



## AuSM Skillshops

Based on topics suggested by the Minnesota autism community, AuSM Skillshops are mini-workshops designed for individuals with autism and their parents, family members, caregivers, and support staff. AuSM Skillshops are also a valuable professional development resource for educators and therapists who work with individuals affected by autism. AuSM Skillshops are held at the AuSM office in St. Paul and at partnering locations throughout the Twin Cities.

### **Autism Society of Minnesota**

2380 Wycliff St. #102, St. Paul, MN 55114

### **Academy of Whole Learning**

9400 Cedar Lake Rd. #7, St. Louis Park, MN 55426

### **Eden Prairie Community Center, Cambria Room**

16700 Valley View Rd., Eden Prairie, MN 55346

### **Fraser**

6458 City West Pkwy., Eden Prairie, MN 55344

### **Lionsgate Academy - Minnetonka**

5605 Green Cir. Dr., Minnetonka, MN 55343

### **Lionsgate Academy - North St. Paul**

2342 Helen St. N., North St. Paul, MN 55109

### **Merrick, Inc.**

3210 Labore Rd., Vadnais Heights, MN 55110

### **Minnesota Life College**

7501 Logan Ave. S. #2a, Richfield, MN 55423

### **St. David's Center**

3395 Plymouth Rd., Minnetonka, MN 55305

### **University of St. Thomas, Opus Hall, Room 450**

1000 LaSalle Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

### **Cost Per AuSM Skillshop/Per Individual Registration**

AuSM Member: \$25      Non-Member: \$40      AuSM Member with ASD or Current Student: \$10

**AuSM Members receive a certificate for a free AuSM Skillshop and save \$15 on each AuSM Skillshop registration.**

## AuSM Skillshop Registration

Register for AuSM Skillshops online at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org). Call 651.647.1083 ext. 22 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) with registration questions. Schedules and presenters are subject to change. Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) for the most up-to-date information and to view AuSM's cancellation policy.



## SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 Autism and Anxiety in Adults

**Presenter:** Meghan Williams, MA, LMFT  
**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2016 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Merrick, Inc.

It's common for adults with autism to have anxiety and/or depression. Learn how to cope with stressors and gather resources for reducing anxiety.

Meghan Williams has worked with individuals with ASD for more than 10 years. She specializes in working with older adolescents, adults, couples, and families and is certified in Prepare/Enrich. Williams uses a holistic, strength-based approach offering hope, understanding, growth, and encouragement.

## OCTOBER 16, 2016 Special Needs & Special Sibs: A Family AuSM Skillshop

**Presenter:** Jen Reinke, PhD, LAMFT, CFLE  
**Date:** Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016 from 2-4 p.m.  
**Location:** Eden Prairie Community Center, Cambria Room

"Autism doesn't just affect my kid, it affects our whole family," a mother of an 8-year-old child with autism said. Explore the unique challenges, rewards, and dynamics experienced by families impacted by a variety of special needs. Special emphasis will be placed on the experiences and needs of siblings (ages 10+) who have a brother or sister with special needs.

Dr. Jennifer Reinke is an Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. She is a Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and a Certified Family Life Educator, and has spent much of her career working with individuals and families affected by autism.

## OCTOBER 25, 2016 Accommodations and Modifications: Navigating the IEP or 504 Plan

**Presenter:** Mary Beth Kelley, MA  
**Date:** Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Fraser

Staff often have to create accommodations or modifications for students they are working with at school, or parents want to suggest accommodations for their child, but the terms can be confusing. Review definitions and differences of frequently used terms and gather examples of specific accommodations and modifications. Obtain a framework to help brainstorm new ways to assist students in the classroom.

Mary Beth Kelley directs the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Minnesota's Assessment program, overseeing a team of specialists who administer assessments to diagnose learning disabilities and/or ADHD. She also oversees program development. Kelley develops and delivers workshops to community partners about special education topics.

