

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**A response to and caution of *Language is a critical mediator of autistic experiences within the criminal justice system***

The commentary *Language Is a Critical Mediator of Autistic Experiences within the Criminal Justice System* commendably affirms the fundamental role of language during criminal proceedings. However, revising established justice system language requires direct engagement with justice professionals to understand potential consequences. Changes without considering the larger context may counterintuitively endanger the rights of autistic individuals that the authors are rightly trying to protect. Much of the language referenced in the commentary, including the Miranda warnings, was standardized to protect the rights of all individuals, especially those charged with a crime, and the integrity of evidence.

Suggesting widescale changes for one specific population is legally questionable, has limited feasibility, and neglects potential downstream impacts during custody and adjudication. As written, the recommendations in the commentary fail to consider the potentially adversarial nature of many contacts between police and the community, the challenges in appropriately identifying autistic individuals by untrained actors, and the justifications for standardizing language. Changing the long-standing formulation of Miranda, for example, injects uncertainty into an already fraught interaction, potentially increasing risk for autistic and all individuals.

Criminal justice interactions do not happen in a vacuum. However, the approach to policy and practice reform presented in this commentary is relatively siloed, spurring implementation challenges. The informative recommendations would benefit from refinement in collaboration with front-line professionals. This strategy has guided development and implementation of effective, evidence-based justice system interventions to support individuals with Serious Mental Illness.

Our Global Autism and Criminal Justice Consortium developed the INSAR policy brief on criminal justice by prioritizing multidisciplinary and ongoing collaborations. Acknowledging international variation and contexts, we generated recommendations through direct partnerships with diverse stakeholders to ensure accessible and implementable policy and practice opportunities. This brief, and elements of the subject commentary, are a springboard to guide efforts that equitably support justice-involved individuals.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

Dr. Lindsay Shea receives contractor wages to support data and policy decisions for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

**DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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