

Dr Pooky Knightsmith

Inspiring Neuroaffirmative Practice



About Pooky

Pooky is an autistic speaker, writer, autism assessor and educator known for her engaging, straight-talking style and practical ideas that make a difference the very next day. She holds a PhD in Psychological Medicine and works across education and health settings in the UK and beyond.

Her work is grounded in both expertise and lived experience – as a neurodivergent adult and mother to neurodivergent daughters – and she’s passionate about helping professionals understand and support autistic and ADHD learners and colleagues with empathy, insight and evidence-informed strategies.

What to Expect from a Talk by Pooky

- Tailored sessions for education and health settings
- Practical strategies you can implement right away
- First-person insights from an autistic professional and parent
- Clear slides and resources to share with your team
- A pre-session briefing to ensure the perfect fit
- Engaging delivery—online or face-to-face

Supporting Neurodivergent Learners

Creating a Neurodivergent-Friendly School

This inspiring talk introduces a practical framework to create school environments where autistic and ADHD students can truly thrive. You'll explore six key focus areas and leave with clear ideas to implement right away.

Neurodivergence in the Classroom: Overcoming Barriers

Explore six common barriers faced by neurodivergent students - including sensory overload, emotional regulation, and executive function-and discover practical strategies to support learning and engagement.

ADHD: Spot, Support, Succeed

A strengths-based approach to understanding and supporting students with ADHD. We'll unpack common challenges and share practical strategies for organisation, focus, friendships, and wellbeing.

Self-Doubt to Self-Belief: Helping Autistic Girls Shine

Explore how to support autistic girls to feel safe, valued, and confident at school. You'll gain insights into their lived experience and learn how small changes can make a big difference.

Inclusive Practice for All

Fair is Not Equal: Supporting Every Student to Succeed

Learn how to balance high expectations with meaningful adjustments. This session helps schools move past "if I do it for one..." thinking and towards confident, inclusive teaching.

Heard, Held, Healed

This much-loved session explores how to create a culture of belonging and emotional safety. Rooted in trauma-informed and inclusive practice, it's full of ideas to help every child thrive.

Six Inclusive Practices for Every Teacher

A fast-paced session introducing six powerful, immediately actionable ideas to create a more inclusive, connected classroom and school environment.

Creating a PDA-Friendly School

Students with a PDA profile often respond to everyday demands with overwhelming anxiety. In this session, we explore ten principles to build trust, reduce pressure and boost engagement.

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Anxiety in the Classroom: Practical Strategies

Discover ten simple, effective strategies to support anxious students and reduce stress in the classroom – for individuals and across the whole class.

Mental Health in Autistic & ADHD Students

Explore how anxiety and other mental health challenges can look different in autistic and ADHD learners – and how to support them in compassionate, practical ways.

When Neurodivergent Students Can't Go to School

For some neurodivergent students, school becomes overwhelming and attendance starts to slip. In this session, we explore what drives school avoidance, how to respond with empathy and curiosity, and practical ways to rebuild trust, reduce anxiety, and support a safe, sustainable return to learning.

Getting to Why: Understanding Behaviour

Challenging behaviour is often a sign of unmet needs. In this session, we explore how to understand what's going on beneath the surface—and respond with curiosity, care, and practical tools to build trust and emotional safety.

Supporting Neurodivergent Adults

Making Work Work for Neurodivergent People

Discover simple, effective adjustments that help neurodivergent people feel safe, supported, and able to thrive at work—no diagnosis or disclosure needed. From communication to workflow and environment, we'll explore what really works.

Navigating Work as a Neurodivergent Employee

Designed for neurodivergent staff and allies, this talk explores common workplace challenges like executive function, communication, sensory overload and burnout—and shares practical strategies for thriving, advocating, and working to your strengths.

Confidently Supporting ND Staff as a Line Manager

A practical guide for managers looking to better support neurodivergent team members. Learn how to lead inclusive conversations, adapt expectations, and build trust and flexibility into everyday practice.

Managing Burnout in Neurodivergent Professionals

Burnout often hits ND staff hard and regularly goes unrecognised. This session explores why it happens, how to spot it early, and practical ways individuals and workplaces can prevent and recover from it.

*”Her mix of lived experience and deep expertise
was exactly what our team needed.”*

– Public Health Commissioner –

Talks for Parents and Carers

Pooky also offers engaging, practical sessions for parents and carers. These can be adapted to your setting and delivered with warmth, empathy, and real-life strategies—designed to empower families without judgment. Just let us know if you're looking to support your parent community.

Bespoke Talks

All sessions are adapted following a pre-session briefing. Many of Pooky's most popular talks began as bespoke requests, and she's always happy to create something new based on your goals. All talks are available online or face-to-face.

Book Pooky

To book Pooky or explore your options, contact:
Ellie Powling | ellie@speakingofbooks.co.uk

Ellie will help you explore your needs, arrange a briefing with Pooky, and ensure everything runs smoothly. She also represents a range of brilliant speakers—so if you're planning a bigger event, she's the perfect person to help you pull it all together.