

Dr. A. Ruth Baker, MB ChB Dip Health Sci (Mental Health)

Autism Spectrum Consultancy:

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Contemplative Therapy / Reflective Integration Therapy™

Contemplative Therapy, known formally as *Reflective Integration Therapy™*, is a structured 12-session programme I am trained in, and now offer to clients in person or by skype (arranged by contacting me at avaruth.baker@xtra.co.nz)

Its founder Rachel Lee Harris, a psychotherapist on the spectrum herself, designed this specifically for clients on the autism spectrum, as an alternative to traditional approaches such as ‘talk therapy’, CBT, mindfulness etc. This revolutionary new approach is strongly endorsed by Dr Tony Attwood and other autism spectrum specialists. The current programme is for those aged 16 years or over, with a story-based variation for children coming soon.

Contemplative therapy draws on innate autistic strengths such as the capacity for “silence, withdrawal, intense focus and repetition” (1, p23) to address challenges commonly faced by those on the spectrum, such as issues with identity, resilience, self-esteem, sensory and emotional regulation, finding meaning and self-acceptance in a neurotypical world, and / or healing the effects of ‘masking’, trauma etc.

The goal is “psychological healing, a greater sense of self-awareness and personal growth” (2, p14) by learning to navigate life’s challenges “to a place of stability and inner peace” (1, p25). Discovering in the process that life is “not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived.” (1, p64)

1. Harris, Rachael Lee. *Contemplative Therapy for Clients on the Autism Spectrum: A Reflective Integration Therapy™ Manual for Psychotherapists and Counsellors* Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Kindle Edition.
2. Attwood, Tony – Foreword in the above book