



2022 AuSM SUMMER RECREATION CATALOG



including
**AuSM's Guide to
Sensory-Friendly
Minnesota 2022
4th Edition**



ausm
autism society of minnesota

www.ausm.org

Minnesota's First Autism Resource®



Providing Home Care for All Ages

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Robert M. Hensel



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BEST CARE
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Building opportunities to keep our community connected to AuSM and to each other



AuSM continues to be dedicated to creatively bringing you the information, resources, and connections you need to thrive while prioritizing safety and fun.

On these pages, you'll find an exciting line-up of spring and summer activities and education designed to meet the needs of youth and adults with autism and those who support them.

For in-person activities, AuSM will apply a safety plan that includes proper health practices while still engaging participants with instructors and each other.

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. Keep connected with AuSM and this amazing community by joining us for an activity, camp, or class!

Special Education Recovery Services and Supports

In 2021, the Minnesota Legislature passed a new law that requires the Minnesota Department of Education, school districts, and charter schools to ensure that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on in-person instruction and access to a free, appropriate public education are addressed. Funding has been made available for school districts and charter schools to focus on challenges from the pandemic including school re-entry, disruption in the education of children with disabilities, and mental health services. In addition to school district and charter school staff, outside providers may provide special education recovery services and supports. If you have questions about these requirements, or want to see if AuSM programs can be accessed through this funding, talk to your student's IEP Case Manager.



AuSM is grateful to Marathon Petroleum Corporation for providing grant funding in support of this catalog. Marathon is committed to investing in organizations and initiatives that make a positive, meaningful impact in the communities where they operate. Thank you, Marathon Petroleum.

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 2022 Summer Recreation Catalog.

Improving lives through personalized homecare



Accra helps families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder that need support in their homes. 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.

Our services include:

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- Mental Health Services
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or visit accrahomecare.org



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SPEND YOUR SUMMER AT MICC



Learn Skills. Experience Life.

Summer Session 1: Ages 18-23 · June 13-17

Summer Session 2: Ages 16-18 · June 21-24

Our **Summer Program**, consists of two one-week day program sessions to choose from and is designed for young adults ages 16-23. We seek to provide our participants with a taste of independence supported by our instructors and staff. Our experienced and diverse staff come from a variety of backgrounds; supporting health and wellness, social skills, and vocational experience. We work alongside our participants on the autism spectrum and with learning differences to:

- Create lasting friendships.
- Explore a variety of careers through industry tours, speaking to professionals, and hands-on learning.
- Gain and practice social skills and social engagement.
- Be introduced to basic independent living skills including cooking.
- Practice healthy habits and wellness routines.

To learn more about our Summer Program, admissions requirements, or to apply visit, miccommunity.org/summer

Contact us at **612.876.9409** or admissions@miccommunity.org.



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AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota *page 33-47*

Opportunities for families and individuals with autism to come together and enjoy fun activities in welcoming environments.

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 \$25 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.

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- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
- SOCIAL SECURITY

Spring Programs

AuSM’s spring programs offer 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. If an individual 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.

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. See page 6 for AuSM’s cancellation policy. Activities 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.



Improv Skills

Ages 14-26

Have fun while learning how to respond to the unexpected, engage in reciprocal interactions, and support fellow participants in keeping a scene moving forward. Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor. **Register at www.ausm.org.**

WINTER/SPRING – Saturdays

Advanced: 12:30-2 p.m.

Beginner: 2:30-4 p.m.

Feb. 19, 26 and March 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2022

Location

The Good Luck High Five Studio
1500 Jackson St. N.E. #218
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Cost Per Session

AuSM Member: \$275

Non-Member: \$325



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 are subject to change. The cost includes activity fees. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

SPRING – Sundays from 1-3 p.m.

- March 13, 2022 – Snapology
- March 20, 2022 – Mill City Museum
- March 27, 2022 – Rem5 VR Lab
- April 3, 2022 – Science Museum of Minnesota
- April 10, 2022 – To Be Determined

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-off and pick-up locations will be at each site.

Cost

AuSM Member: \$275
 Non-Member: \$325

Self-Advocacy In Action

Ages 6-10

Interactive and arts-based strategies to exercise the skill A.R.E.A.S. of Accountability, Resiliency, Empathy, Advocacy, and Self-Control. Explore your own personal voice and methods in which to express yourself as an individual amongst your peers. Theater will be the primary art form used; however, there will be additional explorations in visual arts, music, dance, and creative writing. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

SPRING – Saturdays

May 7, 14, and 21, 2022 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Location

Climb Theatre
 6415 Carmen Ave. E.
 Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

Cost

\$150



Summer Recreation



AuSM will offer two sessions of morning and afternoon recreation programs that will meet in person at a variety of community venues once per week for five weeks. Programming will engage participants in nature activities, museum and zoo visits, and other activities to foster learning, friendships, and fun.

AuSM’s summer recreation sessions 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. Programs are staffed at a 1:4 staff-to-participant ratio.

If an individual 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.

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. See page 6 for AuSM’s cancellation policy. Activities 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.

Youth and Adults

Youth and Young Adult Summer Recreation Session Notes

- In order to make these programs accessible to as many community members as possible, individuals may register for only one session from Jan. 31-March 30. On April 1, we will open remaining available spots for multi-session registration. Sessions are limited to 12 participants.
- Locations are subject to change. Admission/activity fees are included in the registration fee.
- Drop off and pick up are at locations indicated on AuSM's website for each date.
- Participants will be asked to complete a COVID-19 waiver as part of the registration process, and committing to a personal safety plan that will include proper health practices while still engaging participants with instructors and each other.

The AuSM Education team is securing venues for each week of summer recreation programming. Venues may include Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, the Bakken Museum, Walker Art Center, Silverwood Park, the Minnesota Streetcar Museum, Pavek Museum, Wood Lake Nature Center, and others. More information regarding session venues will be available soon on AuSM's website. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

Summer Recreation Session 1

June 15, 22, 29, and July 6, 13, 2022

Morning: 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Ages 12-17

Afternoon: 1-3:30 p.m., Ages 16-24

Cost Per Session

Member: \$275

Non-Member: \$325

Summer Recreation Session 2

July 20, 27, and Aug. 3, 10, 17, 2022

Morning: 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Ages 16-24

Afternoon: 1-3:30 p.m., Ages 12-17

Cost Per Session

Member: \$275

Non-Member: \$325

Thank you, AuSM Premier Partners!

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



If your business or organization is interested in becoming an AuSM Premier Partner, please contact Kelly Ulrick at 651.647.1083 ext. 28 or e-mail kulrick@ausm.org.



Improv Skills

Ages 14-26

Have fun while learning how to respond to the unexpected, engage in reciprocal interactions, and support fellow participants in keeping a scene moving forward. Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

Beginner: 1-3 p.m.

Advanced: 3:30-5:30 p.m.

