Mobilising specialist autism mentoring in UK universities

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Abstract

Many autistic university students in the UK may meet a Specialist Mentor (Autism) for regular, funded sessions with professional mentors throughout their studies. As yet, very little research has considered this provision. Following research questions set by autistic mentees, half-termly diary entries were elicited from specialist autism mentors across the UK. An autistic majority group of 'master mentors' shaped a reflexive thematic analysis. Three framings of mentoring practice were apparent. Diaries recounted narratives of how mentees used a diagnostic frame pointed at university cultures, mentees and mentors made a prognosis of how workarounds to circumstances may unfold, and the mentors themselves had a pivotal role in sharing mentees' joy to frame it for enduring motivation. Not only does this diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational model of mentoring reflect social mobilisation theory writ small, but it provides a flexible conception of mentoring that supports the growth of self-advocacy and an affirming autistic identity.

Keywords: autism, mentoring, higher education

MobSAM

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Context

19,565 autistic students disclosed to their UK universities in 2023 (HESA, 2024). Of these, around 55% seek support from a Specialist Mentor (Irvine, 2023). Students apply for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) alongside their student loan, a needs assessment is conducted and autistic students may be recommended and funded for a Specialist Mentor (ASC) as a form of non-medical help (NMH). Combined with the remarkable year-on-year increase in the number of autistic students, Specialist Mentoring for autistic students became established as a 'collaborative and holistic support model' (MacLeod and Green, 2009, p. 631). Depending on where the student attends university, this may be provided in a mixed economy of inhouse university provision, third-party suppliers and sole-trading mentors.

Unlike counsellors and therapists who work as adjacent Specialist Mentors (Mental Health), autism mentors are not required to be members of professional organisations. They come from disparate backgrounds in teaching, university administration, and counselling (Irvine, 2023), and there is a diverse matrix of accreditation pathways (Disabled Students' Allowances Team, 2023).

The roots of Specialist Mentoring (Autism)

Within the neurodiverse space of a higher education institution, the aspiration of the provision to 'remove barriers to learning' (DSA-QAG, 2016) informed a conception of holistic mentoring with some success (MacLeod and Green, 2009; Irvine and MacLeod, 2022).

However, this emergence of Specialist Mentoring has not been without issue. The Higher Education Commission's 'Arriving at Thriving' identifies weaknesses in the gatekeeping position of formal diagnosis, the detrimental effect of the two-quote system undercutting experienced mentors and creating geographical inequalities, and the lack of a system for mentoring supervision potentially leading to the overstep of professional boundaries (Hector, 2020).

Research on the specialist mentoring of autistic students is scant, though that which exists seems to have a common conceptual root. Nora and Crisp's formulation (2007) of mentoring in higher education is one that seeks to build psychological safety for students. This model informs much later research (MacLeod and Green, 2009; Roberts and Birmingham, 2017; Lucas and James, 2018; Buckley, Pellicano and Remington, 2022). In turn, Nora and Crisp's model is built on *The Complete Mentor Role*, a more productivity-focused approach that saw the mentor's role in passing on institutional culture (Galbraith and Cohen, 1996). This is developed around 6 dimensions: (1) concern for the mentee's feelings, (2) advice from the mentor about the institution, (3) probing the mentees' ways of being, (4) a confrontative challenge of non-productive ways of doing things, (5) mentors sharing their pathways through hardship, and (6) helping develop mentees critical faculties (Galbraith and Cohen, 1996).

