Register for the fun of this virtual competition today!

www.ausm.org

Whether you are a serious puzzle-building competitor or just want to have fun while supporting the local autism community, we invite you and your team to join us from the comfort and safety of your own space. All ages and abilities are welcome!
In this our 50th year, we celebrate individuals with autism by continuing to offer a welcoming place to learn, access services, and develop skills for navigating emotions, information, and life.

In addition to being a valuable resource for those with autism, AuSM continues to reach out to people who care about individuals with autism – parents, caregivers, family members, support staff, educators, employers, therapists, and other professionals in the community.

Despite the uncertainty presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, AuSM’s commitment to this community is unwavering. AuSM will continue to offer special interest-focused social skills classes; AuSM Skillshops that focus on positive strategies and problem-solving; and specialized training tailored for organizations and businesses, including the Autism Direct Support Certification program and P.O.S.T-Certified training for officers and first responders.

Education offerings will include a mix of in-person and virtual sessions, and our community can continue to expect high-quality, well informed options for those on the spectrum and their support teams. Take time to explore this catalog to find AuSM programs and services that will enhance your life.

AuSM appreciates the support of its education catalog advertisers. AuSM cannot endorse any commercial products, processes, or services. Special thanks to Allegra Downtown St. Paul, the official print sponsor of the AuSM 2020-2021 Education Catalog.

Thank you, AuSM Premier Partners!

Join these companies in making a difference in the lives of individuals touched by autism in Minnesota.

If you are interested in becoming an AuSM Premier Partner, please contact Kelly Thomalla at 651.647.1083 ext. 25 or e-mail kthomalla@ausm.org.
The more you understand his world, the more possibilities you see.

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AuSM Education Tips

- Register for AuSM education programs online at www.ausm.org. Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org with registration questions. Classes have a maximum enrollment. Register early to ensure placement.

- Check with your county case manager to see if your selected AuSM education program can be paid for under the Brain Injury (BI); Community Alternative Care (CAC); Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI); or Developmental Disability (DD) waiver.

- Schedules and instructors are subject to change. Visit www.ausm.org for current information.

- If a class is canceled or postponed, AuSM will notify you via phone or e-mail and will post on www.ausm.org.

- Cancellation by registrant: Refunds less a $15 processing fee will be assessed for cancellations received in writing to education@ausm.org seven business days prior to the start of the first class in the session. Following this date, no refunds will be given. Requests for transfer of registration to another individual or program will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Cancellation by program organizer: AuSM reserves the right to cancel a class due to low registration or other circumstances that make the class non-viable. If AuSM cancels a class, registrants will be offered a full refund. If the class is postponed, registrants will have the option to either receive a full refund or transfer registration to the same class at the new, future date.

- AuSM wants to make its programs available to as many as possible. Scholarships are available for those who qualify. Visit www.ausm.org and click on the Resources section to learn more.
The COVID pandemic has brought interrupted routines and unpredictable days. We know that life with erratic schedules has been hard on the autism community, and AuSM continues to be dedicated to creatively bringing you the information, resources, and connections you need to thrive.

While closely monitoring the State of Minnesota and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regulations, AuSM plans to offer the majority of classes and educational sessions virtually in the fall and early winter to maximize the safety of the autism community. For events that will take place in person, AuSM will apply a personal safety plan that includes social distancing, disinfecting, and proper health practices while still engaging participants with instructors and each other.

What does it mean to Go Beyond Virtual with AuSM?

- AuSM programming caters to a diverse range of abilities and support needs and is informed by the clinical experience of AuSM’s autism experts, research-based practices, and the vital input of our autistic community. Highly-qualified staff and/or other subject matter experts facilitate each session.

- Participation in virtual programming builds distance-learning skills in the rapidly-growing digital platforms. AuSM offers guidance, by request, on the use of this technology.

- Delivery of virtual sessions can include a variety of supports for participants, which may include schedules, checklists, timers, and/or social narratives.

