

Friday, April 30 Breakouts

Session I

SMARTBoard Technology

Come and see the possibilities of using interactive whiteboards with students that have visual learning strengths. This dynamic and entertaining workshop will show use of SMARTBoards and highlight a wide array of activities. Learn how this technology can be used to teach math, reading, turn-taking, motor skills, functional routines and more.

Paula Buendorf, MS, has 12 years experience working directly with elementary students with ASD. She has used SMARTBoards in an educational setting for five years.

Stacie Stensrud, BS, has been teaching for 18 years. She recently began using SMARTBoards in an elementary autism program. She parents a child with AS.

RDI: Communication, More Than WORDS

Simply gaining speech does not guarantee effective communication. Learn the essential missing pieces to the development of communication for children on the spectrum in this workshop. Come prepared to participate in a variety of exercises designed to put this new knowledge into practice immediately!

Lisa Giebink, SLP, is a RDI certified consultant with 22 years experience.

Mariko Ortner is a RDI certified consultant with training in early childhood and behavioral therapy. She parents a child with ASD.

Right Brain: A Means to Emotional Growth & Regulation

The right brain gives us a sense of connection to one another and is the “relational” part of the brain. Art and movement activities have been incorporated into a therapy group designed specifically for older teens and young adults with ASD. Learn how to implement these activities to increase emotional growth and regulation.

Cindy D. Nollette, MA, LP, is a psychologist in private practice that has experience in providing diagnostic and treatment services for individuals with ASD. Nollette will be joined in this presentation by a panel of people that work in this arena.

Transition Reference Resource

Make your trip through the transition process more effective and efficient. Create a planning portfolio to use as a reference resource starting in ninth grade. Learn what this reference should include and how to transfer this knowledge. Be prepared and organized to ease this difficult time.

Jan Hanson, SLP and autism specialist and is an instructor in Hamline Autism Certificate program. She works on various committees including the Autism Symposium for Educators and the Transition Focus Group.

Lessons Gleaned

When a diagnosis of ASD comes into a family, many changes occur. Join one mother as she illustrates the issues, treatments and challenges she met along the path of raising her son with ASD. Through this presentation, you will learn strategies that can benefit the growing and aging ASD population.

Caryn Sullivan is a former attorney and writer. She received the ARC of Minnesota Community Media Excellence award.

Ask Dr. Minshew: Q&A

Join us as Dr. Minshew answers your questions. Her cutting edge research has increased the understanding of the cognitive and brain basis of autism, which has led to the conceptualization of autism as a disorder of information processing and brain connectivity. Get your specific concerns addressed in this intimate setting.

Nancy Minshew, MD is an internationally recognized expert in the cognitive, neurological and genetic bases of autism.

Session II

Teaching with Instructional Technology

Technology provides great resources and tools that, when used effectively, increase achievement, independence and engagement of students with ASD. In this session presenters demonstrate how to create cross-curricular lessons that engage and reach students on a daily basis. Come and learn a variety of ideas and resources that you can take into the classroom.

Ashley Geesaman, BA, is an elementary special education teacher who has focused on autism education and social skills therapy for six years.

Elisabeth Ollila, BA, BS, is an elementary special education teacher with autism education and training for eleven years.

Walking in Their Shoes

It is difficult to understand what many nonverbal people with ASD experience on a daily basis. This workshop will bring you into their world through simulation of sensory processing differences. You will learn some strategies to facilitate language learning and cooperation to use with nonverbal individuals with ASD. The presenters will also discuss the evidence base for therapeutic collaboration between their disciplines OT and ST).

Margaret Downey, OTR/L has worked with individuals with ASD in rehabilitation settings. She currently works with secondary students with moderate to severe ASD.

Nora E. Reid, MS, CCC-SLP, is the parent of a young adult with ASD. She has worked with children and adults with ASD in rehabilitation settings and currently serves secondary students with moderate to severe ASD.

Group Music Therapy

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of music therapy interventions for children with ASD. This workshop details the Integrative Play Group Model and

music therapy were used to foster appropriate play, social and communication skills between siblings. Attendees will get an outline and examples for using these techniques in a sibling group. Experiential activities for generalization to home and school settings will also be provided.

Todd Schwartzberg worked for 10 years as a music therapist and now is a professor of Music Therapy and clinic coordinator at the U of M.

Journey to Independence

A panel of parents and autism specialists will discuss the needs and supports they sought out for their children with ASD. Come and learn what they needed, what helped, what resources are available, specific transition issues and how each journey can inform yours.

Tracy Templeton, Dianna Michels, Kim Busse & Megan Halverson are all autism specialists for four different districts and parents of children with ASD.