The challenge of research that seeks to question such a long-standing concept is that this role happens out of sight in the 'black box' of mentoring (Nora and Crisp, 2007). Adding to this, the double empathy problem within specialist autism mentoring requires careful consideration (Milton and Sims, 2014; Milton *et al.*, 2017). The double empathy problem suggests that there is a two-way street in which two differently dispositioned groups - who perceive and respond to the world differently - will often misunderstand each other (Milton, Gurbuz and López, 2022). In the

mentoring relationship this may occur whether the relationship is between an autistic student and a mentoring from a mentor from the majority neurotype; or when an autistic mentor and their autistic mentee seek to consider the wider context of being a minority in a neurodiverse institution. To open up this particular black box of mentoring requires robust constructs of enquiry that promote autistic voices via participatory means. So mentors' diary entries were scaffolded through questions raised by autistic students, and analysis was conducted in partnership with an autistic majority 'master mentor' group.

Ethics were granted by the University of Birmingham.

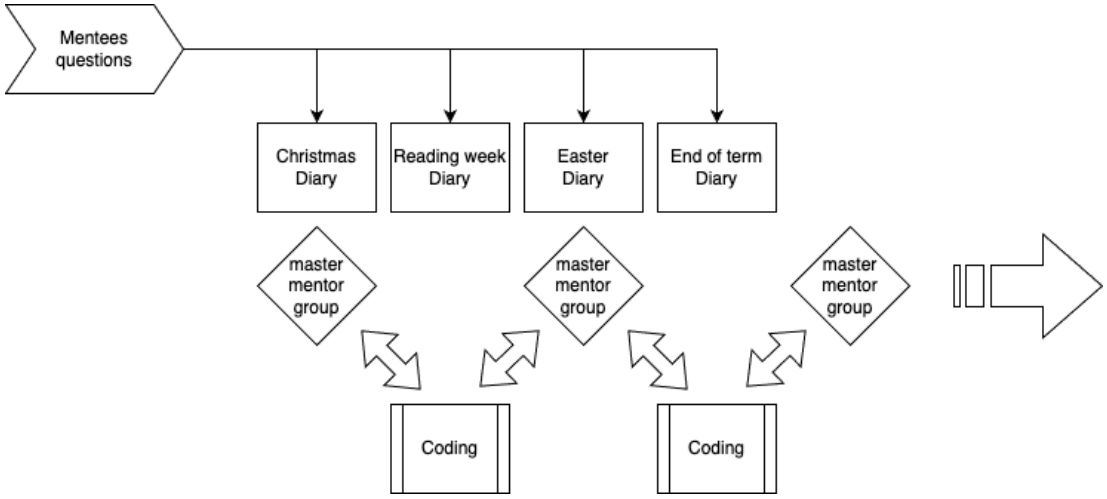
Method

Recruitment

Two initial groups were sought: one group of (autistic) mentees and one of mentors. The 14 'hypothesising' autistic mentees were recruited by mailing a recruiting flyer to disability offices at UK universities. The 29 specialist autism mentors were recruited via two rounds of flyers to UK university disability officers and non-medical health providers listed by Student Finance England (SfE, 2020); perhaps the ease by which such a group was recruited speaks to the need for research in this area. After these initial data were collected, a third group of 5 'Master Mentors' was recruited from within the pool of mentors to inform critical direction in analysis. Participants in all phases elected pseudonyms to keep a sense of ownership in the quotes reported here.

Procedure

Flow diagram of termly diaries and master mentor groups



Mentees as autistic hypothesisers

Seven mentees were met online. A loosely defined interview guide sought questions to ask mentors and widened the potential for diverse perspectives (Kallio *et al.*, 2016). Clarity and flow in the interview guide were critiqued by an autistic consultant, who was also a specialist mentor in their own right.

Mentees were asked what questions they would want mentors to address, these questions then led the phases of mentors' diary requests, see Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Mentees questions posed to mentors

Tranche	*Mentee questions*	*Mentee's pseudonym*
Christmas break diary	How much about autism do you know?	Lily
Reading week diary	What inspires individuals to work with autistic people as mentors?	Artemis
Easter diary	Do you actually understand us? Or do you just listen?	Mollie
End of third term diary	Do you find different mentoring strategies work better for different students or do you take a one-size-fits-all approach?	Sam

Elicited mentor diaries

To minimise the engagement decline seen in other studies (Kaun, 2010) ‘diary’ entries over the year were requested from mentors every half-term via Qualtrics. These diary requests all started with a question set by one of the autistic hypothesisers. Options were given to complete unstructured responses or to follow a loose set of reflective questions that had been suggested in interviews with autistic students. This broadly presented a structure around the barriers, challenges and successes of the mentees they work with.

