

30th Annual Autism Connections Conference

Thursday, April 29, 2021, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

An Online Conference

All registrations include on-demand access through December 1, 2021!



30th ANNUAL
AUTISM CONNECTIONS
AUTISM
CONFERENCE
APRIL 29, 2021



Attendee Information

Are you a busy parent, caregiver, professional, student or self-advocate, who isn't sure what your schedule will be with the return to school, programs and in person offices on the horizon? When you register for the Autism Conference by April 22, all Breakout Sessions and Exhibitor Information will be available to you on demand, as a registered attendee, until December 1, 2021 for viewing on your own schedule!

See inside for Breakout Session descriptions and the full conference schedule. View registration site for conference details.

Register online at: <https://autismconnectionsma.org/en/news-and-events/autism-conference/>.



Keynote Speakers



Stacey Gordon

The puppeteer behind "Puppet Pie" and the voice of Sesame Street's 4-year old female Muppet, Julia, a curious girl with autism.

Morenike Giwa Onaiwu

An autistic educator, writer, speaker, parent, advocate and creator of #AutisticBlackPride.

Autism Connections, fostering a culture of inclusion, understanding, and empowerment

30th Annual Autism Connections Conference

April 29, 2021, sign up for Breakout Sessions 4/23-4/28

Professional: \$80

Parent/Caregiver/Individual with Autism: \$50

REGISTRATION INFORMATION*

Company and/or Individual Name

Address

Address 2

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email (note that this email must be the email that will be used to sign in on the day of the Conference.)

Attendee Name

PAYMENT INFORMATION

I am mailing this form with an enclosed check.

Please enclose check with this registration

I am paying by credit card, information below.**

Credit Card

Visa

MasterCard

Amex

Card #

Exp Date

CVC#

Your Phone

Name on Card

Billing Address

City

State

Zip

Signature

During Autism Awareness Month in April, Autism Connections' annual Autism Conference gathers parents, educators and professionals and self-advocates to connect, be inspired and build knowledge around the most current information on autism.

The 2021 Virtual Conference has a content rich agenda, packed with information and ideas to educate, motivate and energize you. You, your family members, your students, and the children and adults you work with all will benefit from your new-found knowledge and resources!

REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

Use this form and mail it with a check or credit card information to arrive by **April 22, 2021** to: Joanne Lucey, Autism Connections Conference, 41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035. **OR** register online at <https://autismconnectionsma.org/en/news-and-events/autism-conference>. For more information email joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org. **Please note it is best to register online if possible. When you register online you can also choose to pay by check or credit card.**

REGISTER WITH SOCIO

SOCIO will open approximately one week before the conference. At that time, you will receive an email with your unique password. You will then be able to sign up for SOCIO using the email you used for registration, and the password you were emailed.

Once you enter the site, please review the Breakout Sessions and sign up for one in the morning and one in the afternoon. You can then review the site to become comfortable with how it is working and visit the Exhibitor pages.

Registration deadline is April 22, 2021

* We are unable to offer refunds after April 1

** The credit card charge will be from Pathlight

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SCHEDULE

Note that Breakout Session sign ups occur **PRIOR** to the event date. Registrants will be emailed with their sign in instructions and can then review breakouts and sign up on **SOCIO**, when it opens for review on **April 23**. **IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SIGN UP FOR BREAKOUTS ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT.**

Breakout Sessions will close to additional attendees 10 minutes after they begin. Please make sure you are on time for the start of each Breakout Session.

APRIL 23-APRIL 28: SOCIO IS OPEN TO SIGN UP FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS, AND REVIEW EXHIBITORS, SPONSORS.

APRIL 29, EVENT DAY

8:00-9:00: SIGN IN

Registrants sign in to Virtual Conference on SOCIO with their unique code.

YOU MUST SIGN IN WITH THE EMAIL YOU REGISTERED WITH. SOCIO will not recognize you as an approved user without the original email.

8:00-9:00: EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE

View organization descriptions and resources, chat live with some Exhibitor representatives or email for more information. Pages will be available for viewing throughout the day.

9:00-9:15: WELCOME ADDRESS and logistics

9:15-10:30: MORNING KEYNOTE ADDRESS

10:30-10:45: BREAK

10:45-12:15 MORNING BREAKOUT SESSION

12:15-12:30: BREAK

12:30-1:30: AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

1:30-2:30: EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE

2:30-4:00: AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION

BREAKOUT SESSIONS SIGN UP 4/23-4/28

MORNING SESSIONS: attend one

Building and Maintaining Rapport with Caregivers and Providers

Justin Chambers, BCBA, LABA, SLPA, Amber Tower BCBA, LABA

PBS

Participants will learn to use strategies that build rapport with caregivers and providers. Once rapport is established caregivers may be more likely to engage in treatment strategies and trainings. Research has shown that the caregivers trained in behavioral techniques can train other collaborators in the procedures they have been taught. This may increase treatment integrity and effectiveness for treatments in which caretakers are involved.

