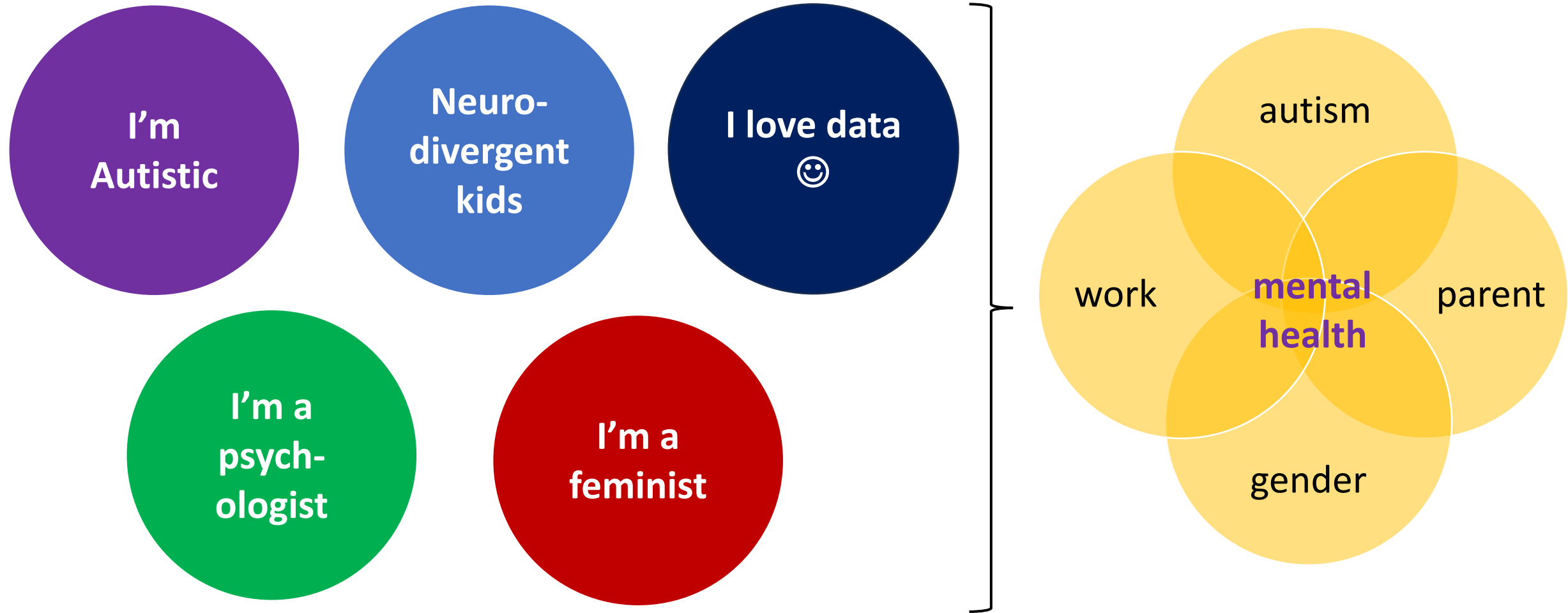


KATE GORE

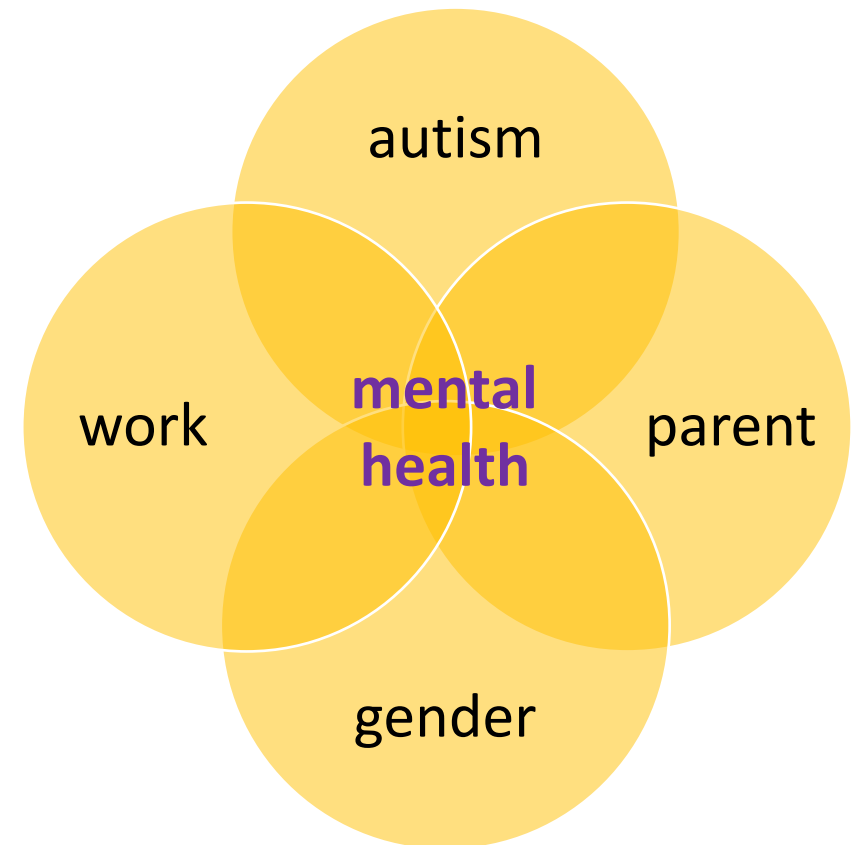
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR
AUTISTIC WORKING
MOTHERS/PARENTS (AFAB)

Why am I passionate about my research?



Prior research on my topic

- Soon to be published **Scoping Review**
- We looked at **all previous research** on mental health and Autistic working parents.
- We found 12 articles that met our criteria –
 - **None** of the articles **focused specifically** on mental health of Autistic working parents.
 - **Only** 2 articles had 100% Autistic working parents in their sample.
 - This made it **hard** to draw any **meaningful conclusions**.
- **Major gaps** in research - many articles could not be considered because they **did not collect demographics we needed**:
 - e.g., did not ask if an Autistic employee was also a parent
 - e.g., some research about parenting Autistic children did not collect data on whether parent is Autistic
 - Gender diverse Autistic working parents & Autistic working fathers under-represented.



Other relevant prior research

Experienced post-natal depression ¹

60%
Autistic
mothers

45% non-
Autistic
mothers

I find talking to professionals about my child causes me so much anxiety that I am unable to think clearly ¹

60%
Autistic
mothers

25% non-
Autistic
mothers