Analysis

Data analysis of interview and forum transcripts, alongside diary entries, was conducted in Nvivo.

Master mentor review

Following the first two diary submissions, a group of five mentors were recruited to inform analysis. These practitioners were identified as those from those who gave responses that formed early coding of thematic categories (see Table 2). Though plans were initially drafted to use preferential ranking to ensure that this forum was selected to function within a participatory framework, this was not needed. The initial selection of the forum - conducted without knowledge of mentors' own disclosed neurotype - had a majority (4 of 5) of autistic autism master mentors, perhaps in itself speaking to the benefit of lived experience within specialist mentoring.

Table 2. Core mentoring themes and responses used in the selection of master mentor group, reproduced from (Irvine, 2023)

Axial themes	*Key text from first diaries*	*Mentor's pseudonym*
Spaces Of Safety	With their own strengths and struggles it is important to give [mentees] space to communicate these, so they do not feel they should always be coping or feel they should always be adapting and fitting in, let them be bored, annoyed, confused, fragile as well as being strong and resourceful.	Ana Ray
Extra-Ordinary Mentoring	A natural sciences student had been very disappointed that she couldn't do the owl pellet dissection in 'real life' and that the lecture was only observed by students - so I supported her to follow up with her tutor, source her own owl pellet from a local wildlife charity, store it in a university freezer and do her own dissection in her own time.	Claire
The Mentoring Role; Professional Optimist; Dismantling Barriers	An ever-changing role in which no two students have identical needs. A bespoke service centered around individual students but based in a firm knowledge and understanding of autism, and the main complexities associated with this. A detailed knowledge of how a particular university operates is vital in order to make students feel secure that they can be helped to achieve their best, and believe that their mentor knows how to access the available network of support which is relevant to their needs. An attitude of 'everything can be sorted' along with positivity and an acceptance and love of all things different are vital qualities in the autism specialist mentor. Finally, the autism mentor needs the courage to stand up against the system which sometimes misses the talents, contribution and also the extreme anxiety and concerns of autistic students.	Lady Bigfoot
Outside the Box Mentoring	One challenge I agree with my students is that my zoom background will never be the same, I will sit somewhere different each week. This way it is a low stimulus novel "environment" all bar one have thought this was a great idea	Sloth
Mentor's Character; The Ineffectively Effective Mentor.	I try to be myself as I think it is important for others to know that I am not perfect or trying to be, as this creates a more relaxed and open relationship where it is OK to make mistakes. The students I work with are generally very open-minded and accepting. However, this can make me look incompetent at times, perhaps (!). Sometimes a person wants to be fixed. If this is the case then mentoring has a different approach long term - where I try and work with the person to understand themself see and value their strengths and support them to self-advocate, but it takes time to unpick years of deficit-based judgements that have been thrust upon autistic people over the years. So, is an ineffective mentor sometimes an effective mentor?	Neko

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

This work seeks to straddle the fine line between grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Corbin and Strauss, 2015) and a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Within a constructivist framework, it used thematic analysis to describe the phenomenon of Specialist Mentoring (Autism) but aspired to - if not theory generation - then theory appropriation. Furthermore, the process of thematic analysis grounded the researcher's thinking in the data but was not conducted by a sole researcher in monadic abstraction. Rather, the ongoing analysis in concert with the master mentor group enabled an iterative reframing of data collection and further analysis throughout the year. Prompts were redrafted for each diary solicitation as analytical momentum was built. In return, a flexible and reflexive thematic analysis process allowed a confluence of analysis with the master mentors and the researcher's own status as both specialist mentor and researcher. Analysis is retold here alongside participants' quotes.