- AuSM provides personal interaction – you’re not just watching a video. Programming is led by our education team members and other community experts who want to interact with you through digital platform features.

- AuSM allows Direct Service Professionals to participate with their clients at no charge.

- AuSM encourages friendship connections in social skills classes by offering opt-in participant directories.
ALL are welcome here at Lions United, but Coach Andy has a special kind of vision. Coach Andy centers his focus around individuals with Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and other physical and intellectual disabilities. For many Lions that join the fitness center, this is their outlet. Lions United is the one place where our athletes can come and actually be themselves. This is a place where they can grow, a place they can socialize, a place where they can learn, and a place where they can ROAR!

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“...I just want to make my Lions better. I love helping people. PERIOD! What your brave warriors may think is “impossible,” I guide them in developing the “I’m Possible” attitude... The LION Attitude.”

- Coach Andy

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Discover our services for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder available via telehealth, in homes, community settings and our Minnetonka and Minneapolis locations.

Autism Day Treatment (Preschool and School Age)  |  Ages 2-10

Autism Support Services  |  Ages 2-26

Occupational Therapy  |  Ages 1-12

Speech Therapy  |  Ages 1-12

Therapeutic Recreation  |  Ages 11+

Floortime Family Project  |  Ages 4-10

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Call 952.548.8700 to get started.
AuSM classes and activities offer low-stress, accepting environments that promote learning and growth while celebrating neurodiversity. AuSM programs are conducive to youth and adults who fall within the wide range of the autism spectrum. Social skills classes are staffed at a 1:4 staff-to-participant ratio.

If an individual is able to participate safely in a program but requires more support than 1:4 staffing provides, the individual may bring a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The DSP will be responsible for supporting the individual with communication, behavior, and daily living skills. Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org for more information.

AuSM is committed to making your class experience positive and rewarding.

AuSM Social Skills Class Registration

AuSM wants to make its programs accessible to as many as possible; scholarships are available for those who qualify and some classes are waiver-eligible. Visit the Resources section on AuSM’s website to learn more. Schedules and instructors are subject to change. See page 6 for AuSM’s cancellation policy. Classes have limited capacity; register early to ensure your placement.

Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org with questions.

Register at www.ausm.org.
AuSM is pleased to continue its partnership with the Three Rivers Park District to offer these outdoor-focused adventures for our community.

**Off Trail Adventures for People on the Autism Spectrum (ages 13+)**

Hike with a naturalist into the woods and prairie. Discover what nature mysteries are hidden off the beaten path. Make friends and practice communicating your needs.

Registration Code: 4LNC1755

**Sept. 27, 2020 from 12:30-3:30 p.m.**

**Location**  
Lowry Nature Center  
7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria, MN 55386

**Cost**  
$20

Register at www.ausm.org.

**Fire Building for People on the Autism Spectrum (ages 13+)**

Practice fire building, cook s’mores, and relax in good company. Explore the woods and meet Lowry’s animals. Make friends and practice communicating your needs.

Registration Code: 4LNC5251

**Oct. 25, 2020 from 12:30-2:30 p.m.**

**Location**  
Lowry Nature Center  
7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria, MN 55386

**Cost**  
$20

Register at www.ausm.org.

**CSz Improv Skills (ages 14-26)**

AuSM is pleased to continue its partnership with CSz Twin Cities to offer social skills classes based on the principles of improvisational theater.

Have fun while learning how to respond to the unexpected, engage in reciprocal interactions, and support fellow participants in keeping a scene moving forward. No prior improv experience is necessary. Experienced participants may register for the Advanced Class. Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor.

**Class Meets on Saturdays**

Advanced Class meets from 12:30-2 p.m.  
Beginner Class meets from 2:30-4 p.m.