June 27-July 1, 2022

Location

To Be Determined

Cost Per Session

AuSM Member: \$275

Non-Member: \$325



Nature Center

Ages 13-18

Outdoor Adventure Skills for Teens on the Autism Spectrum

Explore the forest, pond, and prairie. Build a survival shelter with other campers, start a campfire using different techniques and make a s'more. Meet animal ambassadors and gain skills to navigate and overcome obstacles in the forest. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

Registration Code: #5LNC5215

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

July 11-14, 2022 from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Location

Lowry Nature Center

7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria, MN 55386

Cost

\$100





Music and Design

Ages 6-20

Work together to create interactive art exhibits using different creative arts mediums. Rotations include exhibit design, music, movement, and visual art. Each rotation is led by a teaching artist or therapist with extensive experience working with youth of all ages and ability levels. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

SUMMER SESSION 1 (Ages 6-12) Consecutive Days

July 25-29, 2022 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

SUMMER SESSION 2 (Ages 13-20) Consecutive Days

July 25-29, 2022 from 1-4 p.m.

Location

Toneworks Music Therapy
5600 Lincoln Dr., #280
Edina, MN 55436

Cost Per Session

AuSM Member: \$250
Non-Member: \$300



Budding Artists

Ages 11-18

Be inspired by the art seen in the galleries and make your own masterpieces in the studio while practicing social skills and making friends. Learn about new materials from air-dry clay to acrylic paints. This class will be co-taught by Mia art instructors and an AuSM education specialist. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

Aug. 8-12, 2022 from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Location

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

Cost

AuSM Member: \$250
Non-Member: \$300





Sea and Wildlife

Ages 8-19

The Minnesota Zoo is excited to partner with the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) to offer summer camp opportunities for youth with autism. Scholarships available. Visit mnzoo.org/scholarships for information. **Register at www.ausm.org.**

Ocean Odyssey Ages 8-11

Dive into an underwater world teeming with sea turtles, sharks, sea dragons, and monk seals! Each day, explore a different ocean habitat including coral reefs, tide pools, and estuaries.

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

June 20-24, 2022 from 1-4 p.m.

Wildlife Agents Ages 12-15

A crime has been committed! The victim... wildlife! Can you identify the perpetrator? Explore the problems facing wildlife while learning the skills and tools scientists use to track down criminals. Put on your detective hat and join us.

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

July 11-15, 2022 from 1-4 p.m.

Wildlife Heroes Ages 16-19

This camp is all about problem-solving! Engineers, designers, and scientists work every day to design solutions for wildlife. Test your skills with design challenges while learning about real-world conservation issues—around the world and right in your own backyard.

SUMMER – Consecutive Days

July 18-22, 2022 from 1-4 p.m.

Location of Each Session

Minnesota Zoo
13000 Zoo Blvd.
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Cost Per Session

\$225



Northern Minnesota Adventures Coming Soon!



Duluth



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autism society of minnesota

The Autism Society of Minnesota is working with fun Duluth venues to plan some exciting social skills classes for youth with autism in the Duluth area this summer. More information will be available soon!

www.ausm.org



5th Annual AuSM Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

Whether you are a serious puzzle-building competitor or just want to have fun constructing a neat puzzle with friends and family while supporting the local autism community, we invite you to join us. The in-person competition will include an autism resources fair in the Huntington Bank Rotunda and an exciting live audience to cheer on our puzzling teams!



SATURDAY, NOV. 5, 2022
Mall of America Huntington Rotunda
and Virtual on Zoom

Presented by **ausm**
autism society of minnesota

 **Puzzle Twist**

GAMES
by James



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www.ausm.org Minnesota's First Autism Resource®

Registration will be open in September 2022.
www.ausm.org



AuSM

AuSM camps are tailored for youth and adults with autism. Parents and caregivers can rest assured knowing that their campers are being cared for by highly trained, experienced staff, while campers make memories that last a lifetime.

Building on the success of last year's AuSM Summer Camps, the AuSM team and partnering camps diligently are preparing for the 2022 summer camp season. We look forward to meeting camper needs and providing an exciting and rewarding experience for our campers this summer.

To participate in an AuSM residential camp, you must be a current member of AuSM.



Important Camp Dates

Jan. 17-Feb. 18, 2022: Application period for Camp Discovery and Camp Hand in Hand

March 4, 2022: Camp placements/ waitlists announced via e-mail

March 31, 2022: Camp payment due

April 30, 2022: Camp packets, including physical forms, due

May 2022: Camp and COVID-19 guidelines available

Apply for AuSM Camps
www.ausm.org

Summer Camps

Important notes about 2022:

- Camp placements will be assigned by a lottery process. The application for the lottery will be open from Jan. 17-Feb. 18, 2022. Submit your lottery application for one session of camp only at any time during the application window.
- Each Camp Discovery and Camp Hand in Hand session will be 4 nights and five days. As you review the camp sessions, please note the days of the week spans for each to ensure your desired camp fits your schedule.
- Camp sessions will have increased capacity compared to 2021; however, they will not be at full capacity.
- Camp Discovery will be held at a new location, Courage South in Maple Lake, Minn. Options for 2022 campers to tour the new location will be available in the spring.
- As we plan for the 2022 camp season, we're closely following the evolving pandemic regulations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Health.
- We anticipate camp safety precautions, which could include masking, social distancing, testing, etc. Though we encourage COVID-19 vaccines, we do not anticipate a vaccine requirement to participate in AuSM summer camp programs.

Camp Wahode Returns in 2023

Due to continued pandemic-related programming restrictions at Camp Butwin, AuSM's Camp Wahode will not be held 2022. AuSM has built summer social skills programming to help fill this gap for youth with autism (see pages 10-15). We look forward to offering Camp Wahode in 2023.



Camp Discovery

1:4 Staff-to-Camper Support

In 2022, Camp Discovery will be held at Courage South in Maple Lake, Minn. Campers will stay in cabin groups according to age, gender, and interests. Cabins have restrooms and electricity. Campers will enjoy meals in a dining hall or on an outdoor deck.

Camp Discovery has a high degree of structure and small group activities. Campers should be able to positively interact and safely participate within small groups. Camp activities include swimming, kayaking, canoeing, arts and crafts, nature experiences, recreational games, live action role-playing games, and more. Camp Discovery also includes special evening activities. Campers participate in small group discussions and activities that focus on special interests and making a connection with others.

SESSION 1

June 12-16, 2022 (all genders, ages 17+)

Location **NEW!**

Courage South
8046 83rd St. N.W., Maple Lake, MN 55358

SESSION 2

June 26-30, 2022 (all genders, ages 10-16)

Cost per Session

\$1,550

Camp Hand in Hand

1:1 Staff-to-Camper Support

Camp Hand in Hand features a serene camp location with modern air-conditioned cabins and bathrooms. Nutritious meals are served in a group dining room. This camp provides 1:1 staff-to-camper support.

Activities include swimming, boating, geocaching, tubing, horseback riding, fishing, crafts, archery, nature exploration, biking, and music groups led by a board-certified music therapist. Camp activities focus on social interaction and communication. The camp also offers a small ropes course, paddleboats, and canoes for additional fun. Evenings include bonfires and other fun activities. Each week of camp will be divided into groups determined by age, gender, and interests.

