



## Podcast 14: The No Normal: Neurodiversity and youth in the church

James Blackhall, James Carver and Emma Pavey

What resonated most with you in listening to this podcast?

What gave you pause for thought?

### Some quotes to reflect on:

- \* James B: "I think we are learning that people have their unique gifts and actually that the whole population has their own gifts, because actually we don't all have the same gifts whether neurodiverse or not, and I think once we begin to move away from that medical model we can begin to celebrate that and I think that's what we're seeing".
- \* James C: "One of the biggest things holding people back, stopping people from going, 'Hey look I've got ADHD'... [and] sort of recognize and accept that ADHD is part of them is the stereotypes around it. So with ADHD we're often told we're lazy, we're destructive, and things like that, but we're not really".
- \* James C: "I think...the Church has great empathy and great support for people with neurodiverse conditions and we sort of need to open up our doors and go out into society and try and transform the way society views these neurodiverse conditions as well".
- \* James B: "I've been guilty of it in the past where I've offered to pray for somebody a bit inappropriately or offered, you know, thinking they must want to be cured, and actually it is because society has discomfort and it's easier to heal than it is to engage...with somebody where they are".
- \* James C: "Just engage in an inclusive and non-judgemental way which puts that person's needs first...we are here, we are part of your congregations and you shouldn't be afraid of us. All we want to do is just worship God in the way which best helps us and best expresses our love of God".
- \* James C: "nowadays young people might be less afraid than the older generations to talk about mental health and things like that and we're more willing to share our difficulties".
- \* James B: "I think there's something about being positive about difference because I, thinking of the people I know whether they've then got adult diagnoses or not, particularly who are elderly, who very evidently have some form of neurodiverse condition, there was almost a lot of shame around who they were, their behaviour, you know...If people can see themselves in it and see a reason for their behaviours and actually learn that there wasn't something defective about them, I think that's what people have carried".

# The Susanna Wesley Foundation



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## \* Resources and references mentioned

- \* **Justice, Dignity and Solidarity committee** of the Methodist Church
- \* **Faith and Order committee** of the Methodist Church
- \* **3Generate** youth work at the Methodist Church
- \* **My Body is not a Prayer Request: Disability Justice in the Church** by Amy Kenny
- \* **Arthur's Call: A Journey of Faith in the Face of Severe Learning Disability**  
by Frances Young
- \* Brooklyn Nine Nine - Jake Peralta