Sept. 26; Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 2020

**Location**  
VIRTUAL

**Cost Per Session**

AuSM Member: $250  
Non-Member: $295

Register at www.ausm.org.
**AuSM On the Town (ages 14-26)**

Explore the Twin Cities and have fun while participating in team-building adventures. Participants must have their own transportation to and from each site. Locations may change.

**Fall Schedule**

**Eastman Nature Center Oct. 18**  
13351 Elm Creek Rd., Maple Grove, MN 55369

**Minneapolis Institute of Art Oct. 25**  
2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404

**Virtual Yoga Nov. 1**  
Zoom Meeting Link

**Como Park Zoo & Conservatory Nov. 8**  
1225 Estabrook Dr., St. Paul, MN 55103

**Virtual Workout with Spirit Club Nov. 15**  
Zoom Meeting Link

**Bell Museum Nov. 22**  
2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55113

**Class meets on Sundays from 1-3 p.m.**  
Oct. 18, 25; Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 2020

**Drop Off and Pick Up**

Drop off and pick up locations for AuSM On the Town sessions held in the community will be at each site.

**Cost**

- AuSM Member: $275 (includes T-shirt and activity fees)
- Non-Member: $300 (includes T-shirt and activity fees)

Register at www.ausm.org.

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**AuSM On the Job (ages 14-26)**

Designed to provide workplace readiness training for young adults with autism, this eight-session program will include small-group instruction and employment-focused experiential learning opportunities for building skills that translate into real-life, meaningful future employment.

Program topics will include resume development, interview preparation, job accommodations, and workplace accessibility. Participants will engage in two job-site tours, one volunteer experience, and one visit to a post-secondary education option.

The path of each young adult in our community is unique. Skills covered will be translatable and beneficial to all as they pursue the future of their choice. Content will be customized for individual needs connected to vocational objectives. AuSM wants to equip our community members with the necessary knowledge, tools, and experiences to enter the next phase of their adulthood, confident and prepared for success.

Applications for AuSM on the Job will open in October 2020. This program will be offered free of charge thanks to a grant awarded by Minnesota State–Career and Technical Education.

Visit www.ausm.org in October 2020 to apply to participate in this free program.
Because you deserve support that’s frustration free.

**Ready to discover self-direction?**
With self-direction, you can choose to stay in your home and choose who supports you, including friends or family members that you love and trust.

**The choice is yours**
Ready for support that matches your life? Learn how Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) and the Consumer Support Grant (CSG) can work for you.

Bringing CDCS or CSG to life takes some work—but GT Independence is here to make it easy.

Want to know more?

P: 651.247.7107  
E: jdrganc@gtindependence.com
Learn the Basics, Obtain Valuable Resources

Understanding Autism

Learn common characteristics of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and sensory processing disorders. Obtain valuable insight on evidenced-based practices for supporting individuals across settings.

Who Should Participate?

Caregivers, parents, grandparents, group home and day program staff, Personal Care Attendants, and education and health care staff will benefit from this class.

*Note, this is a single-session class. Content is the same for all sessions. AuSM offers these sessions at different times to accommodate as many schedules as possible. When registering, select the session that works best for you.

Dates and Times

Sept. 21, 2020 from 6-8 p.m.
Oct. 19, 2020 from 2-4 p.m.
Nov. 16, 2020 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Location

VIRTUAL

Cost

Due to the generous sponsorship of Best Care, 2020-2021 sessions are offered for FREE. Space is limited and registration is required.

Register at www.ausm.org.
Individualized Consultation and Support

Life with Autism Series revised to meet needs

In response to community needs, AuSM’s newly revised Life with Autism–Individualized Supports is re-centering the individualized approach. AuSM will offer individual consultations in order to delve deeper into customized topics like behavior, communication, independent living, and developing supports and accommodations.

Our new LWA—Individualized Supports seeks to meet you where you are, offering customized tools, resources, and strategies to ensure you feel prepared and equipped for navigating systems, developing supports, and accessing your communities.