Results

The mentors

For those of us who have worked in university wellbeing, it is no surprise that 89.6% of participating mentors identified as female, echoing and surpassing the 82% prevalence of women in UK social care (Morse *et al.*, 2018). 24.1% disclosed as being autistic autism mentors, with an additional 10.3% choosing 'it's complicated'. With at least a third of mentors bringing their neurodivergence to bear on their practice, Specialist Mentoring is uniquely placed to inform wider institutional practice in our higher education establishments. This comes with a tension, in the "impact of the medical model […] and issues with a sense of belonging" (Lee, mentor) of navigating the divisiveness of a diagnostic line and the value brought by openly autistic mentors.

Autistic and allied mentors

There were no significant differences in the occurrence of mentoring themes between autistic and allied mentors, $\chi 2$ (1, N = 774) = 4.6081, p = .329927.

Table 2. $\chi 2$ matrix of thematic incidence by mentor disposition, reproduced from (Irvine, 2023)

Disposition	Barriers	Challenges	Success	Framing	Mentors Role	Totals
Autistic mentor obs (expt) [dev]	32 (27.19) [0.85]	52 (61.08) [1.35]	12 (13.00) [0.08]	85 (87.09) [0.05]	124 (116.64) [0.46]	305
Allied mentor obs (expt) [dev]	37 (41.81) [0.55]	103 (93.92) [0.88]	21 (20.00) [0.05]	136 (133.91) [0.03]	172 (179.36) [0.30]	469

That is not to say that the experience of mentoring was the same, as Claire put it; “We do what we just have to do. Which is really interesting as an autistic mentor because I find that part of [mentoring for advocacy] makes me go ‘I love doing something other than what I'm told to do. This is so exciting.’ But also there's a bit of a struggle as you're also going ‘I really want to follow the rules here’” (Claire, master mentor). Added to the tension of mentors being - as a last resort - a member of the institution who can support advocacy against the institution, autistic autism mentors may have had to tolerate particular institutional pressures themselves; “This is where I can struggle. If someone tries to micromanage me I can get frustrated because I’m like, ‘I’ve got you the final outcome you want, I’ve just done it my way. Show me a valid reason’” (Sloth, master mentor).

The mentoring

Specialist Mentors (Autism) were acutely aware of three things. They reflected on the knowledge base they required to mentor autistic students in HE well, the operational knowledge they needed to hold about their respective institutions, and the craft of the mentoring process

itself as a continual process of framing and reframing. It is to this last pillar that this analysis is chiefly addressed.

Through creating a non-judgemental space that was “led by the needs and preferences of the individual” (Claire, master mentor) the mentee and mentor could go about building “rapport and trust” (Ana Ray, master mentor) that would go some way to “alleviating associated anxieties” (Andrew, mentor). Mentoring avoided becoming another challenge by operating within a “different way of thinking. Autistic people are some of the most creative thinkers and this makes the mentor have to up their game to keep up” (Sloth, master mentor). This was linked to a bold humility in both autistic and allied mentors who “wouldn’t presume to fully understand what I have not experienced myself” (Lucy, mentor). Autistic mentors considered their own experiences of being misunderstood in a neuromajority world gave them particular insight that was expressed as solidarity with their students' experiences of marginalisation. For all mentors, the observed barriers and challenges of HE informed a conception of mentoring within a ‘bigger wish to establish equality and diversity as the norm in society’ (Nickie, mentor). Action needed to be taken and did so through reframing. “Reframing the student's experience of themselves as failing - by some normative standard - inviting them to look at things differently, think about what their values are, how awesome they are as they are, rather than constantly punishing themselves for not being 'good enough'” (Claire, master mentor). This presents a tension that needs exploring with mentees; a robust university degree must have the possibility of failure for it to be a meaningful proposition. Normative standards and expectations of education - particularly when constrained by three or four years of student loans - can foist failure upon autistic students when it was not warranted, yet these students must also be afforded the dignity of potentially failing themselves. Many mentors talked about the students who did not complete,

sometimes for students not receiving appropriate accommodations, often for students being overwhelmed and overloaded, and sometimes for students becoming disenchanted with their subject.