SESSION 1

June 22-26, 2022 (all genders, ages 20-24)

Location

Camp Knutson
11148 Manhattan Pt. Blvd.
Crosslake, MN 56442

SESSION 2

June 28-July 2, 2022 (all genders, ages 15-19)

SESSION 3

Aug. 8-12, 2022 (all genders, ages 25+)

Cost per Session

\$1,550

SESSION 4

Aug. 14-18, 2022 (all genders, ages 9-14)

Camp Staff Needed

“I had no previous camp experience, but I’ve always heard how magical and special AuSM camps are. Once you experience camp, it becomes infectious. You want to come back, you want to be a part of these campers’ favorite week of the year, and you want to be a part of why their week at camp was a special one.”

Abby Price, graduate student, Edgewood College
2021 AuSM Camp Hand in Hand Counselor

Camp staff make our camps possible. If you are 17 or older and interested in earning money while having the summer experience of a lifetime, AuSM invites you to join in the magic of camp and community by becoming a camp counselor during the summer 2022 season.



Contact AuSM at 651.647.1083, e-mail camp@ausm.org, or apply on www.ausm.org.

22nd Annual Steps for Autism in Minnesota

AuSM's largest fundraiser of the year.

REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN SOON!
www.ausm.org



Build your fundraising team, collect dollars in support of the local autism community, and join us for the 22nd annual Steps for Autism in Minnesota! AuSM will offer participants a walk route, fun activities, an autism resource fair, and opportunities for community connections.



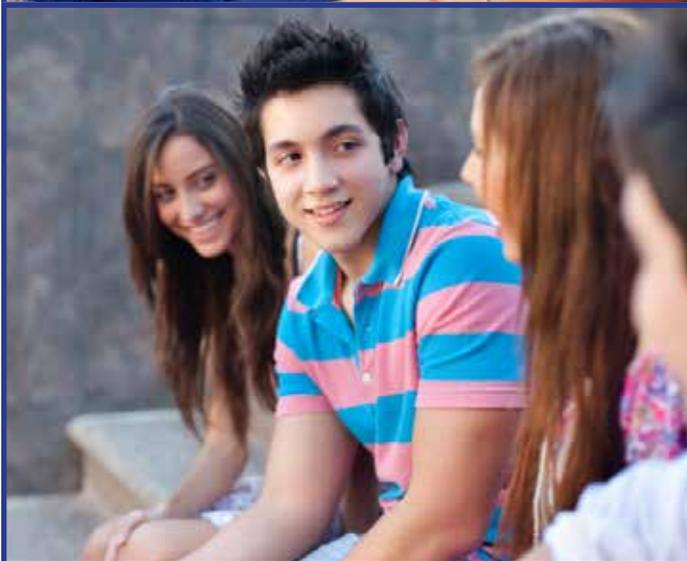
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Minnesota's First Autism Resource®

COMO LAKESIDE PAVILION
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Saint Paul, MN 55103

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2022
9 A.M.-12 P.M.

Learn the Basics, Obtain Valuable Resources



Understanding Autism and Best Strategic Practices

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.

*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

Jan. 17, 2022 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Feb. 21, 2022 from 2-4 p.m.

March 21, 2022 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

April 18, 2022 from 6-8 p.m.

May 16, 2022 from 2-4 p.m.

Location

VIRTUAL

Cost

Due to a generous sponsorship from Accra, 2022 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 re-centers the individualized approach. AuSM offers 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 can 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?

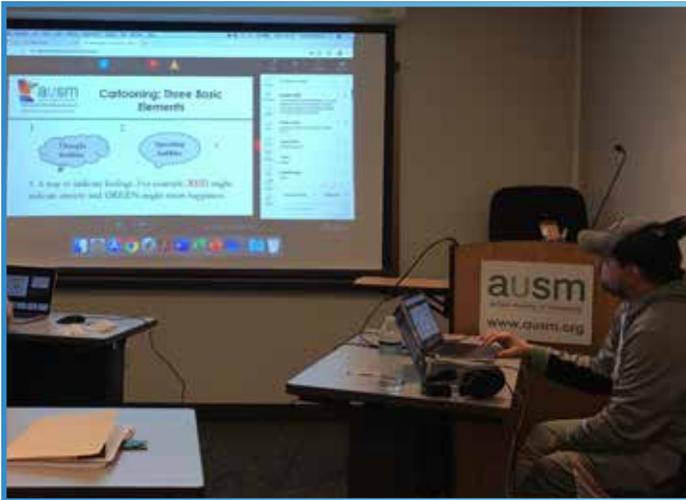
Please complete a consultation form on www.ausm.org. If you have questions, reach AuSM's education team at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail education@ausm.org.

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

SPRING

Mondays from 6-9 p.m.

March 7, 14, 21, 28, and April 4, 2022

SUMMER

Daily from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

June 6-10, 2022

Location

VIRTUAL

Cost

\$260 per person

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

AuSM Autism Training and Consulting



Your brother. Your daughter.
Your student. Your neighbor.
Your customer. Your client.

With a prevalence rate of 1 in 36 in Minnesota,

Autism Spectrum Disorder is the fastest growing disability in our state.

As a business owner, organization member, educator, or direct support professional, you encounter individuals with autism every day. By learning more about the diversity of the autism spectrum, you're taking proactive steps toward support, acceptance, and inclusion.

For more information about AuSM's custom-tailored autism training and consulting, contact AuSM's Education Department at education@ausm.org or call 651.647.1083 ext. 26.



WE UNDERSTAND THAT **AUTISM IMPACTS MORE THAN THE INDIVIDUAL.**

That's why we provide services designed
for each child and family.

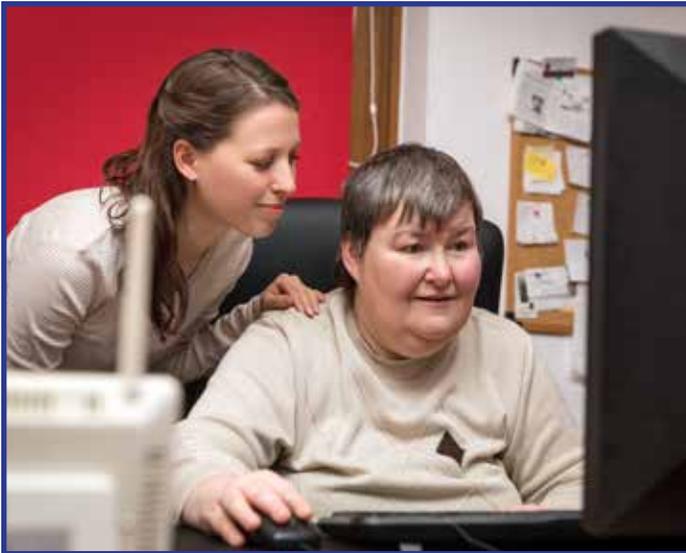
Autism Services:

Preschool Autism Day Treatment
School-Age Autism Day Treatment
East African Autism Day Treatment
Greenspan Floortime Family Clinic

To learn more about mental health
and autism services at St. David's Center,
call (952) 548-8700 or visit stdavidscenter.org



Topic-specific, two-hour mini workshops



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 2022. 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

2022 AuSM Skillshops are generously sponsored by Best Care.



Register at www.ausm.org.

