



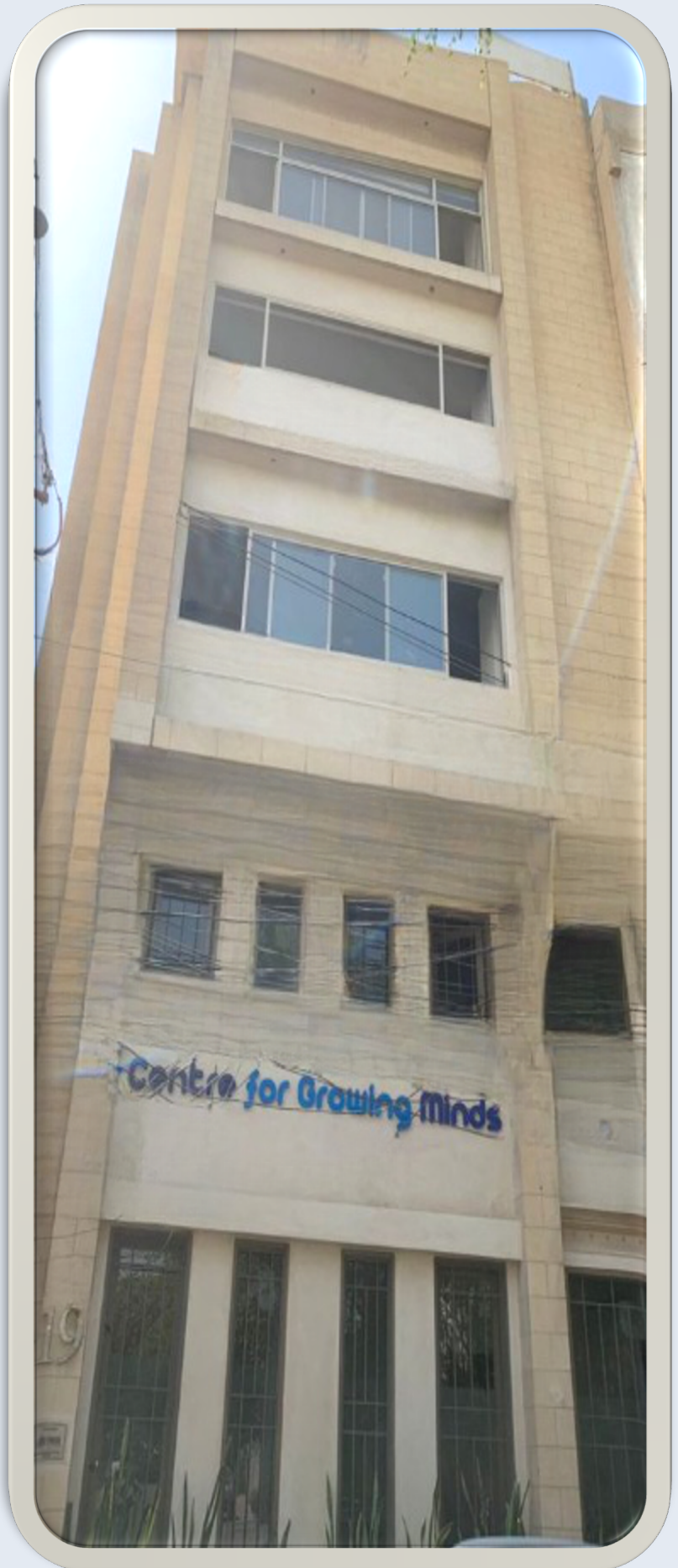
# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August - September  
2023

Volume 8

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Recap of our webinar on Puberty in teens
- Glimpse into social skills group sessions
- Highlights from the month
- Session and webinars conducted by our two BCBA's.
- An interesting read from Dawn Newspaper