## NOVEMBER 8, 2016 Guardianship: Do We Need It?

**Presenter:** Jason Schellack, Esq.  
**Date:** Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2016 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Academy of Whole Learning

At age 18, a child is legally considered an adult. Some kids, however, aren't yet ready for all of the responsibilities of adulthood. Many children with ASD will continue to need assistance with their IEPs, transition services, making medical decisions, and applying for government benefits. To have legal authority to assist their adult children in these important areas, many parents and caregivers choose to establish legal guardianship. Learn about the legal process for obtaining guardianship and how you can qualify for free legal assistance. Also understand the powers and responsibilities guardians have under Minnesota law, and how successor guardians are chosen and appointed.



Jason Schellack is an attorney and the Executive Director of Autism Advocacy & Law Center, LLC, a law firm dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities and their families. Schellack has worked with individuals with autism throughout his career as a camp counselor, personal care attendant, public defender, and legal advocate. He practices primarily in the areas of guardianship, estate planning, family law, and special education law. Schellack also is a qualified neutral under Rule 114, allowing him to serve as a mediator in family law disputes.

## NOVEMBER 15, 2016 Working with Autism: Four Helpful Hacks and One Golden Ticket

**Presenter:** Mitch Potter  
**Date:** Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2016 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Minnesota Life College

Undiagnosed people with autism have long enjoyed workplace success through trial-and-error adaptation. They have learned to be seen by employers as skilled problem-solvers rather than problems that need to be solved. In this session, a recently retired man with autism discusses his approach to managing four problematic behaviors so they did not negatively affect his employment. He also details a formula for using positive behaviors to provide unique value to employers.

Mitch Potter retired recently after more than 40 years of employment. He worked as a high school teacher, newspaper reporter and editor, human resource consultant, and web director for a global consulting firm. When diagnosed with autism in his late 40s he already had developed strategies to manage his behaviors in the workplace and to use his unique abilities to be a valuable employee.

## DECEMBER 8, 2016 Driven to Drive: Getting Behind the Wheel

**Presenter:** Kathy Woods, OTR/L, CDRS, LDI  
**Date:** Thursday, Dec. 8, 2016 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Lionsgate Academy MINNETONKA

Driving is looked at as a right of passage as we enter our mid and late teens. This course will discuss the critical skills needed for driving and how autism characteristics may impact safe driving behaviors. Assessment of driver readiness will be discussed along with ideas for supports that can be initiated in the home or during therapies to increase safe driver potential.

Kathy Woods is the Manager of the Driver Assessment and Training Program at Courage Center. She has a degree in Occupational Therapy is a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist as well as a Minnesota State Licensed Driving Instructor. Courage Center has driving evaluation services in 10 locations throughout the greater Metropolitan area and serves individuals with disabilities as well as older drivers.

## JANUARY 10, 2017 Keeping Aggression in Check

**Presenter:** Stephani Bruyer, MA, LP  
**Date:** Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Merrick, Inc.

During this session, increase your understanding of why interfering behaviors are exhibited and obtain positive intervention strategies. Learn the elements of Functional Behavioral Assessments and how the outcome of assessments can lead to the most effective interventions. Understand how mental health can affect a person's overall functioning and obtain knowledge of effective treatments.

Stephani Bruyer has more than 25 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, autism, related conditions, and mental illness (IDD/MI). Her focus is on positive programming, education, and support for individuals with IDD/MI. Bruyer's experience includes providing individual, group, and family therapies; conducting functional behavioral, psychosexual, and diagnostic assessments; providing training to caregivers/teams; and supporting people in crisis.



## JANUARY 24, 2017 Communication Breakdown: How to Resolve Conflicts

**Presenter:** Beth Pitchford, MA

**Date:** Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Autism Society of Minnesota

During a conflict, tempers may flare, words can have hidden meanings, and body language often is confusing. Thought processes may be emotionally charged and not logical. Teens and adults with autism, learn the difference between a disagreement and a conflict and obtain helpful techniques for listening, reading body language, and using assertive communication to resolve conflicts.

An AuSM therapist, Beth Pitchford, MA, is a mental health practitioner who helps adults decode the neurotypical world to decrease barriers to community acceptance and to increase feelings of success.

