

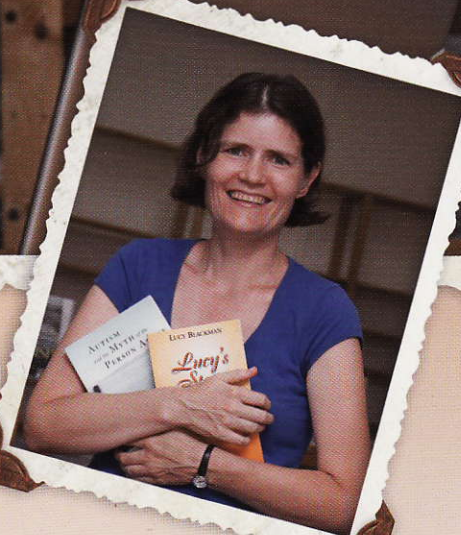


Lucy started to type with a facilitator holding her hand. She now types without any physical support. A partner provides emotional support and reads out her typing if necessary.

See Blackman, L., 2001,

Lucy's Story,

Jessica Kingsley, London



Lucy Blackman

I am 38 and have autism without speech, so I function as if I have an intellectual disability. I have a Master of Arts in Literary Studies, have written a book and been quoted in other people's books.

When I was 14 I didn't have language — at least none that anyone had observed!

Five years later I completed high school and went to university. How? Well, I didn't 'recover' from autism.

I didn't suddenly become so competent I could do this on my own. I certainly didn't learn to speak.

What I did learn, with the help of some wonderful people, was how to create

interdependence, so difficult to achieve when one has autism. I learnt deliberately to attune my movement and vision to connect with written language I can see in my head.

With a patient partner I can type coherent language and, in turn, these heroes can impose the kind of control I need to be a companion.

Now I have travelled overseas and to dozens of places in Australia. I have met lots of people, and I try to explain that having autism isn't about 'getting better' but about trying to make the rest of the world and autism accommodate and come to terms with each other. What an interesting concept!