Recovery from Autism

This presentation focuses on one story of recovery from autism and its implications for professional practice, family involvement in treatment and public information and education. This case study follows a child diagnosed at 22 months through years of diligent treatment to the present when he is a typical 25 year-old college graduate. Commentaries by family members about their journey through these years will be included.

Joseph Mohs, BA, is co-owner of Living Proof, an organization that provides support and resources to families living with ASD.

Dr. Robert Mohs is a practicing dentist in Duluth, MN.

Rapid Prompting: A Case Study

While our world is filling with strategies to accept higher functioning individuals with ASD, accommodate them or tweak them into “normalcy”, the future of lower functioning ones looks less rosy. Come to this session where we will address commonly held assumptions about verbal output, visual learning and engagement at the lower end of the spectrum. How can Rapid Prompting assist you reaching and teaching individuals with low output? Join us in learning this promising technique.

Alexandra Oppenheimer, MEd, has 28 years experience teaching. She also parents a child with ASD.

Social Skills in Middle School

This unique curriculum explores the “jungle” of middle school and gives students tools to negotiate this difficult time in their lives. These are tools they can use for the rest of their lives. The presenters will show you relevant lessons, how to embrace teachable moments and use mindfulness for awareness and relaxation. Join us for this interactive workshop and leave with resources, games and a ton of ideas.

Judy Hart is an autism specialist for eight years with 20 years experience working with students with ASD.

Deb Castner, PhD, has 24 years of experience in special education and is trained in mindfulness.

Session III

Finding the Gifts in ASD

Too little attention is given to finding and developing the gifts in youths with ASD. Early appropriate support in this arena is crucial to future success. Learn and discuss approaches to help inspire young adults and guide them toward independence and success.

Larry Moody, PE, BSCE, is a retired civil engineer whose working career spanned 36 years. He has Asperger Syndrome, ADHD, and was married for 27 years.

When Mainstream No Longer Works

Through personal stories we learn many lessons about life. This story illustrates the following what you need to ask the school to be an effective advocate for your child, knowing when to make the decision to look for alternative education services and possible out-placement for living arrangements, aggressive behaviors and how they affect quality of life for your family and how to process these dramatic life changes. Professionals will learn how to support parents through these difficult transitions.

Judy Griffith parents two adult children with ASD. She has worked in the schools as a paraprofessional.

Supplemental Needs, Trusts & Guardianships

Learn how a supplemental needs, trust and specialized estate planning can help ensure financial resources for your child's future. Failing to plan for the future can disrupt services. Regardless of age, the need for long-term planning is crucial. Guardianships and how to set up an effective one will also be covered.

Amy Dawson is the executive director and founder of the Autism Advocacy & Law Center. She parents a child with special needs.

Dating 101 for Teens: Teacher's Edition

Dating can be a maze riddled with social pitfalls for teens on the spectrum. So join us in this presentation where teachers will learn how to support students through this rite of passage. Often overlooked in social skills curriculum, come and learn how to incorporate these issues and prepare your students for life-long success.

Jeannie Uhlenkamp, MS, taught teens on the spectrum for seven years. This work inspired her to write the book, *The Guide to Dating for Teenagers with Asperger's Syndrome*.

Generalization in Therapeutic Recreation

Many individuals with ASD have trouble generalizing the social skills they learn outside of the therapeutic setting in which they are taught. Integrating therapeutic recreation activities into social cognitive and social skills education and therapy provides a solution for this common problem. It allows individuals to learn and demonstrate skills as they learn them in a variety of settings, with a variety of people and under a wide variety of conditions. Come and learn this innovative model that focuses on building social cognitive skills through therapeutic recreation as a key component of social skills therapy.

Hans Gulstrand, BS, is the director of Therapeutic Recreation and social skills group facilitator at West Metro Learning Connections.

Ashley Geesaman, BA, is an elementary special education teacher who has focused on autism education and social skills therapy for six years.

Online Assessment for Autism

All children with ASD are different; we all know it. But now there is a new web-based tool to help you see it. The Visual Autism Symptom Scale is an online assessment that helps professionals and parents summarize 14 domains of behavior on one sheet of paper. These assessments can be used to facilitate transitions, assess instructional priorities, elucidate strengths and compare perceptions. This workshop will detail use of this innovative tool.

Diane Halpin, PhD, is a research fellow at the Institute on Community Integration where she is studying alternate assessments for children with disabilities.

Autism Tracking Service Dogs

Use of companion animals has increased in recent years. Come and learn how service dogs can augment the life of a child with ASD. These are not therapy dogs, they are service dogs trained to track behaviors and react to each child's needs throughout the day.

Sally Lubrant is a parent of a child with ASD who has a service dog. She is certified in the handling of service dogs for ASD.