Jan. 25, 2022 Creating Autistic-Friendly Spaces

Presenter: Jillian Nelson (she/her)

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 25 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Society frames autistic people as not wanting to have friends. This is far from the truth. Autistic socialization looks different and sometimes that creates challenges in building friendships and social groups. Learn about how to create different types of social spaces and engagement to have greater success connecting with autistic and neurotypical people alike.

Jillian Nelson, Community Resource and Policy Advocate for the Autism Society of Minnesota, 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. She also has worked in employment services, helping others with autism secure and retain appropriate, successful employment.

Feb. 8, 2022 Video Modeling: Why it is Useful and How to Create One

Presenter: Eric Ringgenberg (he/him)

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 8 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Video modeling is an effective strategy for learning and developing many types of skills. This session will review what video modeling is, describe different types of video models that can be used, and demonstrate how to create a video model using technology you may have or can get at minimal expense.

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.

Feb. 22, 2022 Food and Function: Mealtime Solutions When Executive Function Isn’t On the Menu

Presenter: Jillian Nelson (she/her)

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 22 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Join Jillian Nelson, an autistic adult, as she shares lived experience in navigating mealtime with significant autistic challenges including motor skill and executive function deficits and the consideration of dietary needs that make meal prep and planning a daunting task. She will share shopping hacks, cooking tricks, useful kitchen tools, and a variety of life lessons that make autistic meal time less overwhelming and more enjoyable.

Jillian Nelson, Community Resource and Policy Advocate for the Autism Society of Minnesota, 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. She also has worked in employment services, helping others with autism secure and retain appropriate, successful employment.



March 8, 2022 Cookable Kitchen

Presenters: Sam Grover (she/her) and Kat Olson (she/her)

Date: Tuesday, March 8 from 6-8 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Cookable Kitchen’s mission is to empower people of all abilities to cook. Join us for a step-by-step online class where we will make dinner together and socialize. Participants can cook independently or with support as needed. This class will involve using the oven and microwave and handling raw meat. A week before the class, you will receive an e-mail with the recipe, a list of ingredients and supplies needed, and the Zoom link.

This session will be taught by sisters Sam Grover and Kat Olson. Grover’s background is in agriculture and sustainability education and advocacy. During the day she is an administrative director at the University of Minnesota. Grover founded Cookable Kitchen out of a lifelong passion for cooking and her personal experience supporting Olson in reaching her goals for independent living. Olson is a person with autism and a strong self-advocate. She works as an office support assistant for BWBR Architects and enjoys reading, watching movies, archery, and singing.

March 21, 2022 Sleep Essentials for Autistic Youth

Presenter: Melissa Doman (*Pronouns: she/her*)

Date: Tuesday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Learn about the common struggles, myths, and misconceptions about sleep for kids with autism. Receive Doman’s top three recommendations for a better night’s rest.

Melissa Doman is a pediatric sleep consultant for special needs families who have had it with sleepless nights and doctors who say their child’s sleep issues can’t be fixed. Doman helps children sleep better and independently so parents can see them grow, thrive, and use these sleep skills for years to come. She has worked with children diagnosed with Cerebral palsy, Trisomy 21, autism, ADD/ADHD, developmental delays, and more.

April 12, 2022 Online Dating: From Profile to Potential Relationship

Presenter: Kendall Mager (*Pronouns: she/her*)

Date: Tuesday, April 12 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Many unspoken rules come with dating and even more with online dating. Learn about some those social rules as well as how to set up an online dating profile, discuss some of the popular online dating apps, how to prepare for a date, and how to clarify and communicate what you want from online dating.

Kendall Mager is the Program Coordinator for the SELF Program at Lutheran Social Service of MN. In this role, she provides sexuality education to youth and young adults of all abilities in small and large group settings as well as individually. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Women and Gender Studies and is pursuing a Masters Degree in Social Work. Prior to her time at LSS, Mager held professional roles in various harm-reduction jobs including HIV prevention, sexual and domestic violence prevention, and advocated for survivors of gender-based violence. In her current position, she enjoys teaching about healthy relationships, dating, and boundaries.



May 10, 2022 Communicating Consent and Boundaries

Presenter: Alyssa Perau (*Pronouns: she/they*)

Date: Tuesday, May 10 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Knowing how to communicate boundaries and consent can be a struggle at times. Learn what healthy consent and boundaries look like and how to tell if consent is happening to ensure boundaries are being respected. Answer and ask questions, read through scenarios, and gain new skills to help you communicate in a healthy way.

Alyssa Perau has been an Adolescent Health Specialist with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's SELF team since 2018. Perau has created performances around the topics of queerness, mental health, consent, and sexual assault with the goal of de-stigmatizing conversations around taboo topics. Through LSS, she teaches sex education to people of all ages. Perau is neurodivergent and specializes in working with people with developmental disabilities.

May 24, 2022 Medical Cannabis and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Presenter: Noah Simpson (*Pronouns: he/him*) and Jordan Banister (*Pronouns: she/her*)

Date: Tuesday, May 24 from 7-9 p.m. **VIRTUAL**

Gain information and strategies involving medical cannabis, Minnesota's medical cannabis program, and how cannabis can be an effective treatment option for a variety of conditions as well as autism.

Noah Simpson works with organizations and communities in Minnesota to educate and raise awareness about medical cannabis.

Jordan Banister graduated from North Dakota State University with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. She has been working at Leafline Labs for more than five years, and appreciates the opportunity to see how medical cannabis changes lives every day.

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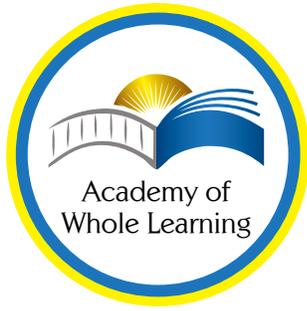
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AuSM therapists have dedicated their careers to helping individuals with autism understand their diagnosis. They provide strategies to support each person’s unique autism experience, addressing both the challenges and gifts it can bring. AuSM therapists help individuals from youth through adulthood as they grow at their own pace in a safe, compassionate, and respectful environment.

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- Diagnostic assessments for adults
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- Training and behavior consultation
- Marriage and couples therapy
- 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 four virtual support groups through Zoom: Women, LGBTQIA, Independent Adults, 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.

Meet Our AuSM Therapists



Sara Lahti, MA, CCTP

Pronouns: she/her

Lahti has worked with children with ASD and individuals with ASD and other disabilities in a day program facility. She 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.

Dr. Luskin serves the local autism community in multiple capacities including professional consultation, training, certification instruction, and individual work with clients. As such, her schedule usually is at capacity. Please speak with the AuSM Counseling and Consulting Services appointment scheduler to identify the AuSM therapist who can best meet your needs.



