable time & to give them a good springboard to find out more independently.

For in-person day training, I'll be with you for 5-6 hours, 4-5 hours of which will be training. For in-person half-day courses, I'll be with you for at least 3 hours, 2-2½ hours of which will be training. Typically, this comprises 30mins set-up & welcome time, followed by group training, then optional time at the end for any one-to-one conversations stimulated by the course content. Short breaks are offered approximately mid-way throughout each half-day session.

With sufficient notice, I'll do my utmost to make presentation adjustments for any participants who have access needs. Regrettably, I'm unable to provide captions (although for online training, some communications platforms have these as an option), Braille, Makaton or BSL interpretation.

## Complementary elements

- PDF copies of the presentation slides can be requested post-course.
- Participants can individually request personal course certificates.
- Training can be tailored to suit particular needs.

## Supporting documents available

- Health & Safety Policy
- Method Statement
- Risk Assessment
- Safeguarding Policy
- Proof of insurance
- Evidence of DBS clearance
- Testimonials from previous clients & employers.

No license is needed for this work nor are subcontractors used.

## A bit about me, Jo Gillam

I have a lifetime of close familial experience of a range of physical disabilities like mobility issues, neurodiversity including autism & dyslexia, learning disabilities, & dementia. This has brought me into contact with lots of other people with lived experience of these & with knowledgeable professionals. Throughout my career, I have worked with & provided services for members of the disabled community. This has ranged from helping visually impaired adults to use new equipment, to teaching school children with Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND). I have also been involved in disability access research. My work continues to be informed by the feedback of autistic/disabled colleagues & service-users.

I have a particular interest in autism which has led me to undertake training, run 'accessible' events, & volunteer with the National Autistic Society (NAS). I'm helping a growing number of cultural venues including galleries & theatres to be more 'autism-friendly'. This includes enabling one of the first museums to gain the national NAS Autism Friendly Award.

I specialise in museums/heritage sites for my other freelance work. This includes researching & producing learning & interpretation material, delivering learning sessions, & running family workshops. Please contact me to see if I can help you.

## What previous clients have to say

"Excellent delivery –highly informative. Has deepened personal awareness. Excellent participative activities".

"Really good, informative & engaging throughout". Thank you for the training day, I learnt a lot, it was so interesting & gave me a lot to think about."

"Friendly & informative. I feel more confident to be able to help autistic visitors to feel welcome & comfortable because I'm more aware of their needs".

“Jo was excellent again. She spoke clearly & concisely, & didn’t use acronyms or terminology that we wouldn’t know”.

“Great. Thank you. Lots to think about. I enjoyed the personal touch with stories & anecdotes from a trainer who clearly knew the subject”.

“I found the training enjoyable. You are inspirational in your approach & knowledge”.

“We feel that we are now more aware of the difficulties that people on the spectrum have to deal with every day. Hopefully, it will help us to be more sensitive to the needs of everyone”.

“Excellent quality of presentation matched by the quality of delivery”.

“Incredibly well-informed, easy to listen to & to understand, encouraging as well as informative”.

“Excellent at clearly categorising, explaining & offering suggestions to making disability access a priority in my museum setting.”

“I found the training really useful & will be looking to integrate it further into our existing & new education offers as well as our galleries. It would be great to consult you in future about this!”

“Very informative & thought-provoking. A good balance between traditional learning & interactive sessions”.

“My understanding of the challenges faced by a wide range of visitors & how we might best mitigate them, has been hugely expanded. That has presented practical opportunities to makes changes & sufficient knowledge to confidently spread the word to colleagues”.

“I feel my colleagues got a lot from it which will also help me, & I got a lot from it too. Thanks again for the excellent workshop (from someone who is autistic!)”

Clients & participants include: Braintree Museum, Centre for Computing History, Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service, Chelmsford City Museum, Chelmsford Theatres, Cynon Valley Museum, East Anglian Railway Museum, Epping Forest District Museum, GEM East, Higgins Museum, Long Shop Museum, Lowewood Museum, Museum of East Anglian Life, Museum of the Order of St John, Museum of Power, Museums Essex, National Horseracing Museum, Norfolk Museums Service, Panacea Museum, RAF Air Defence Radar Museum, SHARE Museums East, University of Cambridge Museums, & Warner Textile Archive.

Thank you so much. I look forward to working with you.

*Jo Gillam*

“A very knowledgeable, engaging trainer”. (Client)