Within many stories of barriers or challenges, mentors reported discussing the underlying reasons for these phenomena through a process of student's framing and reframing. It was not enough for mentors to simply listen and assent to the marginalisation of the mentees that they work alongside. Rather there was a sense of a duty to find out "what [mentees] actually feel is wrong, and to reframe those issues as symptoms of stress due to differences. They can embrace and be assertive about having what they need in place, rather than feeling they are wrong to need adjustments, or extra time, or support, or more guidelines, or whatever it may be" (Lee, mentor). "To find alternative ways of looking at things, [people can] get 'stuck' in a particular way of being or feeling, and it doesn't have to be like that. It's a hard concept to learn though, and harder still to put into practice!" (Melissa, mentor).

This reframing was evident in three particular ways. Firstly, reframing was seen in mentees' critique of the contexts of the academy, campus and studenthood. Secondly, framing and reframing was identified in the sharing of strategies and tactics between mentees and mentors to approach barriers and challenges raised through this critique. Thirdly, being particularly evident in the joy that mentors shared, was a motivational framing of the student experience that leveraged the mentors' position and wisdom to encourage mentees to continue in their self-growth.

It was this third theme that resonated with existing theory and pivoted the underlying epistemology from a classic thematic analysis to something approaching grounded (if appropriated) theory. Motivation is the third facet of collective action frames in the frame

alignment micromobilisation process (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000). This sees the three core tasks of agents of social change to be identifying the problem (diagnostic), proposing solutions or strategies (prognostic) and providing moral or emotional appeals to action (motivational). Pleasingly, this diagnostic, prognostic and motivational schema was described by the master mentor groups as subverting the medical models that still occasionally arise within the higher education context.

Diagnostic framing

With specialist mentoring's mandate to 'remove barriers to learning' (DSA-QAG, 2016), many mentors aligned their role with the dismantling of these barriers. Mentors unanimously reported on structural injustices in their institutions. Looming large over all other barriers, were those caused by a lack of understanding from staff. Though the vast majority of university staff are "supportive when they have the time and resources to be able to do so" (SD, mentor), there are outliers for whom the double empathy problem seems insurmountable. As one of the guiding mentees in the project put it; "What is seen as a difficulty by an autistic student may not be seen as remotely difficult for a non-autistic tutor" (Poppy, mentee). "First let's just have a bit of empathy. This isn't a student that's making an excuse, because they went out and got drunk or... they cannot be bothered, this is a student that is trying their damnedest to be there but there's something that they can't get past" (Sloth, master mentor). In some cases, a university culture of dismissal of difficulties created cycles of staff avoidance: "If I end up encountering a remotely challenging or abrasive member of staff then I tend to back down rather than insisting that I need an appointment" (Sam, mentee). More than this, mentors saw that the lack of understanding from staff has a bleed-through effect as a barrier whose "impact is also felt by students with [autism]

who fear their existence" (Lucy, mentor). One experience of misunderstanding can become a fear of misunderstanding throughout the institution.

Within the mentoring sessions, such barriers of misunderstanding were reframed within the double empathy problem (Milton, 2017). Staff do not often get to see a student's "underlying panics and anxieties" (Anastasia, mentee). When this hidden fragility meets institutional pressures, mentors give "support to reframe events to try to understand that staff are not attacking them on purpose - but are in fact people trying to help - but sometimes with the wrong information" (Neko, master mentor). Emails are co-written to raise awareness on the institutional side of the dynamic that avoids a "hard line, thinking the student will conform" (Ana Ray, master mentor). In turn, framing the speed of reasonable adjustments within institutional sluggishness and departmental independence sometimes builds a student's relationships with departmental coordinators that brings about change. University systems are fallible human constructs, but their failings can sometimes be fixed by self-advocates working within to bring forth creative transformations. There is a clear role for specialist mentors to hold backstage spaces where the soft outcomes of the HE experience can be mulled over, advocacy skills can be practised and honed, and it may act as a place of rest between rounds of change.