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. Using cognitive behavioral approaches and her Adlerian training, Pitchford's goal is to help people better understand themselves and the people in their lives.



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.



Bjorn Walter, MA, LMFT

Pronouns: he/him

Walter 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.



**Josette Wynne, MSW,
Temporary Graduate Social
Work License**

Pronouns: she/her

Josette Wynne came to the field of clinical social work through her own interest in how systems and trauma affect individual development, behavior, and biopsychosocial life outcomes. Additional life experiences as a member of the LGBT community and parent of two children with autism led her on her path

to offer support and encouragement to others.

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

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AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota

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Welcome to AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota

Welcome to the fourth edition of *AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota*, a reference tool and planning guide for families and individuals with autism and other sensory sensitivities. Learn why sensory-friendly events and activities are important, discover how to make accommodations in your own spaces, read about statewide sensory-friendly initiatives, and check out the listing of sensory-friendly businesses and organizations that support those with sensory sensitivities.

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Engaging with the community

Sensory-friendly especially relevant and necessary

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schedules have been scrapped; work and school have been accomplished at home; and individuals, families, and businesses have had to adapt to having less access to those activities that bring them joy and connect them to our community.

Despite the pandemic keeping us at least six feet apart, needs for accommodations and inclusion remain.

Over the past decade, organizations in Minnesota and across the country have increasingly committed to providing “sensory-friendly” experiences to the public. Such programming acknowledges the very real challenges posed by sensory processing issues, which is one of the hallmarks of Autism Spectrum Disorder. As autism prevalence rates continue to rise, so, too, does awareness of the many ways in which the characteristics of autism can make it difficult to access and engage in community activities and spaces.

Meaningful community participation and recreational opportunities support an enhanced quality of life, and there are steps organizations and businesses can take to make their spaces and activities inclusive to a

neurodivergent audience. Training staff and volunteers about autism and other disabilities, as well as how to best support those with different communication and learning styles, is a crucial component. Other efforts may include offering sensory-friendly early open and/or extended hours of operation to better accommodate those who benefit from environmental modifications and reduced crowds.

Creating an inclusive venue opens the door to increased participation overall. When individuals and families attend an event or program tailored to meet their needs, it gives them an opportunity to experience an environment and gain an understanding of what to expect when they return. This can help everyone develop the skills and confidence to participate in such programs in the future, whether during a special event or during general hours of operation. As such, these inclusive spaces and programs promote long-term participation and greater levels of individual independence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges, but we have learned that being as prepared as we can be for what’s next is important. Seeking out autism education now will lead to increased access and opportunities for all in our community.



The Autism Society of Minnesota is dedicated to helping create sensory-friendly opportunities for our community. AuSM offers a wide range of services, including general consulting, sensory and accessibility inventories, customized

training, social narrative preparation, and more. Our partners have included zoos, museums, theaters, community centers, and sporting venues.

Contact AuSM’s education department at education@ausm.org or 651.647.1083, ext. 26, for more information about how we can help you support the Minnesota autism community. 🌈

Autism prevalence rate increases 1 in 44 national, 1 in 36 in Minnesota

The Centers for Disease Control's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network released its surveillance of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) report in December 2021, which noted that one in 44 U.S. children has ASD. This reflects an increase over the previous report of one in 54. Also consistent with previous findings, boys are 4.2 times as likely to be identified with ASD than girls.

MN-ADDM, part of the ADDM Network, monitors the prevalence of ASD and of intellectual disability (ID) in parts of Hennepin and Ramsey counties. MN-ADDM collects ongoing data on ASD prevalence in Minnesota communities and provides ASD prevalence estimates every two years. Below are summaries of key findings (for the full article, visit www.ausm.org):

- In Minnesota, the prevalence rate for autism is one in 36, the third highest rate of the 11 data collection sites throughout the country. This new prevalence rate is higher than the previous study which identified Minnesota prevalence as 1 in 44.
- Minnesota had intelligence quotient (IQ) data available for 81 percent of 8-year-old children identified with ASD. Of those children with ASD in MN, 29 percent had an intellectual disability.
- MN-ADDM collects ASD prevalence data across racial and ethnic groups to better understand rates of ASD in MN communities and to identify health disparities. Among 8-year-olds in Minnesota, Black children were 1.8 times more likely to be identified with ASD than Hispanic children and 1.3 more likely to be identified with ASD than white children. Among 4-year-olds, Black children were

1.4 times more likely to be identified with ASD than White children, and Asian children were twice as likely to be identified with ASD than White children.

- The median age of first ASD diagnosis by a community provider in Minnesota was 63 months (or 5 years, 3 months) of age. ASD can be diagnosed by 2 years of age.
- Approximately 45 percent of children later identified with ASD had an evaluation (of some kind) documented in their records by age of 3. While this is a slight improvement from previous the previous study year, Minnesota needs to continue to find ways to lower the age of first evaluation by community providers.

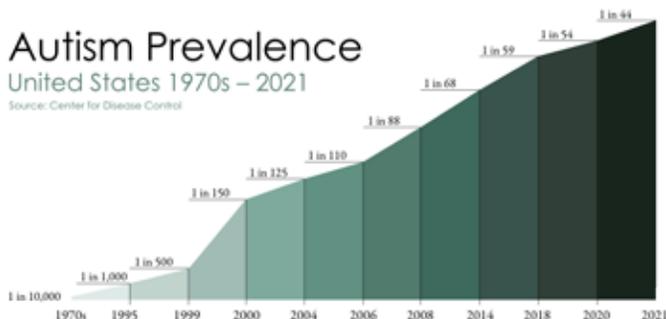
In addition to focusing on early identification and intervention, Minnesota services and support are critical now and as children grow into adolescence and adulthood. To meet this increasing need, additional resources are required to support diagnostic, educational, and treatment options for children with ASD.

Because of Minnesota's current ASD provider shortage, building resources and capacity is imperative. Continued efforts are needed to train, recruit, and retain professionals in the field of ASD, particularly individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Ellie Wilson, Executive Director of the Autism Society of Minnesota agrees. "As autism diagnoses increase, so, too, does the need for programs and services to support individuals with autism from birth through retirement and to provide education and training to our communities," Wilson said. "For more than 50 years, AuSM has been supporting individuals affected by autism through community-building, education, advocacy, and information and resources. We also understand the importance of early identification and of informing policies promoting improved outcomes in health care and education for individuals with autism." 

Autism Prevalence United States 1970s – 2021

Source: Center for Disease Control



Prioritizing community inclusivity

Adjusting spaces to promotes access

Throughout the years, the Autism Society of Minnesota has worked with many partners to provide inclusive and sensory-friendly options. Whether it's events, relaxed performances, sensory-friendly hours, or resources that are always available to make a space more accessible, inclusion can take many forms. We spoke to some of our partners to learn more about why they chose to incorporate inclusivity and accessibility into their planning in previous years, and what their plans are for 2022.

