

Our Journey with Autism: Works and Experiences

Selim Pullu

I am very proud and honoured to be with you all. Thank you for this great opportunity for giving me the chance to express my experiences and work with autism. My Name is Selim Pullu; I am an Assoc. Prof. Dr, ancient historian / archaeologist in University of Afyon, Department of History.

Day by day autism is increasing rapidly. Latest figures show that 1 out of 67 children have been diagnosed with autism. I did not know what autism was until a lot of the signs appeared with my son. I was only familiar the movie so called "Rain Man".

Basically autism (ASD) is a general term for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviours. Also every person with autism can be very different.

When it became a reality, we desperately started to seek for help. Those years the city where I lived had almost nothing for autism, neither as facility nor the personnel and no education or support networks. Even big cities had similar conditions. We had only one choice which was the total sacrifice for each family member as we were about to make big changes in our lives. Fortunately my wife and all of our children are Australian citizens so we decided and hoped we would have better services and education for Autism in Australia. The period between that decision and now is a subject of a book that I have been writing. I named it "Twenty thousand Leagues above the Sea".

In Australia I researched about autism, the education system, community networks in conjunction with schools, teachers, therapists, specialists as well as non-governmental organizations. I could say I have almost finished another graduate degree.