## FEBRUARY 7, 2017 Social Safety: Strategies for Navigating Online and Offline

**Presenter:** Sara Pahl, MS, BCBA, NCC

**Date:** Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Lionsgate Academy MINNETONKA

As parents, caregivers, educators, and care providers, we often are concerned for the physical safety of our children. But, as children advance into elementary and middle school, we find ourselves asking, "How can I keep them safe emotionally?" In this session, learn about the most important issues of social and emotional safety for our pre-teen and teen loved ones. Common problems will be discussed and strategies offered with regard to navigating the hidden curriculum, bullying, and online safety.

An AuSM therapist, Sara Pahl has worked with people with ASD for nearly 20 years. She specializes in working with systems, such as families and schools struggling with behavioral issues, as well as working with adolescents and young adults with ASD. Pahl strives to help empower, children, adolescents and young adults with ASD through self-advocacy and self-determination no matter what ability using a non-judgemental, integrated, empathetic, evidenced-based approach.

## FEBRUARY 9, 2017 Poetry and Autism: Turning Perseveration Into Creativity

**Presenter:** Chris Martin

**Date:** Thursday, Feb. 9, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis Campus, Opus Hall, Room 450

New research shows that the autistic brain is hardwired for metaphor, sensory detail, and studied attention to the materiality of language. In other words, children and adults with autism may be natural poets! And creative writing may be the best and most direct way to connect their personal passions to the larger world. Offered in partnership with the University of St. Thomas, this AuSM Skillsshop will facilitate practical and dynamic pathways to expression for your students, your children, and yourself.



Chris Martin is the author of three collections of poetry and co-founder of Unrestricted Interest. He currently is a visiting assistant professor at Carleton College.

## FEBRUARY 21, 2017 Special Needs & Special Sibs: A Family AuSM Skillsshop

**Presenter:** Jen Reinke, PhD, LAMFT, CFLE

**Date:** Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Academy of Whole Learning

"Autism doesn't just affect my kid, it affects our whole family," a mother of an 8-year-old child with autism said. Explore the unique challenges, rewards, and dynamics experienced by families impacted by a variety of special needs. Special emphasis will be placed on the experiences and needs of siblings (ages 10+) who have a brother or sister with special needs.

Dr. Jennifer Reinke is an Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. She is a Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and a Certified Family Life Educator, and has spent much of her career working with individuals and families affected by autism.



## MARCH 23, 2017 Electronic Addiction: How to Break Free From Battles Over Screens

**Presenter:** Barb Andrus, BS, CAPS  
**Date:** Thursday, March 23, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** St. David's Center

Have you ever tried to limit electronics but then given in because your child wouldn't stop badgering you? Do you feel guilty for sometimes giving in so your child is entertained rather than complaining? There is a real "addictive" quality to electronics and a proven, step-by-step protocol to restore health and harmony to families. Receive solutions from the *Free Your Family From Electronic Addiction* protocol that are key to having a calmer, more cooperative child with healthy boundaries around electronic usage.

Barb Andrus, is a Certified Mad2Glad Parent Coach, whose passion is teaching practical ways to achieve peace and harmony within families. A child and family specialist for more than 35 years, Andrus is skilled at helping parents understand how the brain works and improving relationships with their children.

## APRIL 13, 2017 Self-Regulation Through the Mind-Body Connection

**Presenter:** Kathy Flaminio, MSW, LGSW, E-RYT-200  
**Date:** Thursday, April 13, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** St. David's Center

Through lecture, hands-on learning, reflection, and discussion, learn breathing exercises, simple yoga-based movement, and social/emotional skill development activities for use in school and at home. Develop practical research-based interventions to assist with self-regulation, focus, de-escalation, community connection, and overall well-being. Obtain movement routines for calming, releasing, energizing, centering, focusing, and transition.

Kathy Flaminio holds a Master's Degree in social work and has 20 years of experience in schools. She is the creator of the Move Mindfully™ yoga-based sequencing for self-regulation, focus, and overall well-being.