What Does Sensory-Friendly Mean?

Sensory concerns look very different in different spaces. For example, Bekki Hansen of the Bakken Museum shares “A visit to The Bakken Museum is a highly sensory experience...one negative experience, an unexpected shock, for example, can cause someone to be timid about trying out anything else.”

Theater productions may include strobe effects or fog that are a seizure risk or can cause a sudden meltdown. Many spaces that are offering sensory-friendly programming can sometimes have intense sensory experiences including large crowds, noises and smells or the expectation that participants stay quiet and easily regulated throughout the experience (for example, knowing when to clap or laugh during a theater performance).

For those who can't easily manage these sensory inputs, it means they have to stay home or struggle to access an environment that doesn't feel right for them.

Why is Sensory-Friendly Important?

AuSM is dedicated to supporting autistic individuals and families so they can have the same opportunities and options as families with neurotypical children. This commitment to equity is a driving force behind sensory-friendly and inclusive programming. When our partners commit to offering inclusive options, they help remove limitations, fear, and stigma for our community.



In addition, many of AuSM's partners have found that when they offer a wide variety of accommodations, visitors may start with more support, but move into less supported or more interactive roles as they watch those around them, test out individual limits, and explore. Having a spectrum of accommodations is essential to helping our community grow in independence and comfort.

“In June 2021, The Bakken Museum hosted groups of students from AuSM,” Hansen said. “Each group had an educational workshop experience about magnets and electromagnets and a guided tour of our exhibits. There was a lot of enthusiastic participation and many smiles and squeals of delight. Even some of our more cautious visitors enjoyed watching their friends have fun.”

These accommodations offer an equitable environment that everyone can access, which not only is supportive of neurodivergent community members, but also brings together the greater community to meet and interact with each other.

How Are Our Partners Making These Essential Changes Happen?

The Bell Museum's Jennifer Stampe shares how the museum incorporated inclusion prior to the COVID pandemic:

“Past programming and accommodations have included monthly Sensory Friendly Saturday programming, including a brief planetarium show, support for AuSM’s partner programs, sensory packs, and pre-visit materials including social narratives.”

Similarly, The Bakken Museum had a wide variety of options. “Prior to COVID-19, we had sensory friendly backpacks available through Visitor Services,” Hansen said. “Backpacks include ear muffs, fidgets, and laminated copies of our social narrative, a room to room experience guide, and an interactive exhibit planner. We also offered monthly sensory friendly hours on Sunday mornings when sound and lighting was reduced throughout the building.”

Although both museums hope to return to these programs in the future, they’ve had to make adjustments.

Sensory-Friendly in the Time of COVID-19

The Bakken Museum continues to have sensory-friendly backpacks available and encourages smaller

groups to visit and request an individual guide who can help them learn what to expect. The Bell Museum has been hosting virtual programs to make their content accessible. Stampe said, “We urge visitors looking for a quiet time to visit to try coming in the late afternoon, when the galleries are usually not very crowded. For those who decide to come to the museum during our slow times, we’ve got a brand-new, updated sensory pack program. Packs include items such as visual timers, weighted lap pads, and hearing protection to make visits more enjoyable. We’re excited for folks to try these packs during their visits and let us know what they think. You can ask for a pack at the ticketing desk.”

Other partners, including the Guthrie Theater and the Children’s Theatre Company are returning to hosting relaxed performances throughout 2022. Visit the listings in this year’s *AuSM’s Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota* as many of our partners are beginning to host these essential in-person opportunities again. 🌈



Challenges spark creativity

Mia's navigation of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for individuals, families, and organizations. For the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), these challenges go beyond keeping operations running – they include operating in ways that continue valuing diversity, fostering equity, and empowering an accessible and inclusive environment.

Established in 1883, Mia is one of the largest art museums in the United States. For Studio Programs Associate Angela Olson and her team at Mia, finding creative ways to provide access to the museum and program offerings has taken multiple forms.

“We have shifted many of our programs to a digital format, whether it be recording talks or offering virtual tours,” Olson said. “As we have gotten more practiced in offering virtual experiences, Mia also has started offering what we call ‘phygital’ programs, such as our Family Day, where participants can drop by the museum to pick up a tote of supplies, visit the artworks if they wish, and then engage in art making once home.”

Youth classes also shifted to a kit-based model, where participants can order kits of supplies and activities to be completed at home while having access to virtual support from teaching artists.

While these changes came about due to necessity, they also have provided opportunities for accessibility and inclusion in different ways.

Olson noted, “New offerings have enabled us to provide more robust support in our programming as well, such as CART captioning or interpretive services.”

In order to better serve neurodivergent community members, Mia has collaborated with AuSM both prior to and throughout the pandemic. “Several of our teaching artists were able to attend AuSM’s Direct Support Certification last summer, and the skills and techniques they learned have benefitted Mia’s programming,” Olson said. “By sharing their knowledge and advising on things like lesson plans



and ways to interact with the gallery, these artists have helped the whole team grow in their understanding of practicing inclusion.”

Additionally, AuSM has provided support in summer classes and by providing sensory kits for Mia to offer with kit-based supplies and activities. “Co-creating programming with AuSM has helped make Mia’s educational offerings more robust, thoughtful, and relevant,” Olson said.

Amidst the uncertainty about the future, some projects and long-term plans remain on hold; however, accessibility and inclusion will remain a core consideration regardless of the form programming takes. “Learning about and implementing inclusive practices into Mia’s public programming is an integral part of decolonizing educational and public programming at Mia and other institutions,” Olson said. “I am grateful for AuSM’s willingness to partner in different ways that help make Mia a place intended for everyone.” 🇺🇸



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Shelly Lopez at 612-726-5239
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Photo by Pixel Dust Photography

2022 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to alter plans for sensory-friendly experiences in the community, this fourth edition of AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota includes a listing of organizations that have featured sensory-friendly offerings and are making plans to welcome the community back when it's safe. We encourage you to visit these organizations' websites to learn more about their offerings, what is required for registration, and how their spaces accommodate safe, sensory-friendly experiences.

Bell Museum of Natural History

2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55113
www.bellmuseum.umn.edu



While we are unable to offer our monthly Sensory Friendly Saturdays series during COVID-19 restrictions, the quietest time to visit the museum when we are open is late afternoon, as we have fewer visitors and our space is generally uncrowded. Visitors are welcome to use additional resources like our quiet spaces and new sensory packs (containing sensory tools and resources). A social narrative is available for download to prepare for your visit. Please visit www.bellmuseum.umn.edu for the most up-to-date information.

Children's Theatre Company

2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404
www.childrenstheatre.org



CTC understands that patrons with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder have unique and varying sensory needs and sensitivities, as may individuals with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and other sensory, social, and cognitive disabilities, and mental illnesses. At our Sensory Friendly performances, sensory modifications are balanced with preserving the engaging theatre experience desired by all children and families. Sensory Friendly programming was developed in partnership with Fraser, ByPercent, and the Autism Society of Minnesota.