Examples of mental health diagnoses found to be higher prevalence in Autistic people compared to general population ²

Anxiety

ADHD

Depression

OCD

Sleep-wake
disorders

1. Pohl, A.L., Crockford, S.K., Blakemore, M. *et al.* A comparative study of autistic and non-autistic women's experience of motherhood. *Molecular Autism* **11**, 3 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-019-0304-2>
2. Lai, M.-C., Kasse, C., Besney, R., Bonato, S., Hull, L., Mandy, W., Szatmari, P., & Ameis, S. H. (2019). Prevalence of co-occurring mental health diagnoses in the autism population: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet. Psychiatry*, 6(10), 819–829. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(19\)30289-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30289-5)

Our 2024 qualitative research.

Results – Theme 1 of 4

Theme 1

Wellbeing: Work Gives Me Purpose.

Subtheme

Work Supports My Mental Health.

Subtheme

Financial Independence Means a Lot to Me.

“...I love that sense of satisfaction and fulfillment [at work], that I'm doing something that is important...”

“I know, it's just me, but I have a thing about not, I don't want to be on Centrelink.”

Results – Theme 2 of 4

“I'm just constantly going to appointments and if I'm not going to the appointments, then I'm arranging the appointments, or I'm following up on what they told me to do in the appointment...”