Tapping into our network of self-advocates, educators, and more, we will develop personalized support plans that you will be able to implement into your daily practices to ensure the neurodiversity of your household/community is supported and celebrated.

Who should participate?

Life with Autism—Individualized Supports is a great resource for families seeking training, support, or individual consultation. AuSM knows that autism is in the fabric of all our communities and that each community, household, and individual will flourish when the entirety of its members is supported.

Whether your family has a newly diagnosed member, your child is transitioning into adolescence and young adulthood or the autistic adult in your life is in need of supports beyond your capacity, AuSM can assist you in navigating and thriving through these periods of life.

AuSM staff will coordinate with you and your family to designate a time, location, and group size, as well as the information you would like covered, and bring this material to you.

How do I set up a consultation?

Please complete a consultation form on www.ausm.org. If you have questions, you can reach AuSM’s education team at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org.

Cost

Family: $25 per hour/two participants

Visit www.ausm.org for more information.
Information and Strategies for Better Service Provision

Autism Direct Support Certification Program

This program is designed for professionals and caregivers who work with or support individuals with autism and want to provide better service and care. Individuals on the spectrum also are welcome and encouraged to attend for increased self-understanding and to share their unique perspectives.

Training Objectives

- Identify how people with autism think.
- Understand how differences in thinking lead to differences in behavior.
- Understand how different tools/interventions address the strengths and challenges of ASD.
- Identify tools to support clients and loved ones in different situations.

Dates and Times

FALL 2020  WINTER 2021
Fridays, 9-12 p.m.  Saturdays, 9-3 p.m.
Sept. 11, 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9  Jan. 16, 23, 30

Location  Cost
VIRTUAL    $260 per person

A group discount is available for 3 or more participants from the same organization. Contact AuSM at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 to register 3 or more participants for the same session.

Certification is available for groups at your specified location or via Zoom. Contact AuSM’s education team for more information.

Register at www.ausm.org.
Training for Officers and Emergency Responders

With the 1 in 54 national prevalence rate for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it is inevitable you will encounter someone affected by ASD in your work as a first responder, firefighter; in the criminal justice system; in public safety and security; in Emergency Medical Services (EMS); as a medical professional; and in everyday life.

Our community helped inform our training so that your encounters have positive outcomes.

**New Minnesota Requirements for Officer Training**

According to a bill passed by the MN legislature during 2020, law enforcement agencies are required to provide autism training to every peace officer. The training must consist of four continuing education credits, be board-approved, and meet the following learning objectives:

1. Autism overview and behavioral understanding
2. Best practices for interventions and de-escalation strategies
3. Prevention and crisis reduction models
4. Objective review of tools and technology available

Trainings must include consultation with individuals with autism, family members, autism experts, and peace officers.

AuSM meets the autism training requirements of this new bill and is P.O.S.T.-Certified. Proof of attendance can be provided to those who require CEUs in another field.

**Contact AuSM at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org to schedule your training.**
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www.autismlawcenter.com

www.ausm.org • 651.647.1083
AuSM Skillshops

Based on topics suggested by the Minnesota autism community, AuSM Skillshops are mini-workshops designed for individuals with autism, parents, caregivers, family members, support staff, educators, therapists, and other professionals.

Due to the pandemic, AuSM Skillshops will be held virtually in the fall and early winter. Sessions will be available in real-time only and will not be accessible after the AuSM Skillshop has taken place.

Upon request, AuSM Skillshop participants may receive a certificate of attendance to submit to licensing boards for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) consideration.

AuSM Members receive a certificate for a FREE AuSM Skillshop and save $10 on each AuSM Skillshop registration.

Location

VIRTUAL

Cost Per Skillshop/Individual Registration

AuSM Member: $15
Non-Member: $25
AuSM Member with ASD/Current Student: $10

2020-2021 AuSM Skillshops are generously sponsored by GT Independence.