2022 Sensory Friendly Performances

Circus Abyssinia: Tulu: Jan. 29, 2022 at 11 a.m.

Bina's Six Apples: Feb. 11, 2022 at 7 p.m.

Something Happened in Our Town: March 26, 2022 at 11 a.m.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical: June 17, 2022 at 7 p.m.

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory

1225 Estabrook Dr., St. Paul, MN 55103
www.comozooconservatory.org

Visit Como Park Zoo & Conservatory from 9-10 a.m. during select dates for an inclusive experience. Individuals on the autism spectrum and their families can spend time exploring exhibits before general public hours without the crowds. Early Access morning dates to be announced for 2022 and free reservations will be required to attend. Dates and reservations are available at comozooconservatory.org.



Lake Superior Zoo

7210 Fremont St., Duluth, MN 55807
www.lszooduluth.org

The Lake Superior Zoo strives to offer an inclusive experience for all guests, including those with sensory needs. Guests may borrow a sensory bag with fidget tools and noise canceling headphones. A weighted lap pad is also available upon request. Areas of the zoo that can be loud are labeled as "headphone zones" on signs.



Metropolitan Airports Commission/MSP Airport

4300 Glumack Dr., Suite LT-3000, St. Paul, MN 55111
www.msairport.com/navigating

Having a child with special needs can make travel intimidating. Navigating MSP Airport helps ease the anxiety with free, monthly practice runs through the airport. A partnership between the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Autism Society of Minnesota, and Fraser, this program allows you to experience TSA security; explore the terminal; board a plane and meet a pilot; prepare for takeoff; and gather helpful tips, info, and resources.



Mill City Museum

704 S 2nd St., Minneapolis, MN 55401
www.mnhs.org/millcity

Discover the lively Mississippi riverfront – the very birthplace of Minneapolis – and experience the fiery past and dynamic present of this National Historic Landmark. Built within the ruins of what was once the world's largest flour mill, Mill City Museum is packed with fun for all ages. Mill City Museum welcomes all visitors. We recognize the diverse needs of our audience and strive to offer accessible programming to enable all visitors to explore this historic site.



Minneapolis Institute of Art

2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404
www.new.artsmia.org

Inspiring wonder through the power of art. The Minneapolis Institute of Art enriches the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world's diverse cultures. Mia is proud to offer social narratives designed for members of the neurodiverse community. Intended to increase comfort while visiting the museum, these illustrated documents are useful tools for anyone planning a trip to Mia.



Minnesota Orchestra

1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403
www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Experience inclusive concerts that spark curiosity and joy! At our Relaxed Family and Sensory-Friendly Concerts, audiences of all ages and abilities, including individuals on the autism spectrum and those with sensory sensitivities, are welcome to come be who they are while enjoying music together with family and friends in a relaxed environment.

Sensory-Friendly Concerts feature individual musicians or small ensembles in the Target Atrium at Orchestra Hall. Relaxed Family Concerts feature the full Orchestra in the main auditorium, plus a variety of pre/post-concert activities in the Orchestra Hall lobby.

Features of both series include: a relaxed environment where all patrons are welcome to freely respond to the music by moving, vocalizing, clapping, etc. at any time; support materials to help prepare patrons for the experience (e.g., pre-visit stories, concert playlists, tip sheets, and an instrument guide); environmental supports so that patrons can regulate the level of sensory input they take in throughout the event (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones/ear plugs and fidgets; quiet spaces for taking a break from the experience; and continuous seating for those who need to exit, enter, or find a new seat throughout the concert. In addition, house lights are kept at a low level throughout every performance.)



Minnesota Orchestra 2022 Sensory Friendly Performances

Relaxed Family Concert - Lunar New Year: Feb. 6, 2022 at 2 p.m.

Sensory-Friendly Concert - Cello and Bass Trombone: Feb. 26, 2022 at 11 a.m.

Relaxed Family Concert - Music Around the Globe: April 9, 2022 at 2 p.m.

Sensory-Friendly Concert: April 19, 2022 at 11 a.m.

Additional programming to be announced.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum

PO Box 16509, Minneapolis, MN 55416-0609
www.trolleyride.org

The Minnesota Streetcar Museum's streetcars provide a fun ride and an opportunity to explore the history of the Twin Cities, transportation, and more! We welcome neurodiverse riders at all times and are happy to discuss accommodations. We have neurodiverse volunteers, members, and guests. Please contact neurodiversity welcome committee coordinator Leah Harp at Leahharp@gmail.com. Please note our platforms are wheelchair accessible but the vintage trolleys have stairs. We have two locations, Minneapolis and Excelsior, Minn. Monthly neurodiversity rides to be announced. Charters and birthday parties and events available. Streetcar camps and clubs for kids—parent or DSP welcome.



Minnesota Zoo

13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley, MN 55124
www.mnzoo.org

The Minnesota Zoo is open to the public from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. with special Minnesota Zoo Member hours starting at 9 a.m.



MINNESOTA ZOO

New Brighton Parks & Recreation Eagles Nest Indoor Playground

400 10th St. N.W., New Brighton, Minnesota 55112
www.newbrightonmn.gov/departments/ParksRecreation

New Brighton Parks and Recreation understands that not all children can attend the Eagles Nest during normal business hours. They have partnered with AuSM to create a series of Sensory Friendly events at the very popular Eagles Nest Indoor Playground at the New Brighton Community Center.

A limited number of admissions will be sold at a reduced rate for each session. Guarantee admission by pre-purchasing admission on the city's website. Additional staff will be on site to assist with accommodation requests, as well as a quiet space for those who need a break.

Sensory Friendly Events at Eagles Nest Indoor Playground

Feb. 13, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

April 3, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Aug. 7, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Oct. 9, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.



Norway House

913 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404
www.norwayhouse.org

During Gingerbread Wonderland, our annual holiday show of Gingerbread Houses, we offer sensory-friendly visits by appointment.



Reach for Resources

5900 Green Oak Dr. #303, Minnetonka, MN 55343
www.reachforresources.org

Reach supports children and adults of all abilities in recreation through adaptive and inclusive opportunities. We focus on social groups and active programs, and we also have craft and cooking classes. Our recreation staff take unique needs and sensory experiences into account. Everyone is welcome to attend and we make accommodations when requested. We provide inclusion support to make parks and recreation programs accessible for individuals of any age in any program from Minecraft camp to curling to swimming. We are contracted to provide assistance through Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Chanhassen, Chaska, Crystal, New Hope, Golden Valley, St Louis Park, and Three Rivers Park District programs.



REM-5 VR Lab

4950 W. 35th St., St. Louis Park, MN 55416
www.rem5forgood.com

REM5 often hosts special “Sensory-Friendly Family Nights” where we dim the lights and music, offer calming spaces, and host a private event for only families with members on the spectrum. Our staff also is well-trained to give you an amazing experience and work with you to provide content specifically catered to your children’s needs. While during our normal operating hours we cannot guarantee certain modifications, we’ve had a number of families come and experience VR together with quite incredible results. Sign up for our email newsletters and follow us on social media to get the most up-to-date information.



