



# CLAHRCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

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## Overcoming Barriers: Autism in the Somali Community



**Overcoming Barriers is a short film exploring perceptions of autism in the Somali community and the experiences of parents accessing support for their children. Their stories are interwoven with the perspectives of professionals from health, social care and education who support these families.**

Research by CLAHRC West and Autism Independence has revealed that cultural stigma surrounding mental health,

challenging behaviour and disability means that families in the Somali community often hide their child and don't seek help early. Parents can feel isolated and don't engage with support services for their child.

The research also suggests that service providers would benefit from a better understanding of the cultural perceptions of autism and the impact that this has on engagement with services.

Like other migrant groups, the Somali community has high numbers of children with autism, many of whom are likely to be severely affected.

But there is no Somali word for autism, making it hard to understand and accept.



## About the film

The film explores the barriers experienced by this community and highlights potential solutions for improved service delivery.

The film is useful to raise awareness amongst Somali and other migrant communities affected by autism, as well as other conditions that are commonly stigmatised.

The film can be used as a resource for teaching, training and awareness raising amongst professional groups, organisations and agencies.

Bite-size chapters make it simple to access and use in training, including:



- perceptions of autism in the Somali community
- navigating the system: health, social care and education
- advice for Somali families and service providers

This film forms part of Autism Independence's unique **Intersectional Autism Competence training** which is being launched alongside the film.

## Watch the film online

To watch the full 30 minute film visit:

[clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/OvercomingBarriers/](http://clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/OvercomingBarriers/)



## Who made the film?

Overcoming Barriers has been co-produced by NIHR CLAHRC West, Autism Independence, Therapeutic Media and the University of Bristol.

This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account ES/M500410/1

**Autism Independence** works with families and local authorities to help transform the lives of children with autism. They provide consultancy, training, including Intersectional Autism Competence training, and guidance for a range of professions to bridge the gap between families and providers.



## Find out more

For more information on this project, visit:

[clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/OvercomingBarriers](http://clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/OvercomingBarriers)

For more about Autism Independence's services including training, visit:

[www.autism-independence.org](http://www.autism-independence.org)

## What is NIHR CLAHRC West?

NIHR CLAHRC West works with partner organisations, including the NHS, local authorities and universities, to conduct applied health research and implement research evidence, to improve health and healthcare across the West.

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