Register at www.ausm.org.
Sept. 29, 2020
Evidence Based Practices: Visual Supports

**Presenter:** Eric Ringgenberg *(Pronouns: he/his)*
**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020 from 7-9 p.m.
**Location:** VIRTUAL

Visual supports provide concrete cues that communicate information about an activity, routine, or expectation. Common examples of visual supports are visual schedules, activity schedules, work systems, graphic organizers, visual cues, and scripts. Learn how to create and implement visual supports in any setting.

Eric Ringgenberg, AuSM’s Education Director, has a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities and a master’s degree in Special Education–Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of St. Thomas.

Oct. 13, 2020
Your Vote Matters!

**Presenter:** Jillian Nelson *(Pronouns: she/her)*
**Date:** Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020 from 7-9 p.m.
**Location:** VIRTUAL

Learn the important steps necessary to become an educated voter. Obtain bipartisan tips on how to research important issues and candidates, as well as an overview on the issues that impact the autism community. Learn how to register to vote and what to do to prepare yourself for election day. Make sure your voice gets heard!

Jillian Nelson, Community Resource and Policy Advocate at AuSM, was diagnosed with autism as a young adult. With a degree in human services and a background in self-advocacy, she has dedicated her career to helping others with autism achieve their goals, advocating for system change, and spreading a message of education and autism acceptance.

Nelson currently sits on the Governor’s Council for Developmental Disabilities and has worked in employment services helping others with autism secure and retain appropriate, successful employment.

Oct. 27, 2020
Evidence Based Practices: Social Narratives

**Presenter:** Eric Ringgenberg *(Pronouns: he/his)*
**Date:** Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020 from 7-9 p.m.
**Location:** VIRTUAL

Social narratives are an effective, flexible support tool that can be used in any setting. This EBP can be used to prepare for changes, new environments and routines, and share information that is needed to be successful in a social setting. Learn how to create a social narrative and receive resources to assist in social narrative development.

Eric Ringgenberg, AuSM’s Education Director, has a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities and a master’s degree in Special Education–Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of St. Thomas.

Nov. 10, 2020
Special Education During COVID-19

**Presenter:** Jason Schellack, JD *(Pronouns: he/his)*
**Date:** Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020 from 7-9 p.m.
**Location:** VIRTUAL

COVID-19 poses unique challenges for all sectors of society, including special education programs. If a school district is offering general education services to its residents, then it also must offer special education services to students who qualify for them. Simply suspending special education services, as some school districts have tried, violates the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This AuSM Skillshop will focus on advocating for special education services during COVID-19, and on developing creative strategies for providing special education service minutes.

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.

Dec. 8, 2020
A Developmental Perspective on Sexuality

Presenters: Logan Sand (Pronouns: they/them) and Kendall Mager (Pronouns: she/her)
Date: Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020 from 7-9 p.m.
Location: VIRTUAL

Caregivers are the primary sexuality educators of their children, but many have questions about how to start those conversations. No matter the age of your child, it is never too late to start having these important conversations. Learn about developmental milestones throughout adolescence, how to have age-appropriate conversations, and practice responding to scenarios related to sexuality, boundaries, and safety.

Logan Sand is the Program Manager for the Seeing and Exploring Life’s Future (SELF) Program with Lutheran Social Service of MN. Sand is committed to anti-racist sex ed that is inclusive of all genders and abilities. Sand has been a sexuality educator for six years, and provides education to youth, parents/caregivers, and professionals in a variety of settings. They have presented at the National Sex Ed Conference, is published in the American Journal of Sexuality Education, and sits on Minneapolis Public School’s Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment Committee.

Kendall Mager has a degree in Women’s Studies and Psychology and specializes in harm reduction and sexual and domestic violence prevention. She joined Lutheran Social Service of MN in 2016 and is the Program Coordinator in the Seeing and Exploring Life’s Future (SELF) Program. In her role on the SELF team, Mager has provided comprehensive sexuality education to youth and adults across Minnesota, with a focus on disability-specific sexual health education and caregiver education.