In reports of mentees considering teaching and learning practices, it was often evident that "difficulties come around from lack of clear, precise information" (Louise, mentor). Without this clarity, assignment anxiety builds, emails are avoided, and the structures and routines that enable participation in lectures are corroded. Compounding this, there is a concern in some students over the stigma of having a mentor who may support managing workload and forming good routines. Mentors observed a pervasive narrative of independence - rather than mutual

support; hence mentoring conversations' concern with the interrelations of collegiate interdependence through a neurodiversity lens.

In the mentors' diaries, autism discourse was almost universally couched in terms of difference, not deficit. With such a pervasive neurodiverse frame alignment as a mentoring substrate, mentees could start to reframe experiences in which stigma and ableism has been internalised, and from there start the ongoing and exhausting task of chipping away at normative standards.

Prognostic framing

Simply naming the barriers and challenges faced is not enough. Mentoring is about "the incredibly diverse range of subjects we discuss [...], the passion with which students describe the things they care about, the shared satisfaction in overcoming barriers, the nitty-gritty of problem-solving" (Claire, master mentor). Mentors share potential tactics and workarounds to campus problems across their mentoring caseload and both present and past: "to draw on previous experience of mentoring other students with autism, but to try to keep an open mind about what might be difficult for each individual." (Lucy, mentor).

Development of an autistic identity "is a life's work - and for this person undoing a lifetime of built identity is ongoing and not linear" so mentoring has a role as a "being a bridge that people travel over to their next destination." (LilyLearning, mentor). Mentors and mentees talked together about the usually unspoken aggressions received as a neurominority; dealing with overwhelm, the attitudes of others and the need for clarity. In this, the mentoring room becomes a space to talk about the possible impact of these experiences and how students were rising to these challenges by doing things in their own way.

Tactics were shared - often being modelled by the mentor - of "tools that simplify tasks that might feel overwhelming" (Lee, mentor) by overtly breaking down questions set, journeys taken, access needs, living skills and the breaking down of planning itself. There is the pre-emptive need for double empathy navigation: "to talk through some of the ways in which [predominant neurotye] individuals may operate in any given situations" (LadyBigfoot, master mentor), and - when the injustices of others have been accounted for - how to take responsibility for one's own mistakes. There were examples of mentoring conversation reframing this uncertainty towards that which is "good enough" for each student in the context of their multiple demands (Claire, master mentor). This navigation requires both a wealth of experience in the mentor and self-reflection time for a mentee who is finding their own value.

Motivational framing

This diagnostic and prognostic framing can be a bit bleak without the last strand of motivational framing. Most mentors know that universities can get better. That being a student can be fun. With this hope, mentors work through "sharing motivation in terms of optimism, empowerment and the sharing of joy" (Lucy, mentor).

Not only do mentors share the joy of their mentees' success, but some find their own pleasure in having time to talk with mentees about their special interests. When trusted relationships have been built, students may choose to share those wonderful things that bring them joy. Mentors are able to see and share the joy in topics that may be discounted by other peers. In this mentors seem well-versed and well-placed to be able to frame and reflect their mentees' virtues that link to these interests: a passion for learning, compassion for friends, the building of communities, integrity and endurance. Should the mentor name and draw attention to these virtues, students are built up to enact more good. Mentors reported that this can often be

a little rebellious, as students grow in confidence to advocate for better - more neuro-affirmative - campuses. In this mentors are "encouraging that bit of risk-taking and subversion that comes as part of a growing up process - that they're kind of ready to do anyway, and if you kind of push them into that a little bit a lot of the work kind of does itself" (Claire, master mentor). This, perhaps, requires mentors to have robust mentoring supervision themselves to enable supportive relationships that allow confidential discussion and decision planning that is done in 'bold humility' (Claire, master mentor).