Chutes and Ladders: The Ups and Downs of AAC (Breaking it down and making it fun)

Hillary Jellison, MS.CCC-SLP, ATP; Nerissa Hall, PhD..CCC-SLP, ATP

Communicare

Using the framework of the board game Chutes and Ladders we will outline the strategies and implementation tools for families and educators to support successful AAC use across multiple environments. We will review principals of AAC implementation: AAC modeling, creating opportunities for communication, and the triadic model of language and prompting hierarchy. We will review the 'chutes' that may derail successful AAC use as well as how to use varying tools and strategies to overcome these 'chutes'. We will share some case studies of success and hear from some parents on their strategies for successful AAC implementation in the home setting.

DDS Services for Autism NonID in the Changing World

DDS Autism Program Regional Coordinators - Pamela Ferguson, Lea Hill, Shannon Hubley, Maria Stefano

Department of Developmental Services

Regional Autism Program Coordinators from The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will initiate a discussion and provide insights on Adult Autism eligibility and potential DDS resources. This presentation will focus on the Autism without intellectual disability population- in these changing times. This breakout session is designed for individuals, support staff, family members and natural supports, and any interested stakeholders. Topics covered will be Adult Autism eligibility, potential services available, and lessons learned through providing virtual supports.

Forged by Fire: The Intersection of Race, Disability, and Gender[®]

Morénike Giwa Onaiwu, PhD(c), MA, Keynote Speaker

Existing at the intersection of multiple marginalizations dramatically shapes the way an individual perceives the world and is perceived by the world. Utilizing facts as well as personal experience, this dynamic presentation highlights some of the unique ways that gender and race impact individuals with disabilities (including neurodevelopmental disabilities i.e. autism).

Individualized College Support for Students in Need of Transition Services

Chris Kennedy, Regional Director; Brya Emery, Director of Admissions and Enrollment

College Steps

How teams can support students in their transition to a post-secondary education environment with a focus on post-secondary or pre-employment goals. Topics include the program overview, age-appropriate transition supports, partnerships both on- and off-campus, and monitoring student goals and progress towards greater independence.

For individuals or those supporting individuals who could benefit from transitional supports as they seek a college experience focused on post-secondary or pre-employment goals. Individuals would be interested in a transition to more independence within the post-secondary environment with peer and professional support through goals and participation in course(s) and in the campus community.

Advocacy Strategies for Autism Services and Supports

Maura K. Sullivan, MPA

*Director of Government Affairs - The Arc of Massachusetts
Program Director/Instructor, Operation House Call*

Maura will provide an overview of the needed services and supports for people with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities as we begin to emerge from this crisis. She will present a practical, hands-on and effective approach to lobbying with your elected officials.

Sign up for Breakout Sessions on SOCIO April 23-April 28

Teaching Boundaries and Relationships to Individuals with IDD and Autism

Maggie Rice, M.Ed, Director of Whole Children and Whole Selves; Brian Melanson, MSW, Whole Selves, Sexuality Educator

From 10 years of expertise teaching Boundaries and Relationships, we have developed accessible ways to teach complex topics around self-discovery, friendships, dating and sexuality. We will share strategies and skills for facilitating meaningful conversations and interventions in your own setting.

Therapeutic Approaches: CBT and Behavioral/ABA

Kirstin Birtwell, PhD

Lurie Center for Autism - Massachusetts General Hospital

Dr. Birtwell will discuss behavioral and cognitive-behavioral therapeutic approaches for ASD and specifically ways in which traditional interventions can be modified for children and adolescents who present with ASD and co-occurring anxiety, behavioral, and mood disorders.

The Intersection of Autism and Systemic Racism: When Worlds Collide

Jacqueline Williams Hines, Autism Specialist, Founder and CEO of No Small Victories Autism Awareness/Education Initiative
David Lewis, Clinical Director, African Diaspora Mental Health Association LLC

Williams and LaRoc Consulting

An examination of PTSD (post traumatic slave syndrome) as a contributing factor in diagnostic disparities, inequities in access to systems of delivery, self-advocacy and the correlation between reduced quality of life for those on the African diaspora struggling with an autism diagnosis

AFTERNOON SESSIONS: attend one

Autism and Co-occurring Medical Conditions

Robyn Thom, MD

Lurie Center for Autism - Massachusetts General Hospital

This presentation will begin with a review of the common medical comorbidities affecting children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The bidirectional relationship between medical conditions and problematic behaviors will be discussed. We will then discuss challenges that are commonly encountered by individuals with ASD in the medical setting and how a collaborative patient/family-centered approach can decrease distress and facilitate access to medical care. The presentation will conclude with an interactive case-based discussion.

