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Wonita is a psychotherapist and paediatric occupational therapist with over 20 years' experience. She specialises in neuroaffirming, trauma-informed care and integrates Co-Creative Transactional Analysis into autism-focused practice. A parent of an autistic daughter, Wonita bridges lived and clinical insight to advocate for systemic change and inclusive, identity-safe therapy.



Unseen Selves: Exploring Shadowing in Autistic Girls and Women

Why do so many autistic girls and women remain unseen, undiagnosed, or misunderstood? One compelling answer lies in the phenomenon of *shadowing*—the conscious or unconscious mimicry of others in order to navigate social contexts. This camouflaging behaviour often comes at a profound cost: identity confusion, exhaustion, and misrecognition by clinicians and educators alike.

This presentation explores the nuances of shadowing through a neuroaffirming and trauma-informed lens.

Drawing on clinical experience, current research, and lived perspectives, the session will illuminate how shadowing manifests, why it occurs, and how it intersects with cultural, relational, and therapeutic contexts.

Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to recognise shadowing and how to support the development of authentic selfhood in autistic girls and women through sensitive, identity-safe approaches.