Discussion

Reconfiguring mentoring

Reflecting upon the aggregated findings here it is perhaps necessary to extend our conceptions of what mentoring should be. Whilst still a somewhat useful tool to reflect on practice, *The Complete Mentor Role* of Galbraith and Cohen (1996) does not quite overlap with the model of framing and reframing that was identified here. What becomes evident is that the concern for confronting 'unproductive strategies and behaviours' has the potential for becoming marooned on the double empathy problem (Galbraith and Cohen, 1996, p. 7). Should mentoring become narrowly obsessed with productivity, it buys into normative working practices which discount the need for the necessary downtime that is needed to operate in a sometimes hostile climate. Mentoring autistic students cannot be another means of control that limits students' flourishing and taking their own place in the academy. Rather, the model of mentoring through reframing proposed here has the potential to liberate students through the nurturing of self-determination.

Framing and reframing

Perhaps we should not be surprised that specialist mentoring with autistic university students has reframing at the heart of its craft. There has been a slow move over the last two decades to de-pathologise attitudes towards autistic being and to move towards a neurodiverse concept of people in all our diversity (Happé and Frith, 2020; Dwyer *et al.*, 2024; Legault, Catala and Poirier, 2024). With this has come the need for a sense of belonging for autistic students and staff within the academic community. The resonance of framing in such a context is one that is found in the realms of a more sociological exploration of the social sciences (Milton, 2013). For Goffman - in *Frame Analysis* (1974) - frames are the structures we use to organise our experiences, they are the socially constructed means by which we each interpret the world. Mentees' frames are brought to mentors who hold a space for co-creating a keying to make sense of student experiences. This is through dialogue that both changes the tone of the frame to something more optimistic and - in Goffman's terms - permits laminating of the lens of reframing. Mentoring as framing fundamentally becomes a social act. It is this optimistic reframing that enables the mentoring witnessed in the narratives of this project, to be places in which self-advocacy and self-determination can be fostered.

Limitations

This work faced two core limitations: firstly, diaries were solicited before and during the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, so they contain accounts of disrupted mentoring provisions that needed consideration before generalising. Secondly, this is a shortened report of a project conducted for the fulfilment of a PhD, and as a PhD project, there are constraints to

participatory approaches. Whilst autistic hypothisisers and the co-analysis from the master mentor group are a step towards ensuring full participation in the creation of knowledge, it is short of the hallmark that a wider team might bring.

Conclusion

Mobilising Mentoring

Within Higher Educational Institutions, specialist mentoring has become an established mechanism for meeting the access needs of students with specific disabilities. This is particularly notable in the case of neurodivergent students, of which there are growing numbers.

Being fundamentally a social act, specialist autism mentoring in UK universities can be seen to co-opt frame mobilisation theory (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow, 2022). Mentoring is located within the persons of the mentee and mentor who are both firmly contextualised in the institution of higher education. To see the student in isolation of this context is not to see them as a student. Frame alignment as a sociological mode writ small permits a concept of mentoring that becomes alive with institutional university culture as well as the developing ongoing student and mentor habitus. Developing a model for mentoring that is constructed as an agent of both individual and collective change allows it to be both a model that can speak to mentoring in other contexts, and to be a flexible enough paradigm of mentoring to take whatever future universities may bring.

This paper has endeavoured to explore not just what happens within the black-box of the mentoring room, but also the potential for institutional change that specialist mentoring can mobilise. The reflections recounted in this study articulate very powerfully the ways in which the

mentoring role, much like higher education itself, goes beyond the provision of support for learning and can - for the students concerned - be a critical agent for change and a bridge to self-determination.

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