The Anxiety Curve

The Anxiety Curve model is used to visually illustrate the level of anxiety a person is experiencing and its influence on their behavior. It provides professionals, caregivers and the individual with ASD information regarding de-escalation and avoidance of crisis. Learn how to use this scale to achieve pro-active strategies in managing the high level of anxiety that impacts those living with ASD.

Mitzi Curtis, MA, has worked in special education for over 20 years and provides many services to individuals with ASD. She frequently presents and consults on behavior issues and anxiety management.

Saturday, May 1 Breakouts

Session I

Higher Education & Your Legal Rights

Though colleges and universities do not have to follow the same accommodations and support guidelines as K-12 institutions, students with ASD are guaranteed access and rights. This presentation covers some of those, from the perspective of an individual diagnosed with HFA. An important aspect of these protections is that the student must disclose an official diagnosis, registering with disability services at the school. Join us in a discussion of the pros and cons of accessing these services.

Christopher Scott Wyatt will complete his PhD this spring. He accessed disability services during his college years and focused his research on developing courses that accommodate students with ASD.

Bringing It Home – DIR

DIR is a home-based program that teaches parents how to engage their child in a therapeutic way. The DIR/Floortime Model provides a developmental treatment approach that is effective, science-based and cost-effective. This presentation will provide an overview of the DIR/Floortime Model, discuss some of the differences between a developmental versus behavioral approach, provide evidence and share specific strategies for implementing the DIR/Floortime framework in any setting.

Anne Harrington is a child development consultant, autism resource specialist, DIR/Floortime practitioner and founder/director of Celebrate The Spectrum: Home-based and Center-based Developmental Treatment Services, with decades of experience working with children with ASD. She also parents a child on the spectrum.

Life Skills Camp for Adults

Get the details on a camp designed to meet the needs of adults with ASD. It addressed employment-seeking skills, community mobility, self-regulation and advocacy, inter-personal communication and personal relationships. This presentation will review the planning process, implementation and the outcomes of the camp.

Kathy Rakowski, OT, has been working in a Drivers Assessment Program for many years.

David Russell, BS, CBIS, has been working as placement specialist in a vocational services department for several years.

A Living/Learning College Program

This multimedia presentation describes the university of Iowa's REACH Program, a unique living/learning experience for 18-25 year olds with ASD. A two-year, non-degree certificate program, REACH provides integrated campus, community and career opportunities. Improved self-advocacy, self-esteem, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, daily life competencies, career awareness and career readiness

result in students who complete this program.

Amy Vander Busard, MA, developed and implemented the REACH program and has professional experience in teaching college leadership classes, student involvement and on-campus residence life.

Session II

Case Management in Transition

The first step in facilitating a successful transition to adult life is a careful assessment of the youth's comprehensive needs. This presentation details an evidence-based needs assessment tool, which can be used in the initial process and throughout the transition journey. Professionals and parents will learn the concerns of parents and individuals with ASD, discuss the interplay of these variables and their likely effect on success and how to identify the specific needs of youth with ASD in transition to adult life.

Dee Alleckson, RN, works with youths with a mental health diagnosis. She parents an adult with ASD.

Adults with Autism: Network & Discuss

Join this informal gathering where adults with ASD can talk freely about their concerns, triumphs and daily life. Learn from others and share your knowledge as we discuss how adult life on the spectrum looks and feels. Gain insights and tips into job issues, relationships and how to ease the struggles of daily life. Parents, professionals and caregivers are encouraged to attend.

Barbara Luskin, PhD, LP, sees numerous clients with an ASD diagnosis. She also parents an adult with ASD. Her work with a support group of adults with ASD guides her facilitation of this workshop.

OT in Your Home

Regulation of sensory systems is crucial for children on the spectrum. But providing a complete "sensory diet" at home can be a struggle for parents with limited resources and/or space. Join us at this workshop where we will explore the fundamentals of sensory processing and gain insights on how to provide a rich sensory environment at home. Specific activities and techniques used by occupational therapists have been adapted to the home environment. Use what you have and provide the sensory input your child needs.

Kristen VanDeRiet is an occupational therapist at St. David's Center. She provides parent training on this topic as part of her work with children in St. David's Autism Day Treatment since its inception in 2006.

Adjusting to College

For students with ASD, transitioning from high school to college may be the first time they have had to independently navigate life without a daily guide. On a college campus, students can become overwhelmed with a variety of sensory activities and encounter a minefield of social interactions. Learn how to plan for

these challenges and implement strategies to make this transition a success.
Laura Gardner, MC, has worked one-on-one with college students with ASD.

Note to Parents

Parents of children with ASD face many daily challenges. As your days of this special parenting task continue, advocacy and school relationships on your child's behalf increase in importance. Attend this session to learn tips on how to manage stress, be there for your child, yourself and your family, for the long haul.

Mary Z. McGrath, educator and professional speaker, is the author of many books for teachers. She spent 31 years teaching in public school.