Theme 2

Challenges: It's hard being a working mother.

Subtheme

I Need to Constantly Juggle the Needs of Work and My Children.

Subtheme

Being a ND mother to ND children is a different kind of 'juggle'.

Subtheme

Guilt is a Working Mother's Constant Companion.

Subtheme

Part-time Work has its Own Set of Challenges.

Results – Theme 3 of 4

Theme 3

The Invisible Disability:
Everyone Thinks I Look Okay.

Subtheme

People Don't Understand
What It's Like for Me.

Subtheme

It's Hard to Get the Support I
Need at Work.

Subtheme

I Get Burnt Out from Trying to
Do it All

"...when we say we're autistic, people are like, no you're not...and then we try to tell them that we're struggling, and they just don't get it because we look the same as they do."

"...you almost feel safer if I say I've got a headache or a migraine versus this is something that actually impacts me on a daily, you know, day to day and part of my life."

" I get very, very exhausted and I've been exhausted for years, but it's gotten to a whole new level."

Results – Theme 4 of 4

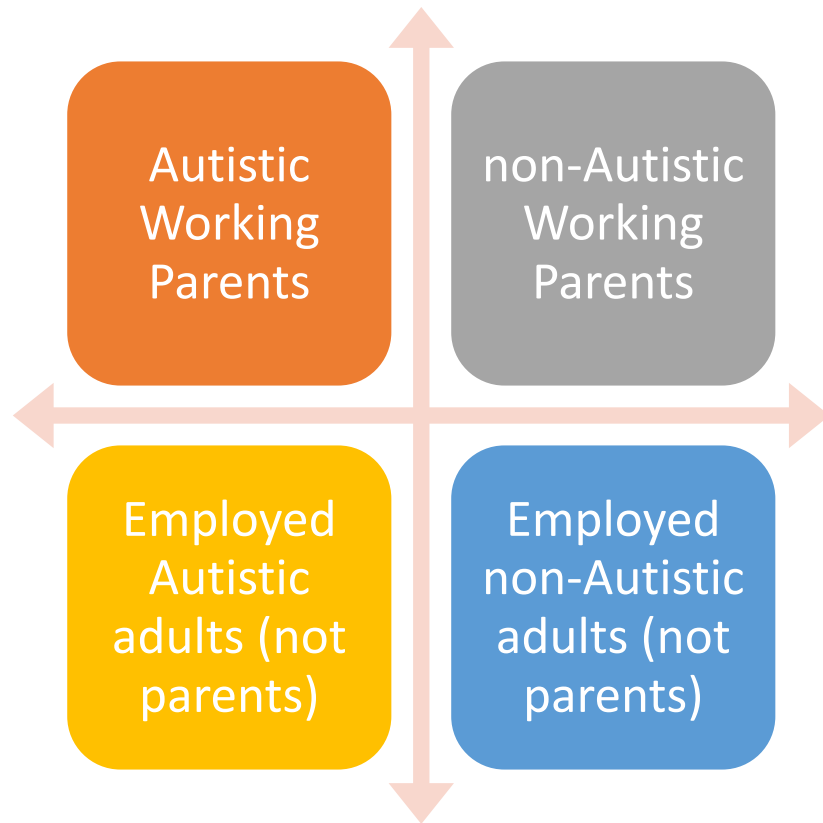
“And I was telling them again, and again, I can't cope...I was just dismissed. So, I didn't seek support because after that, I just, I just learned to cope with it.”

“I always think a lot about my kids. And I tend to, I'll put them their needs first before mine.”

Theme 4
Supports: Self-sufficiency
Out of Necessity.

What's next?

ONLINE SURVEY - UNDERWAY



Gender differences and group differences

Mental health conditions

Mental health measures

Physical health conditions

Masking / camouflaging levels

Autistic burnout

Executive Function



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



Olga Tennison
Autism Research Centre

**Thank
you**

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