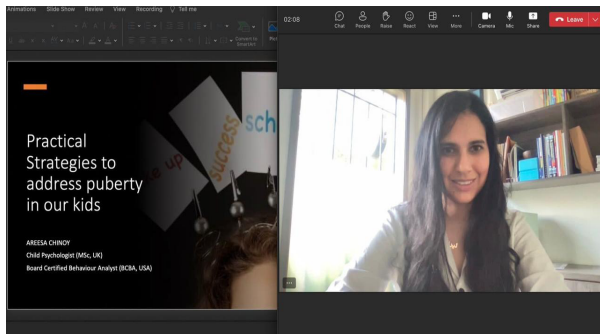
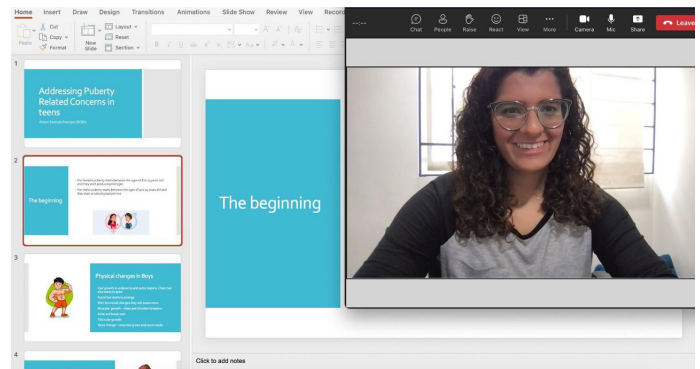
**CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
[www.growingminds.com.pk](http://www.growingminds.com.pk)

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

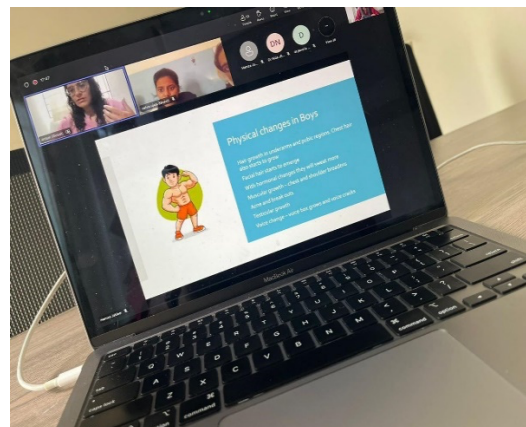
**Quick recap of our Webinar: Addressing Puberty Related Concerns In Teens With Special Needs.**

**A little insight on the information shared during the webinar.**

In this webinar we discussed the basics of puberty, and the kind of changes that take place in boys and girls when they reach puberty. We also talked about the emotional and physical changes which teenagers face during this time and how this can be a challenging time for them.



We also addressed some practical strategies of when, how and what to share with your kiddos along with the importance of preparing our kids early!



CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
[www.growingminds.com.pk](http://www.growingminds.com.pk)

---

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

---

## An introduction to Social Skills

Within our social skills sessions, every week group members ranging from ages 10-12 work on various topics aimed at enhancing communication and social interaction. A few are described below:

### 1. Personal space

Group members are introduced to the concept of personal space through the use of social stories and role-playing exercises. After the concept is introduced, each member will be assisted to determine appropriate actions for different levels of interaction: waving to certain individuals, shaking hands with others, and allowing close proximity to a few. If group members display behaviours that deviate from the established norms of personal space, the therapist will intervene to help them recognize and suggest an alternative behaviour. The ability to maintain personal space and the comprehension of one's own boundaries are significant skills for adolescents.

### 2. Showing interest:

In social situations, displaying interest in others creates pathways for increased interactions and opportunities for friendships. Children often need assistance in developing this skill. Within our sessions, members are taught different methods for expressing interest in their peers. These methods include asking questions, responding to social cues, commenting on other's achievements, and engaging in active listening by maintaining attention when others are talking. Therapists derive situations to help group members engage in behaviours expected when showing interest in others.

### 3. Asking for help:

Frequently, children are unable to independently perform a task that is expected from them. Such circumstances can lead to frustration and may lead to various inappropriate behaviours due to distress. In our social skills, we assist children in recognising when they need assistance, how they feel about it and how they can ask for help from people around them. This skillset serves to foster practical communication, emotional regulation, and enhance their ability for problem solving within social contexts. Social stories and real scenarios within sessions are used as opportunities to teach how members can ask for help.

**CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
www.growingminds.com.pk

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

**Social Skills 101**



**SOCIAL SKILLS**

NAIHA KHAN, RBT

## SHOWING INTEREST

Children work on pro-social behaviours such as:

1. Asking follow up questions
2. Responding to social gestures
3. Listening to others when they speak

They work on this skill through social stories, role play and real life situations!

Fatima's friend Aiyas walked into her classroom very excited. She said, "Fatima, have something really interesting on my way to school today?" Fatima did not look at Aiyas and looked down at her table. She showed no interest in her. Aiyas was waiting for Fatima to ask her what the shoe. She looked confused and said "I saw a very cool looking bird. My mom told me it is called a frogmouth!" Fatima wanted to ask Aiyas about the cool bird but was too shy to do so. Aiyas decided to look around to see if her another friend Sarah had arrived yet.



## PERSONAL SPACE

Group members work on understanding the concept of personal space around themselves first, before establishing different types of boundaries with different people.

Teaching our older kiddos a little bit about personal space...




## ASKING FOR HELP

Identifying when one needs help and being able to ask for it appropriately is a significant skill. Group members are assisted by their therapists to identify times when each member can ask for help. Social stories and scenarios promote the use of this skill.

I need help!

A social story





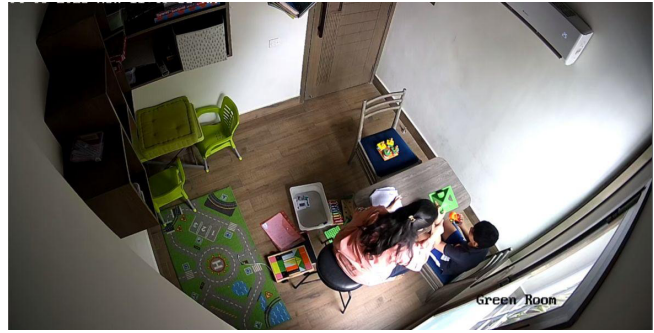
**CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
[www.growingminds.com.pk](http://www.growingminds.com.pk)

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

**Highlights from the month**



Staff training staff



Celebrating our RBT's birthday



Staff training day

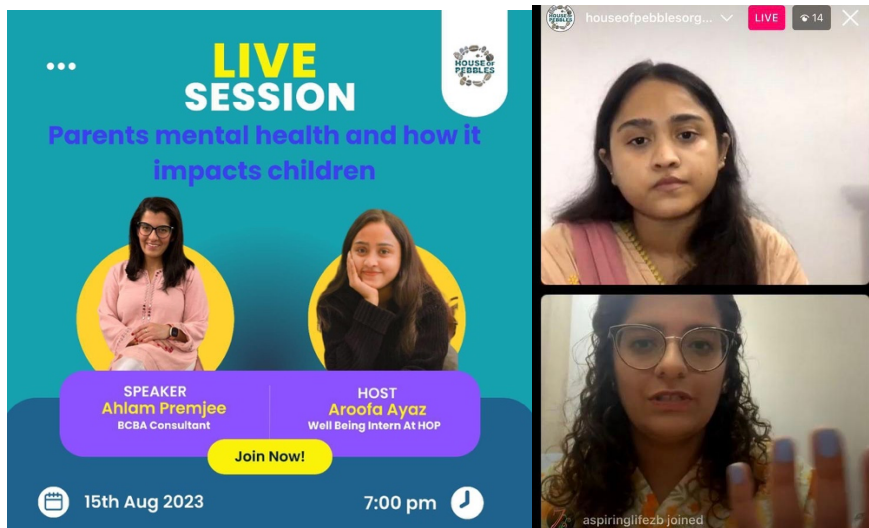
**CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
[www.growingminds.com.pk](http://www.growingminds.com.pk)

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

**Foundations of Applied Behavior Analysis: An in-house session conducted at House of Pebbles by our founder, Areesa Chinoy**



**Live session conducted on Parental mental health and its impact on children in collaboration with House of Pebbles with our BCBA Ahlam Premjee**





CENTRE FOR GROWING MINDS  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
www.growingminds.com.pk

AUGUST 2023 – VOLUME 8

Excerpts from Dawn article – Interesting Read!