Jan. 12, 2021
Mental Health from a Distance

Presenter: Olivia James (Uses all pronouns)
Date: Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021 from 7-9 p.m.
Location: VIRTUAL

2020 was a challenging year. For autistics who have historically relied on certain structures, people, and resources, social distancing has drastically changed how we can care for our mental health. This session will offer suggestions, strategies, and resources for self-care and mental health management when you are limited to your own home. Find ways to help build structure, meet your sensory needs, and socialize during a time of social distancing.

Olivia James is the Marketing and Communications Specialist at AuSM, a MN LEND Fellow, and an autistic adult. With the unique position of working at an autism organization, they have the ability to balance their professional life with their personal accommodations and share those lessons with other adults on the spectrum.

Jan. 26, 2021
Guardianship

Presenter: Jason Schellack, JD (Pronouns: he/his)
Date: Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 from 7-9 p.m.
Location: VIRTUAL

At age 18, a child is legally considered an adult. Some youth, however, aren’t yet ready for all of the responsibilities of adulthood. Many individuals 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. 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.

Feb. 9, 2021
Disclosure and Accommodations in Post-Secondary and Employment Settings

Presenter: Eric Ringgenberg (Pronouns: he/him)
Date: Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021 from 7-9 p.m.
Location: VIRTUAL

Disability disclosure and accommodations are important for success in post-secondary and employment settings. As a form of self-advocacy, disclosure requires self-awareness of needs and solutions, as well as the systems and processes involved. Increased understanding in these areas can assist in promoting self-determination and achieving desired outcomes.

Eric Ringgenberg, AuSM’s Education Director, has a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities and a master’s degree in Special Education–Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of St. Thomas.
Classes are designed to give kids and adults of all abilities a safe, fun, and encouraging environment to learn about their bodies and how to move them. Independent and parent participant classes are available for ALL ages.

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SwimPossible does not focus on diagnoses or labels. We teach swimming to students of all ages who are not served successfully by traditional lessons, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Anxiety, ADHD, Down’s Syndrome, and other sensory and learning differences.

Locations in Maple Grove, Saint Louis Park, and Lakeville! Learn more at swimpossible.org

Contact us about lessons today at swiminfo@swimpossible.org

10% Discount when you sign up for your first 10 week session!
AuSM therapists have dedicated their careers to helping individuals with autism understand their diagnosis. They provide strategies to support each person’s unique autism experience, addressing both the challenges and gifts it can bring. AuSM therapists help individuals from youth through adulthood as they grow at their own pace in a safe, compassionate, and respectful environment.

**Counseling Services**
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- Individual and family therapy

**Consulting Services/Social Coaching**
AuSM's Counseling and Consulting Services team is available to assist therapists, group home staff, community organizations, employers, day training and habilitation groups, and other professionals who work with individuals with autism with general training or strategies related to a specific issue or topic. We also offer social coaching for individuals who want to build specific skills.

**We Are Ready to Meet with You**
During the pandemic, we are accepting new clients in Minnesota for individual therapy via telehealth. We accept many different insurance carriers. Please contact our office at 651.647.1083 ext. 13 or e-mail autismcounseling@ausm.org for more information.

**Support Groups**
While we are observing pandemic restrictions, AuSM is offering five virtual support groups through Zoom: Women, LGBTQIA, Independent Adults, Topic, and Family Members of Adults. Please contact info@ausm.org to receive the Zoom link for the online support group(s) in which you would like to participate. 2020 support groups are generously sponsored by Lions United Fitness Center.
Meet Our AuSM Therapists

Amy Carrison, PsyD, LADC
Pronouns: she/her
Dr. Carrison is completing a postdoctoral fellowship with AuSM and uses cognitive behavioral strategies in therapy to help clients change problematic behavior patterns. She has experience in psychological assessment and testing with the goal of providing individuals with targeted interventions to overcome areas of need. Dr. Carrison has been licensed in Minnesota as a drug and alcohol counselor since 2002 and has worked in a variety of substance abuse treatment settings with both adults and adolescents.