Promoting Everyday Independence, Everyday

Peter McLean, M.Ed, Training and Development Manager

Pathlight

As family members, friends and care providers of individuals with autism we may be inclined to do things for those individuals which can limit their development. To promote learning, independence and personal growth, this workshop asks you to take a step back and examine our relationships. Join this interactive session for a refreshing perspective on building trusting connections and promoting greater independence. We will cover topics from the most basic need of feeling safe to building trusting relationships as we consider our approach to communication, community membership and promoting reasonable risk. You will walk away with new ideas to best support growth and happiness.

Effective Communication is Key to Building a Successful IEP Team

Nancy Farnsworth, Pathlight, Educational Advocate; Zach Smith, Self-Advocate

Special Education services and the IEP can be difficult to navigate. We will be discussing the important role communication plays amongst Team members, parents and the student. Topics will include role of team members, life experience, success stories and pitfalls, and strategies and tools to build an effective team and positive journey for the student. There will be an allotted time for questions and answers.

I Used to Be Bullied for Having Autism - Here's When It Stopped

Kerry Magro, Ed.D (please note that this is a pre-recorded session)

Bullying can be a lifelong concern for our loved ones with developmental disabilities. This presentation will offer a first-hand account of a young man who was bullied as he was growing up on the autism spectrum. He will share tips for educators and students to take a stand against bullying.

Puppeteering for Parents and Professionals

Stacey Gordon, Keynote Speaker

Puppetry has been used all over the world to tell stories and bridge relationships for centuries. Parents, teachers, therapists, and counselors are often encouraged to use puppets with children, but left without instruction on how to do so effectively. In this breakout session, you'll join Sesame Street puppeteer, Stacey Gordon, for an introduction to puppeteering for parents and providers. You'll explore new ways to incorporate puppets into your work and how to use puppetry to connect with others in a more meaningful way. Discover how much more compelling your work can be with puppeteering skills that match the heart of what you do. Bringing puppetry into your world doesn't need to be difficult or expensive. In the first part of this breakout session, Stacey will introduce attendees to inexpensive, easy-to-make puppets that can be just as effective as top-of-the-line, custom-made work. Stacey will guide participants through creating their own practice puppet (with a downloadable pdf), and will teach everyone how to bring puppets of various styles to life with purpose. You'll learn how to bring focus to your puppet, how to identify and express emotions, and tips and tricks to create deeper connections with your audience, whether your work is in-person or online, with groups or one-on-one. Participants are encouraged to print the PDF puppet kit ahead of time and have scissors and tape (or a stapler) ready to go for puppet-construction.

Everyone is encouraged to turn on their cameras, interact, ask questions, and participate with enthusiasm as we dive into an age-old art form and discover the power of play.

Good skills to have for this workshop are: Using scissors to accurately cut paper; applying tape (or use of a stapler); coloring (optional); holding your arm up for several minutes at a time; opening and closing your hand; muting and unmuting yourself when requested; communicating in front of a group; watching yourself on-camera; self-advocacy; being kind to yourself; being open to learning a new skill.

Setting Expectations: Providing ABA Services Now and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

Julie Hayden, BCBA, LABA

Behavior Assist

Participants will learn to set expectations across all stakeholders involved in client treatment. In-person, telehealth or hybrid service delivery models are now available from most providers. Ensuring clients and their families understand these options and how they may be utilized from initial conversations through intake, assessment, and treatment will help providers deliver individualized, effective treatment.

The Journey Continues: Employment as a Road Map to Independence

DDS Autism Service Coordinators Erica Donovan & Ashley McGrath

The panel is comprised of adults with autism who will share their experiences, employment support staff from Community Options, as well as two DDS Coordinators. This panel discussion will address the unique challenges that adults experience when planning for independent living and employment. Panelists will talk about their unique situations with housing, job search and working. Areas of focus include: supports provided as people prepare for employment, living independently and the challenges it presents, and planning for the future.

Trans and Autistic: Gender Inclusion in our Communities

J. Aleah Nestebly, MSN, FP Director of LGBTQ Services; Elliot Ezcurra, Trans Health Navigator

Cooley Dickinson Hospital

Transgender and gender-expansive people have always existed within autistic communities. However, the recent increases in visibility of transgender people overall has boosted the visibility of autistic trans people. Participants will gain a greater understanding of gender-expansive children, adolescents and adults. This workshop is for educators, parents and health care providers.

Making Connections through Pathways to Friendship

Meg Gaydos and Phoebe Goodman

Pathways to Friendship, The Arc of Massachusetts

Pathways to Friendship consultants will share stories of connecting people, the benefits of inclusive friendships, and also what to do when efforts are distracted and misled, which even when well-intended, can be terrible barriers to relationships. Making connections is exactly what we plan to occur when we are looking at enriching people's lives and our communities. Each section will emphasize the opportunity for people to build relationships within their communities, naturally wherever they live, learn, work and play. Support on how to encourage friendships for people with autism in different facets of everyday life will be explored.

You may attend one session in the morning and one in the afternoon the day of the Conference, and registrants receive on-demand access to ALL sessions and content on SOCIO until December 1, 2021!

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