## May 9, 2017 Mindful Parenting: How To Stop the Fighting, Yelling, and Frustration

**Presenter:** Samantha Moe, MA, SLP  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 9, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Fraser

Are you stressed out and exhausted? Tired of your child's poor listening, lack of self-control, and defiant behavior? Discover why children with autism push your limits and try to control everything, and how you can transform your home into an enjoyable space rather than a war zone. In this interactive presentation, receive solutions from the Mad to Glad Blueprint™ that are key to having a calmer, more cooperative child and restoring your sanity.

Samantha Moe is a Certified Parent Coach whose passion is teaching practical ways to decrease stress. Known as the owner of Mad2Glad and founder of the holistic and innovative Mad to Glad Blueprint™, Moe guides caregivers in her step-by-step approach to dramatically reduce defiance and disrespect and re-establish confidence and authority.

## May 16, 2017 Guardianship: Do We Need It?

**Presenter:** Jason Schellack, Esq.  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 16, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.  
**Location:** Lionsgate Academy NORTH ST. PAUL

At age 18, a child is legally considered an adult. Some kids, however, aren't yet ready for all of the responsibilities of adulthood. Many children with ASD will continue to need assistance with their IEPs, transition services, making medical decisions, and applying for government benefits. To have legal authority to assist their adult children in these important areas, many parents and caregivers choose to establish legal guardianship. Learn about the legal process for obtaining guardianship and how you can qualify for free legal assistance. Also understand the powers and responsibilities guardians have under Minnesota law, and how successor guardians are chosen and appointed.



Jason Schellack is an attorney and the Executive Director of Autism Advocacy & Law Center, LLC, a law firm dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities and their families. Schellack has worked with individuals with autism throughout his career as a camp counselor, personal care attendant, public defender, and legal advocate. He practices primarily in the areas of guardianship, estate planning, family law, and special education law. Schellack also is a qualified neutral under Rule 114, allowing him to serve as a mediator in family law disputes.

## **JUNE 6, 2017** **Helping Your Child with ASD** **Learn to Ride a Bike**

**Presenter:** Alex Uhler

**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Autism Society of Minnesota

**Note to Participants:** This AuSM Skillshop is limited to 9 children, ages 5-12. Supportive adult and child attend together. Child should bring a bike and helmet.

Challenges with body awareness, balance and motor control, and hand-eye coordination can make riding a bike difficult for children on the spectrum. Learn a number of tips for successful bike riding including purchasing the correct equipment, making bike adjustments, breaking down riding into smaller steps, clothing protection, practice makes perfect pedaling, staying positive and patient, and working toward the sense of independence and accomplishment that your child will experience when learning to ride his or her own bike.

Alex Uhler is an outdoor enthusiast with more than 40 years of bicycling experience. He is a life-long resident of the southeast Twin Cities area and has been active in many philanthropic activities.

## **SEPTEMBER 19, 2017** **Law & Order: ASD**

**Presenter:** Barb Luskin, PhD, LP

**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Autism Society of Minnesota

Studies show that people with autism are seven to 12 times more likely to interface with law enforcement and the criminal justice system than their neurotypical peers. Social and communication

challenges can lead to misunderstandings. Whether it's a misunderstanding or not, having positive response strategies is imperative. Learn about common scenarios involving individuals with autism and how to ensure their safety in the community as well as how to advocate and support them through the legal process.

An AuSM psychologist, Dr. Luskin has worked closely with children and adults with ASD for more than 30 years in professional and home settings. She specializes in providing both assessments and counseling to individuals with ASD and those who support them.

## **SEPTEMBER 26, 2017** **My Child Has Autism: Do I?**

**Presenter:** Beth Pitchford, MA

**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Autism Society of Minnesota

Your child was diagnosed with autism, and you recognize some of his or her traits reflected in yourself. Do you wonder if you, too, could be on the autism spectrum? Is it important to get a formal diagnosis? Learn about the heritability of autism, adult diagnosis, parenting with autism, and the importance of understanding your needs as a parent.

An AuSM therapist, Beth Pitchford helps adults decode the neurotypical world to decrease barriers to community acceptance and to increase feelings of success.