Sara Lahti, MA, CCTP
Pronouns: she/her
Lahti is a therapist currently working on becoming a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. She has worked with children with ASD and individuals with ASD and other disabilities in a day program facility. Lahti developed a passion for working with adults on the autism spectrum and uses Adlerian and person-centered therapeutic techniques to help clients better understand themselves and their strengths. She works with clients on thought patterns and how they affect daily living and also helps clients develop social interest within themselves and their communities.

Barbara Luskin, PhD, LP
Pronouns: she/her
Dr. Luskin is a licensed psychologist who 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. Dr. Luskin’s services include diagnostic and functional assessments, individual therapy for adults and adolescents, and training and consultation for caregivers. She helps them understand ASD, teaches them creative and effective interventions, helps them evaluate progress, and provides guidance when adjustments are needed.

James Rechs, LICSW
Pronouns: he/him
Rechs, located in Rochester, Minn., provides individual therapy for adults and teens as well as psychoeducation and support for parents, families, and caregivers. Rechs believes that social and emotional struggles are not a sign of abnormality, but rather a reflection of the diversity and challenges of human experience. His top priority is helping clients achieve goals that are most important to them, and to help them live lives of meaning and satisfaction. Rechs specializes in working with those seeking to transition to greater independence, and especially enjoys helping clients pursue their areas of interest in ways that stimulate personal growth and connection. Rechs has a master's degree in social work from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and an undergraduate degree from Grinnell College in Iowa.

Meg Spires, MSW, LICSW
Pronouns: she/her
Spires is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and is the parent of a child with autism. She uses a strengths-based approach and counsels clients through identifying and building on the unique gifts they possess. She uses a variety of therapeutic frameworks, including narrative, family systems, solution-focused, trauma-informed, and dialectical behavioral approaches. Her greatest joy as a therapist is watching people become their authentic selves and build lives that meet their needs. She is open to feedback and strives to provide a safe and empowering environment to help people achieve their therapeutic goals.

Bjorn Walter, MA
Pronouns: he/him
Walter is working to obtain his license in Marriage and Family Therapy. He earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology from Southwest Minnesota State University, and his master’s degree in Adlerian psychotherapy and counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy from Adler Graduate School (AGS). Since graduating from AGS, Walter spent time working at a group home dedicated to adults with autism and schizophrenia near his hometown in Sweden. He uses Adlerian and cognitive behavioral techniques to help individuals and their families understand the true nature of autism. He recognizes the importance of familial relationships and friendships and strives to help his clients realize how they affect us and our lives. Walter promotes encouragement, openness, and honesty.

Beth Pitchford, MA, LPCC
Pronouns: she/her
Pitchford became passionate about working with people on the “invisible” part of the spectrum (formerly known as Asperger’s syndrome) after she realized that many people close to her have autism and spent most of their lives wondering why they felt so different. Pitchford values working with adults who want to decode the neurotypical world in order to decrease barriers to community acceptance and increase feelings of success. She works with adolescents as they navigate the super-social world of the teenage years. Using cognitive behavioral approaches and her Adlerian training, Pitchford’s goal is to help people better understand themselves and the people in their lives.
AuSM Membership

Whether you are a family with a child who is newly diagnosed, an adult on the spectrum, an educator who serves individuals with autism, or a business that wants to learn how to better serve customers with autism, AuSM provides you with resources and services you need to find the most comfortable way to participate and grow.