Science Museum of Minnesota

120 W Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102
www.new.smm.org

We exist to turn on the science: Inspire learning. Inform policy. Improve lives. We envision a world where everyone has the power to use science to make lives better. We value collaboration, equity, and learning. We have a variety of tools available to help our visitors with sensory issues make the most of their visit. We also have quiet spaces available for the community.



Snapology

2649 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408
www.snapology.com/location/minneapolis

Snapology offers camps, classes workshops, field trips, and birthday parties around STEAM concepts like robotics, engineering, architecture, animation, and more.

Throughout the last five years, Snapology has been a safe space for our friends on the spectrum and those with sensory sensitivities, and our teachers are trained to work with students with extra needs. We can scale activities up or down based on gifted learner abilities, focus and attention, space to work alone, or students who need some social interaction and would like to be paired up to initiate those connections.

Snapology always is ready to provide private sensory-friendly events for groups. Whether it’s just some connection time with friends and families in our creative play area, or more focused workshops around robotics or engineering, or even a sensory-friendly birthday party, Snapology is ready to set the stage for a great time for students and families with autism or other sensory sensitivities. Just reach out to Aaron at minneapolis@snapology.com to discuss possible dates and activities.



Stages Theatre Company

1111 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN 55343
www.stagestheatre.org

Stages Theatre Company's Sensory Friendly Performances are designed for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Sensory Processing Disorder, as well as those with other sensory, social, cognitive disabilities and mental illnesses. Sensory Modifications include: lights remain on in the theater throughout the performance; loud noises and intense lighting are lowered or removed; crowds are minimized, audience members can move around throughout the performance; fidgets and noise-cancelling headphones are encouraged and available; social stories, and plot summaries are provided in advance before each Sensory Friendly Performance; a quiet space is available to take a break during performances.



We also offer an educational theatre program called C.A.S.T.: C.A.S.T. is a year-round educational program dedicated to creating a safe, welcoming, and comfortable environment for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other sensory sensitivities. The program is designed for children with ASD that would like to make new friends, explore deeper levels of communication and self-expression, creatively work on social skills, and develop acting skills and improvisation techniques.

Stages Theatre Company 2022 Sensory Friendly Season

The North Star: Feb. 5, 2022 at 10 a.m.

Tuck Everlasting, TYA: March 19, 2022 at 10 a.m.

What Do You Do With An Idea?: April 23, 2022 at 10 a.m.

All American Boys: May 8, 2022 at 1 p.m.

Disney's The Little Mermaid, Jr.: July 30, 2022 at 10 a.m.

C.A.S.T. Program Dates

Winter: Jan. 15-March 19, 2022

Spring: April 9-May 21, 2022

Three Rivers Park District

3000 Zenium Ln. N., Plymouth, MN 55441
www.threeriversparks.org

Three Rivers Parks offers outdoor programs specifically designed for individuals with autism including summer day camp and single-day nature programs.



Walker Art Center

725 Vineland Pl., Minneapolis, MN 55403
www.walkerart.org

The Walker Art Center welcomes visitors of all abilities to engage with the visual, performing, and media arts of our time in an inclusive, welcoming environment. The Walker offers a Social Narrative to help visitors prepare for their visit, as well as Sensory Packs for checkout at the admission desk. These packs contain noise reduction headphones, fidgets, sunglasses, and other accommodations to support visitors during their visit. Exhibitions change frequently, and staff are happy to provide information about accessibility and exhibitions on view.

WALKER

Sensory Friendly Sunday is a free monthly event is designed for kids, teens, and adults with sensory processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disabilities. From 8-11 a.m. on the second Sunday of the month, the galleries will be closed to the general public, allowing visitors to enjoy the museum in a calm environment with accommodations such as quiet spaces, fidgets, and sunglasses available.

Sensory Friendly Sunday was developed in consultation with the Autism Society of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota's Occupational Therapy Program.

Bringing the Autism Community Together

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.

April 27-29, 2022

27th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference



Get all of the latest information on autism, all in one place. Spend your conference days learning from expert speakers, shop the AuSM Shop, and gather information from key autism exhibitors.

Location: Hyatt Regency, Bloomington

May 22, 2022

22nd Annual Steps for Autism in Minnesota



Held outside near Como Zoo, Steps for Autism will include a fun walk, an autism resource fair, and fun activity stations. Fundraise to celebrate inclusion and appreciation of those with autism in Minnesota.

Location: Como Lakeside Pavilion, St. Paul

August 8, 2022

27th Annual AuSM Golf Classic



During this 2022 fundraising event, participants will play a round of golf including exciting games and raffles in support of individuals with autism in Minnesota.

Location: To be announced

September 17, 2022

5th Annual AuSM Autistic Community Summit



The 5th Annual AuSM Autistic Community Summit will include a keynote presentation and breakout sessions. This event is for adults with autism by adults with autism.

Location: To be announced

November 5, 2022

5th Annual AuSM Jigsaw Puzzle Competition



Put your jigsaw puzzling passion to the test! Gather your friends and family into teams of up to four that will compete for the fastest completion time. Partners include PuzzleTwist®, Games By James, and Mall of America.

Location: Mall of America and Virtual on Zoom



Visit www.ausm.org for the latest community events information.

Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff St. #102

St. Paul, MN 55114

651.647.1083 • education@ausm.org

www.ausm.org

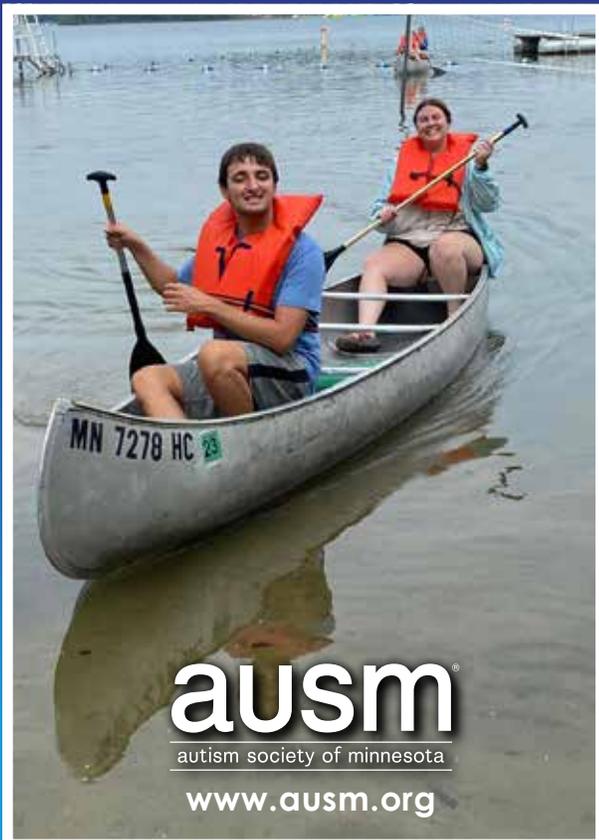
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Twin Cities, MN

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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[®]