

**DEBRIEF**

**Supporting autistic adults to recall events**

Thank you for taking part in this research. This study is looking at how interview questions can be adapted to support recall of important personal experiences by autistic adults. We are also examining this in non-autistic adults as a comparison.

When recalling a memory, we must monitor how informative our recall is (to ensure that we are providing as much information as possible) as well as monitoring its accuracy. When asked a question about a specific instance, e.g., ‘what colour hat was the bank robber wearing?’ we usually try to retrieve a detailed, ‘fine-grained’ response (e.g., *blue*). We will think about how confident we are that this detail is accurate, and then assess this against a benchmark of accuracy. Typically, we will volunteer a fine-grained response (e.g., *blue*) when our confidence exceeds this criterion value. If we are less confident, we will try to retrieve a less detailed, general or ‘coarse-grained’ response (‘what colour hat was the bank robber wearing?’ = *dark*).

Recalling past events and monitoring recall in this way can be difficult for autistic adults. In this study we are comparing autistic and typical adults’ recall when they were asked questions about a previously witnessed mock crime. These questions were either delivered socially (in an interview with the researcher) or non-socially (in an individually-completed questionnaire). We also asked the questions again for a final time with the explicit instruction to maximise accuracy over informativeness. The data will be analysed to assess the level of detail in participants’ answers to the different question types.

The study is testing different types of questioning support that could be used to elicit more detailed, accurate, and coherent memories in real-life contexts such as police interviews. This research aims to generate findings to inform guidance for practitioners such as the police on how they might adapt questioning strategies when working with autistic people.

The project is being led by Dr Katie Maras in the Department of Psychology, University of Bath. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the research, you can contact Dr Maras [k.l.maras@bath.ac.uk](mailto:k.l.maras@bath.ac.uk); 01225 383801, or Dr Jade Norris [j.norris@bath.ac.uk](mailto:j.norris@bath.ac.uk).

Thank you once again. We really appreciate your participation in our research.