- Member-only rates on classes, AuSM Skillshops, workshops, and other programs
- Discount registration for annual Minnesota autism conference
- AuSM Summer Camps for members only
- One complimentary AuSM Skillshop per year – $25 value
- Access to AuSM Lending Library
- AuSM Connections, twice per month e-mail newsletter
- Advocacy updates and alerts

Basic AuSM Membership

$60 Household: 2 adults and children or grandchildren, ages 21 and under
$40 Educator/Professional: individual membership for professionals
$20 Person with ASD: individual membership for adults over 21

Group AuSM Membership

$150 Non-Profit: includes memberships for employees
$350 Corporate: includes memberships for employees

Visit www.ausm.org or call 651.647.1083 to become an AuSM Member today!

We help your child communicate.

Children with autism often struggle with communication. We work with children and their families to assess, diagnose and treat language disorders with a personalized approach. And our services are provided at no cost to families.

Check out one of our free Autism Parent Workshops or webinars, call us to discuss your child’s needs, or visit our website at MasonicChildrensClinic.org.
AuSM is pleased to offer opportunities for families and individuals with autism to come together and enjoy fun activities in welcoming environments, both in-person and virtually. We also offer events and fundraisers that support our mission of enhancing the lives of those affected by autism. Visit www.ausm.org and click on the Events section to access a frequently-updated listing of community gatherings and for more information about AuSM events.

September 19, 2020
3rd Annual AuSM Autistic Community Summit
This event for autistics by autistics will include a keynote presentation; breakout sessions focused on identity, community, and practical skills; interactive activities; a Flappy Hour virtual Zoom session; and a virtual exhibit hall.
Location: VIRTUAL

October 24, 2020
3rd Annual AuSM Connections Puzzle Competition
Put your jigsaw puzzling passion to the test during the 3rd annual AuSM Connections Jigsaw Puzzle Competition held virtually through the Zoom platform and supported by PuzzleTwist®. Gather your friends and family into teams of up to four that will compete for the fastest completion time.
Location: VIRTUAL

December 3, 2020
Autism & Trauma: Exploring Effects and Strategies Workshop
In partnership with the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin, AuSM will offer this virtual workshop featuring a keynote presentation and additional expert speakers.
Location: VIRTUAL

April 2021
26th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference
Get all of the latest information on autism, all in one place. Spend your conference days learning from high-caliber speakers, shop the AuSM Bookstore, and gather information from key autism exhibitors.
Location: VIRTUAL

May 2021
Steps for Autism in Minnesota
Steps for Autism in Minnesota 2021 is going to be bigger, more exciting, and raise more dollars than ever for the Minnesota autism community. Fundraise to celebrate inclusion and appreciation of those with autism in Minnesota.
Location: More details to come!

Visit www.ausm.org for the latest community events information.
WHEN IT ALL SEEMS TOO MUCH,
FRASER IS HERE

Fraser Hope Line offers a free way to connect directly with a mental health professional.

Call 612-446-HOPE (4673) or email fraserhopeline@fraser.org

Fraser Hope Line is not a crisis hotline. In an emergency, please call 9-1-1.
Improving lives through personalized homecare

Accra provides support to children, adolescents, adults and families that need help in their homes for a loved one with a disability. We are one of the largest providers of homecare services in Minnesota, proudly serving more than 9,000 clients across the state. Our mission is to improve lives by providing individualized homecare services and support to people living at home. Our person-centered philosophy focuses on treating each person as a unique individual.

To learn more, call 866-935-3515 or visit accrahomecare.org

Our services include:
- Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Choice
- Financial Management Services (FMS)
- 245D Waivered Services
- Home Health Care
- Mental Health Services
- Senior Assisted Living
You have an AuSM community.

The Autism Society of Minnesota offers a place to learn, access services, and develop skills that enhance your life. AuSM membership connects you to a common community that acts without judgment, nurtures potential, advances knowledge, and supports acceptance.

To learn about AuSM’s member benefits and become an AuSM Member today, call 651.647.1083 or visit www.ausm.org.

Minnesota’s First Autism Resource®