► WIDE ANGLE

Here are seven clues that Hercule Poirot might be autistic

# IS HERCULE POIROT AUTISTIC?

By Rebecca Ellis

difference can be positive for those who feel under-represented in the media.

**THE DETECTIVE**  
Detectives are often ND-coded in crime fiction stories. Their actions and diverse thought patterns are typically not understood by those around them. So, their personalities are labelled as “different”, or their mannerisms are classed as odd or eccentric.  
Some are explicitly ND, such as Adrian Monk in the US series *Monk* and Saga Noren in the Nordic noir series *The Bridge*. Others have been headcanoned as ND — most frequently, Sherlock Holmes in his various iterations.  
Here are seven reasons why Hercule Poirot is also ND-coded:

**1. SOCIAL EXCLUSION**  
Poirot is regularly seen as “different” by those around him. Often, this is attributed to him being Belgian, with other characters drawing attention to his “odd” behaviours. He is also described as “positively exotic” in 1937’s *Dumb Witness*, and is regularly referred to as being French, something which angers Poirot.

**2. SCRIPTING**  
Poirot scripts conversations prior to having them, planning out what he will say and how he will act towards people, much like autistic people often do.

**3. MASKING**  
He also masks, which is a phenomenon frequently reported by autistic people, in which they hide or reduce elements of themselves to fit in. Poirot does this by putting on his “foreign shield of exaggerated mannerisms” — sometimes taking advantage of his uniqueness, knowing how others will see him and behaving accordingly.

**4. PSYCHOLOGY**  
Poirot is interested in psychology, a common special interest for autistic people, who often wish to have an in-depth understanding of people.  
He states that his brain and mind work differently to those around him, and arguably values his enduring companion Hastings for his “neurotypical” insights, telling him: “In you, Hastings, I find the normal mind almost perfectly illustrated.”

**5. INTERACTION**  
Poirot also displays a unique interaction style, which other characters often do not understand, or label peculiar. This mirrors the differences in communication preferences, and misunderstandings this can lead to, between neurotypical and ND people.  
Poirot is less governed by social norms and customs, considering each character as an individual, regardless of their age, sex, gender or socio-economic status. Christie often played on the readers’ prejudice, with the detective obliged to see beyond this.  
For example, in *Peril at End House* (1932), Hastings believes that an affable sea commander must be above suspicion, but Poirot responds: “Doubtless he has been to what you consider the right school. Happily, being a foreigner, I am free from these prejudices, and can make investigations unhampered by them.”

**6. ROUTINE**  
Poirot is very particular in the way he solves crimes, through order and method. He enjoys keeping a routine, typically revolving around his meals, which he is also very particular about: “For my breakfast, I have only toast which is cut into neat little squares.”  
Autistic people often find comfort in familiarity and in eating the same or safe foods.

**7. SENSORY REGULATION**  
Poirot wears tight, patent leather shoes, as described in *Hallowe’en Party* (1969): “He was unsuitably attired as to the feet in patent leather shoes which were, so Mr Fullerton guessed shrewdly, too tight for him.”  
This habit is arguably for sensory reasons, which is very important for autistic people and their wellbeing.  
Poirot requires a particular sensory environment to think properly, and values his alone time to process what he has learnt. He also likes to keep his immediate surroundings, including his friend Hastings, neat and orderly.  
Although Poirot’s neurotype is never explicitly detailed in Christie’s works, fellow ND readers who understand and recognise these codes may headcanon Poirot as part of their community. ■

*The writer is an Assistant Researcher in Public Health at the Swansea University in the UK*

*Republished from The Conversation*



Kenneth Branagh as Hercule Poirot | Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy