Providing Home Care for All Ages

“

There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.

Robert M. Hensel

“

Start your Best journey now! Call 651.330.2550

Ask about our Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Program. We accept Medical Assistance and major insurance plans. bestcaremn.com
AuSM knows that when you have a disability or support someone with a disability, community is essential. The connections of a community provide understanding, support, wisdom, and resources. We’re dedicated to helping you and your family find that community through classes, social opportunities, events, and information. On these pages, you'll find an exciting lineup of spring and summer activities and education designed to meet the needs of autistic youth and adults, as well as the communities that support them.

Whether you’re just beginning on your journey or you’ve spent years in the autism community, AuSM has something for you. We celebrate autistic individuals and everyone who surrounds them 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!

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

AuSM appreciates the support of its summer catalog advertisers. AuSM cannot endorse any commercial products, processes, or services.

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**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 Zephyr James at 651.647.1083 ext. 123 or e-mail zjames@ausm.org.
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Our therapists can help you overcome challenges, improve daily functioning, and achieve a more balanced lifestyle.

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AuSM membership includes reduced rates for AuSM programs and gives you access to resources and services to help you accomplish your goals.

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Opportunities for families and individuals with autism to come together and enjoy fun activities in welcoming environments, both in-person and virtual.

AUSM EDUCATION TIPS

Register for AuSM education programs online at www.ausm.org. Call 651.647.1083 or email education@ausm.org with registration questions. Classes have a maximum enrollment. Register early to ensure placement in a class.

• We have had some participants let us know that they are not receiving our emails. Please add dnelson@ausm.org and education@ausm.org to your email address book to ensure you receive all our communications.

If a participant requires more support than the class provides, they may participate with a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The DSP will be responsible for supporting the individual with communication, behavior, and daily living skills. Contact us at education@ausm.org for more information.

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. All cancellations must be 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 another class.

Scholarships are available for those who qualify, and some classes are waiver-eligible. Scholarships can be requested through the registration forms.
SPEND YOUR SUMMER AT MICC

Learn Skills. Experience Life.

Summer Session 1: Ages 18–23 • June 12–16
Summer Session 2: Ages 16–18 • June 20–23

MICC’s Summer Program, consists of two, one-week day program sessions and is designed for autistic and neurodivergent young adults ages 16–23. MICC seeks to provide participants with a taste of independence supported by instructors and staff. Experienced and diverse staff come from a variety of backgrounds; supporting health and wellness, social skills, and vocational experience. They work alongside participants 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 612.876.9408 or admissions@miccommunity.org.
AuSM’s social and recreation programs offer accepting environments that promote learning and growth while celebrating neurodiversity. AuSM operates on the model of social skills classes as community-based, experiential learning opportunities. That’s why our programs don’t include explicit instruction in social expectations. Instead, we partner with community organizations to build fun and engaging activities that kids and adults will love. Our participants naturally gain skills as they navigate new situations, get to know other students, and practice everything from improv to self-advocacy. 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. 126 or e-mail education@ausm.org for more information.

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 four for AuSM’s cancellation policy. Activities have limited capacity; register early to ensure your placement.

Call 651.647.1083 ext. 126 or e-mail education@ausm.org with questions.
Register at www.ausm.org.
SPRING OFFERINGS

Spring 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.

DATES and TIMES
Sundays March 5-April 2
1-3 p.m.

SPRING LOCATIONS
March 5: MN History Center
March 12: Snake Discovery
March 19: Model Railroad Museum
March 26: The Raptor Center
April 2: Kroening Nature Center

COST PER PARTICIPANT
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

Beginning Improv for Younger Kids with SteppingStone Theatre
Ages 7-12
Do you love to be silly and have a good time? Join our Beginning Improv workshop! In this class, you will work collaboratively with your group to explore the art of improv — making it up on the spot. Together, you will play improv games and share some good laughs! At the end of this workshop, you will create a short recording to share with friends and family.

LOCATION
Park Square Theatre
20 W. 7th Pl.
St. Paul, MN 55102

DATE and TIME
Saturday February 18
2-4:30 p.m.

COST PER PARTICIPANT
$50 Non-Members
$40 Members

Improv Skills With CsZ Twin Cities
Ages 14-26
AuSM is pleased to continue its partnership with CSz Twin Cities to offer 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 improv participants may register for the Advanced class; Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor.

BEGINNER:
2:30-4 p.m.

ADVANCED:
12:30-2 p.m.

February 11, 18, (no class 2/25);
March 4, 11, 18, 25

COST PER SESSION
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

LOCATION
Center for Performing Arts, Room 205w
3754 Pleasant Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55409
What does a perfect summer day look like to you? MRCI Client Directed Services helps you get the most out of your self-directed care program by assisting you with Human Resources for your staff, paying bills, purchasing sensory items, managing your care budget, and more so that you can spend more time how you want to. Michael’s family was able to purchase an adaptive bicycle with help from MRCI-CDS.

“Michael loves riding his bike around his neighborhood as his daily exercise.”
Michelle T - Michael’s Sister

To Learn More
Call: 800-829-7110 or Visit: MRCICDS.ORG

Statewide Services:
Financial Management Service (FMS) | PCA Choice | 245D Licensed | Community First Services and Supports (CFSS)
SUMMER OFFERINGS

Minnesota Zoo
AuSM is excited to partner again with the Minnesota Zoo to offer classes for youth with autism.

All class sessions will be co-taught by a Minnesota Zoo Naturalist and AuSM Educators. Participants must be group-ready: demonstrate self-care skills without assistance; follow adult direction; show readiness for large group participation, including the ability to remain with the group at all times; and follow safety rules independently.

Additional scholarships available. Visit mnzoo.org/scholarships for information.

LOCATION
Minnesota Zoo
13000 Zoo Blvd.
Apple Valley, MN 55124

COST PER SESSION
$225

Zoo Explorers
Ages 8-11
DATES and TIMES
June 26-30, 1:30-4:30 pm
Tromp through the tropics, journey through the grasslands, and “swim” through the oceans to observe animals like real zoologists.

Ocean Commotion
Ages 12-15
DATES and TIMES
July 10-14, 8:30-11:30 am
Welcome to a world of constant change. Meet the creatures of this wonderful watery world and explore their awesome abilities to survive and thrive—despite all the commotion. Through observations, discussions, and scientific data, determine what changes have already occurred in our oceans, what might be in store for the future, and how you could make a difference!

Zoo Crew and Design
Ages 16-19
DATES and TIMES
July 24-28
8:30-11:30 am
If you’re interested in working at a zoo, then this camp is for you. Explore a day in the life of our animal care staff and other exciting careers. Learn how zoo exhibits are designed and plan your own zoo exhibit with the help of our design experts. Come join the crew!
Lowry Nature Center
Explore the forest, pond, and prairie habitats! Build a survival shelter with other campers. Start a campfire using different techniques and make a s’more. Try canoeing in our nearby lake. Meet our resident animals. Gain skills to navigate and overcome obstacles in the forest. Make friends and engage with others during safe, off-trail adventures away from the comforts of home. This program is entirely outdoors.

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

### Outdoor Adventure Skills for Autistic Youth
**Ages 8-12**

**DATES and TIMES**
July 11-14, 1-3 p.m.

**COST PER SESSION**
$80

### Outdoor Adventure Skills for Autistic Teens
**Ages 13-18**

**DATES and TIMES**
July 11-14, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

**COST PER SESSION**
$100

### Toneworks
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.

**DATES and TIMES**
July 17-21
Session 1: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. **Ages 6-12**
Session 2: 1 – 4 p.m. **Ages 13-20**

**COST PER SESSION**
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

### Mia: AuSM Artists
**Ages 12-18**

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.

**DATES and TIMES**
July 31-August 4
9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

**COST PER SESSION**
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

**LOCATION**
Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 3rd Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55404
SUMMER OFFERINGS (cont.)

Improv Skills with CsZ Twin Cities
Ages 14-26

DATES and TIMES
July 24-28
Beginner: 1 - 3 p.m.
Advanced: 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

COST PER SESSION
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

LOCATION
Center for Performing Arts, room 305w
3754 Pleasant Ave. S.

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.

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.

COST PER SESSION
AuSM Member: $275
Non-Member: $325

Session 1
Ages 12-17
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Session 2
Ages 16-24
1 – 3 p.m.

DATES
Wednesdays, June 14-July 19
(no class July 5)

Session 3
Ages 16-24
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Session 4
Ages 12-17
1 – 3 p.m.

DATES
Thursdays, July 20-August 17
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:**

- Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Choice
- Financial Management Services (FMS)
- 245D Waivered Services
- Home Health Care
- Mental Health Services
- Senior Assisted Living

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

**Experiences and Adventures for All Abilities**

- Camp
- Respite
- Retreats
- Team Building
- Therapy and Adaptive Riding
- Travel

© 2022 Accra Care, Inc.
In 2021, AuSM reached out to our community of autistic adults with a survey to find out what kinds of programming and supports adults want. We received an amazing response, which gave us numerous programming ideas. Those ideas helped us engage with our community and improve existing programs. They also sparked the creation of adult social groups.

Our adult community has struggled with limited resources and social programming, especially in the past two years through the pandemic. AuSM has been dedicated to building community through our adult support groups during that time by hosting them more frequently. However, as more and more people begin to meet in-person and as AuSM works closely with our adult community through focus groups, surveys, and feedback, our community has let us know that they need more social interaction with their peers outside of support groups.

The information our community shared has helped our education team narrow the scope of what type of structure is needed to support autistic adults in an organic setting to create community and friendships. Through this ongoing conversation, we’ve found two major categories our adult community wants in their programming – life skill programs and social groups.

We’re thrilled to share that we are creating content for life skills programs through new content on our website. In both our Resources section and the AuSM Celebrates Interdependence campaign, we’ve added social narratives for a number of life skills, resources for employment, and information about building relationships. You can also find AuSM Skillshops coming up about topics our community has requested, including DEI Training for Invisible Disabilities, Boundaries, and Autism Acceptance.

In addition, we’re excited to announce that Coffee Club for autistic adults will be making its debut in February 2023! Join fellow neurodivergent adults for a beverage and/or pastry while making lifelong connections. Coffee Club is designed as a safe space to stim, parallel play, co-work, and make new friends. AuSM will provide a concierge check-in person who will provide each Coffee Club participant with resources and tools, such as conversation topics, stoplight stickers, and friendship cards, that coffee club members can use at (and outside of) Coffee Club. AuSM is partnering with local coffee shops – Dogwood Coffee Co. and Milkweed Café – to create welcoming environments that are accessible to the autistic and neurodivergent community. Coffee Club will be offered twice monthly to start, with the hopes to offer it with more frequency in the future.

Our adult social programs don’t end at Coffee Club. AuSM is dedicated to developing more social groups for the adult community with suggestions and feedback directly from autistic adults. Keep your eyes on our website for more social offerings in 2023.
COFFEE CLUB

Coffee Club for autistic adults is a space where autistic and neurodiverse adults can connect with each other, foster friendships and build community while enjoying a favorite beverage and/or snack. Adults are welcome to bring items that make them feel comfortable, can stay as long as they’d like, stim and parallel play. We ask that participants purchase something from our venues.

AuSM will provide a concierge staff person to help assist with questions, check-in, help ordering, or to manage any issues that may arise during the club. AuSM will provide a number of resources, that includes a social narrative providing club details, parking info, menus, and more.

VISIT WWW.AUSM.ORG TO RSVP

Dogwood Coffee
Ages 18+

DATES and TIMES
Tuesday nights, 5-7 p.m.
February 7th & 21st
March 7th & 21st
April 4th & 18th
May 2nd & 16th

Cost Per Session
FREE

Location of Each Session
Dogwood Coffee
825 Carleton St.
St. Paul, MN 55114

Milkweed Café
Ages 18+

DATES and TIMES
Monday nights, 5-7 p.m.
March 13th
April 10th
May 8th

Cost Per Session
FREE

Location of Each Session
Milkweed Café
3822 E. Lake St.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
AuSM Summer 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 2023 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 overnight camp, you must be a current member of AuSM.

**Important Camp Dates**

**January 3-February 15, 2023:** Application period for Camp Discovery and Camp Hand in Hand

**March 1, 2023:** Camp placements/waitlists announced via e-mail

**April 15, 2023:** Camp payments, camp packets (including physical forms) due

**Apply for AuSM Camps**

[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)
Camp placements will be assigned by a lottery process. The application for the lottery will be open from January 3-February 15, 2023. When you submit an application, please choose only one session of camp. You can apply at any time during the lottery window.

After multiple years of running at limited capacity, Camp Hand in Hand and Camp Discovery will be running at full capacity in 2023.

As we plan for the 2023 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.

**DAY CAMP to Return in Future**

Due to continued pandemic-related programming restrictions at Camp Butwin, AuSM’s Day Camp will not be held 2023. AuSM has built summer social and recreation programming to help fill this gap for youth with autism (see pages 10-12).
CAMP DISCOVERY

Camp Discovery has a 1:4 staff-to-camper ratio and is held at Courage North in Lake George, MN. To attend, campers must be willing to stay with a small group during activities and must be independent in bathing, toileting, and dressing. Many campers pay with CDCS waivers and county grants.

SESSION 1
June 18 – 22 (ages 15+)

SESSION 2
June 25 – 29 (ages 10-14)

Location
True Friends/Courage North
37569 N. Courage Lake Dr.
Lake George, MN 56458

Cost per Session
$1,600

CAMP HAND IN HAND

Camp Hand in Hand has a 1:1 staff-to-camper ratio and is held at Camp Knutson in Crosslake, MN. Camp staff can meet the unique needs of all campers EXCEPT those who are medically fragile. If you are uncertain whether Camp Hand in Hand is a good fit for your camper, please contact Director of Camp Programs, Melinda Harris at 651-647-1083 ext. 116, or camp@ausm.org to discuss questions and concerns. Most campers pay with CDCS waivers.

SESSION 1
June 27 – July 1 (ages 20 – 25)

SESSION 2
July 3 – 7 (ages 14 – 19)

SESSION 3
August 7 – 11 (ages 9 – 13)

SESSION 4
August 13 – 17 (ages 26+)

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

Cost per Session
$1,700
Working at AuSM Summer Camps is a unique opportunity for students, para-professionals, teachers, service providers, siblings, friends, and relatives who want to support this amazing community. As an AuSM camp counselor, you will make a difference and have the chance to get valuable hands-on experience using structure, environmental supports, social stories, and individual communication systems.

WE’RE HIRING:

- Nurse (RN, NP, or MD licensure required. 1 per session)
- 1:1 Counselors for Camp Hand in Hand (40 per session)
- Program Staff for Camp Hand in Hand (6+ per session)
- Cabin Support People for Camp Discovery (6+ per session)

Questions about working at camp can be directed to AuSM at camp@ausm.org or by calling 651.647.1083.
Come for the Fun & Friendship! Benefit from Belonging & Learning!

NEW LOCATION
1001 Boone Ave North | Golden Valley

952-737-6900
www.franklinmn.org/camp

Experience a wide range of engaging day camps for K-12 students with autism and other neurodiverseities, featuring:

- Skilled instructors who understand neurodiverse behaviors and learning styles.
- Developmentally and socially attentive environments.
- Friendly, open, and welcoming environment.
- Academic, recreational and social skills programs.

2023 AuSM Summer Recreation Catalog and Guide to Sensory Friendly Minnesota
Spend more time with your loved ones and less time worrying about the financial aspects of self-directed care. PICS handles the details for the caregivers of individuals with disabilities and older adults who receive support in their own homes and communities.

- FMS Service – CDCS & CSG/CFSS
- 245d Service – IHS

Contact us today!
picsmn.org | 651.967.5060
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 2023 Session
Mondays 6-9 p.m.
March 6-April 3

Summer 2023 Session
Consecutive days, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
June 5-9

Cost
$300 per person

Location
Virtual via Zoom

Register online at www.ausm.org.

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

Learn common characteristics of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and sensory processing disorders. Obtain valuable insight on evidence-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 healthcare staff will benefit from this class. *Note: This is a single-session class. Content is the same in all sessions. When registering, please select only the single session that works best for you.

DATES and TIMES
February 20, 2-4 p.m.
March 20, 2-4 p.m.
April 17, 6-8 p.m.
May 15, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Cost
2023 Understanding Autism classes are generously sponsored by AuSM Premier Partner

Location
Virtual via Zoom

Register online at www.ausm.org.
Autism Resource Guide

A free resource for

FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

in Southeast Minnesota.


We provide an accessible connection between families and resources within our community to serve the best interests of those on the spectrum, primarily through guidebooks and educational conferences. Sponsor-funded to be 100% FREE for families.
AuSM Skillshops

2 Hour Mini Workshops

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.

AuSM Skillshops will be held virtually in 2023. 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.

Cost Per Skillshop/Individual Registration

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

Location

VIRTUAL

2023 AuSM Skillshops are generously sponsored by Best Care, an AuSM Premier Partner.

Register at www.ausm.org.

February 28, 2023 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

Presenter: Victor Thompson (Pronouns: he/him)
Date: Tuesday, February 28 from 7-9 p.m.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a well-sought topic for both employees and employers. In this Skillshop we navigate the importance of creating conversations in the workplace about invisible disabilities through DEI training. Join AuSM and FlexAble Solutions as we discuss what DEI for invisible disabilities looks like, how and when to request DEI training and the importance of inclusion for invisible disabilities in the workplace.

March 14, 2023 - Positive and Proactive Parenting Strategies

Presenter: Mitch Leppicello (Pronouns: he/him)
Date: Tuesday, March 14 from 7-9 p.m.

The CALM Compass: Positive and proactive parenting strategies to use on your ASD parenting journey! This interactive and engaging AuSM skillshop will help you better understand ASD to take the best action and supports with your child. This skillshop is intended for parents and caregivers of all types of kids with ASD from five to 25 years old. Strategies are suited for kids with ASD Levels I-III with verbal abilities.
March 28, 2023 - Setting and Keeping Boundaries

Presenter: Sara Lahti (Pronouns: she/her)
Date: Tuesday, March 28 from 7-9 p.m.

Boundaries. We have heard of them, but what does it mean to have boundaries? And how do you maintain them successfully? This workshop will cover tips and tricks for creating and keeping solid boundaries. Participants will also learn about social cues related to boundaries, how to respond to a boundary violation, and the role of emotions in boundary-setting.

April 11, 2023 - Autism Acceptance : Being an Ally to the Autism Community

Presenter: Eric Ringgenberg (Pronouns: he/him)
Date: Tuesday, April 11 from 7-9 p.m.

Over the last several decades awareness of autism has grown significantly. During this time our understanding of autism and the way we conceptualize it has also changed significantly. In this session we will review topics that help you to better understand what autism is and what it isn’t, and allow you to hear from autistic individuals about what you can do to be an ally for the autism community.

May 9, 2023 - Communication Differences and Conflict Resolution

Presenter: Dayna Nelson (Pronouns: she/her)
Date: Tuesday, May 9 from 7-9 p.m.

Communication differences exist for everyone, regardless of having a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. For autistics, these communication differences can be challenging to navigate when there are social nuances, lack of directness, confusing body language, and difficulty understanding receptive and/or expressive communication. That can often feel like having one conversation with a person but both parties are talking about two entirely different things. This Skillshop discusses differences in communication and the nuances behind them. You will learn proactive strategies for communicating effectively and resolving conflict when there is a disconnect.

May 23, 2023 - Setting Goals for Personal Wellness

Presenter: James Rechs (Pronouns: he/him)
Date: Tuesday, May 23 from 7-9 p.m.

This presentation will address health and wellness goals for neurodiverse individuals, their caregivers, staff, and educators. Whether it be a desire to eat more healthily, exercise more, or engage in yoga, meditation, or mindfulness, James will help you explore your core motivations and identify how you can channel this motivation into success!
Compassionate Support, Safe Environment

Autism Society of Minnesota therapists have committed their careers to helping individuals with autism spectrum disorder 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

- Diagnostic and functional assessments for adolescents and adults
- Individual and family therapy
- Training for organizations and service providers

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. Contact us for more information.

We Are Ready to Meet with You

To inquire about our counseling services, make an appointment, or verify insurance, contact us at 651.647.1083 or e-mail info@ausm.org. We accept Medical Assistance and many private insurance plans.

Support Groups

AuSM offers free monthly support groups to meet the needs of caregivers, children, family members, and individuals. Currently our Women’s Support Group, LGBTQIA+ Support Group, and our Independent Adults with ASD Support Group are meeting in a hybrid format. Participants can attend in person or virtually. We ask that you RSVP for any session you would like to attend to help us ensure we can distance appropriately. Our Family Members of Adults with ASD Support Group is still meeting virtually. Visit www.ausm.org for more information and to RSVP.
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 for caregivers. She helps them understand ASD, teaches them creative and effective interventions, helps them evaluate progress, and provides guidance when adjustments are needed.

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.

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.

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
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.

Maura McDonald
Pronouns: she/her
Maura McDonald is a Mental Health Practitioner who earned her Bachelors in Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Masters in Arts degree from Adler Graduate School. She has worked therapeutically with individuals, families and groups in homes, clinics, day treatment settings and in the community. McDonald is a keen listener and is most passionate about supporting others by finding their own strengths, gifts, and answers.

McDonald has a special interest in helping people through transitions and utilizes techniques from Adlerian therapy, Internal Family Systems, strengths-based practices and somatics to work through challenges. She promotes the importance of understanding self to then be able to strengthen relationships and foster belonging and contribution.

Sara Pahl
Pronouns: she/her
Sara Pahl is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, and Nationally Certified Counselor, who has worked with individuals with ASD for over 25 years. Pahl has been fortunate to work with individuals on the autism spectrum across the life span, in many different roles, including mental health therapist, director of a behavior analytic community-based instruction for teen and early intervention programs, primary grade teacher, and adjunct professor. Pahl has a background in systems counseling and behavior analysis, and a passion for precision measurement and Precision Teaching.
AuSM Membership

Whether you are a family with a child who is newly diagnosed, an autistic adult, 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
- AuSM Connections, twice per month e-mail newsletter
- Advocacy updates and alerts

Basic AuSM Membership

Household: $60 (Includes everyone living at a single address)
Individual: $40 (Membership for one adult)
Autistic Individual: $20 (Membership for a single autistic adult)

Group AuSM Membership

Nonprofit: $150 (includes memberships for employees)
Corporation: $350 (includes memberships for employees)

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

28TH ANNUAL MINNESOTA AUTISM CONFERENCE
MARRIOTT MINNEAPOLIS AIRPORT HOTEL

FEATURING KEYNOTES

- Dr. Mona Delahooke
- Eric Garcia

26-28 APRIL 2023

www.ausm.org
Sensory Friendly Saturdays

This monthly series provides a welcoming and accessible environment for individuals, families, and children who have sensory sensitivities. Explore the Bell Museum with lowered lighting, quieter sounds, and fewer visitors.

Find dates, additional resources and more at: z.umn.edu/bell-sensory
Welcome to AuSM’s Guide to Sensory Friendly Minnesota

Welcome to the fifth 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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AuSM appreciates the support of advertisers. AuSM does not endorse any commercial products, processes, or services. Special thanks to Allegra Downtown St. Paul, the official print sponsor of AuSM’s Guide to Sensory Friendly Minnesota 2023.
Creating Sensory Friendly at the Minnesota Zoo

For many individuals and families, a trip to the zoo is a highlight of their year and can create many lasting memories. With a mission to connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife, the Minnesota Zoo is committed to providing these opportunities to all Minnesotans. Created by the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Zoo opened in 1978 and is one of only two zoos in the United States that are state agencies. It is home to more than 4,500 animals and 500 species in award-winning exhibits. In addition to general admission, the Minnesota Zoo offers many other events and opportunities, and has taken steps to promote accessibility and inclusion within their spaces.

Over the past ten years the Minnesota Zoo has offered Dream Night, a special event that invites children with special healthcare needs and disabilities and their immediate family to spend a cost-free evening at the Minnesota Zoo. Throughout the pandemic, the Zoo’s special events team offered complimentary and exclusive-access nights within seasonal events, such as Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular, Nature Illuminated, and Farm Babies. Additionally, the Minnesota Zoo continues to offer its Free to Explore program, providing free access to qualifying families to ensure that economic circumstances are not obstacles to experiencing everything that the Minnesota Zoo has to offer.

For nearly a decade, AuSM and the Minnesota Zoo have partnered to offer summer camp opportunities for autistic children and teens. For these programs, AuSM staff are paired with Minnesota Zoo educators to provide support while learning about important topics, which are often high-interest areas for participants. “Participants are able to make genuine connections with their peers who share a mutual interest in animals. It provides authentic and real-life opportunities to practice interpersonal and adaptive skills all while enjoying their special interests within the community,” said Katie Laschinger, an AuSM staff for these programs. Minnesota Zoo staff have also received AuSM training to learn about neurodiversity, autism, and support considerations.

For those planning to visit the Minnesota Zoo in summer 2023, a new attraction will be available to guests. The Treetop Trail, the longest elevated pedestrian loop in the world, will be opened on what was previously the monorail track. Designed with accessibility at the forefront, the Treetop Trail will offer an opportunity for individuals of all abilities and experiences to connect with nature.
Our Sensory Resources Are Yours: Create Your Own DIY Sensory Friendly Spaces

In the last year, we’ve consulted with and hosted sensory friendly spaces for the Guthrie Theater, Minnesota Orchestra, CONvergence, and more. And while our staff are glad to personally spend time at these venues to guide their efforts to become more inclusive, we’re also encouraged by a growing number of venues and organizations that find they can create sensory friendly spaces on their own just with the documentation and tools we provide at ausm.org.

Sensory Resources on AuSM’s Website

In the “Resources” section on our website, within the “Social Narratives” section you can find a link called “Creating Sensory Friendly Spaces” and another called “How to Create a Sensory Kit.” Also, in “Resources” you’ll find our section called “AuSM Celebrates Interdependence,” and within this is a subsection called “Independence and Interdependence” – here you’ll find a link called “Sensory Chew Product Database” which has an extensive listing of more than 300 products. The “Resources” section on our website also has a link called “AuSM Shop” where you’ll find sensory items of all kinds, many of which we also sell at some of our events.

Sensory Friendly Events

If you’re looking for sensory friendly events, we collect and publish them on our website’s events calendar, which is on our “Events” page. As community builders, we’re casting a wide net to hear from event organizers in communities beyond the Twin Cities metro area. Our intent is to make our events calendar more robust to serve more people statewide. If your organization or venue has a sensory friendly or otherwise autism-inclusive event, please tell us so we can inform our community.

DIY: You Can Do This – We Can Help

The more we’re involved in helping create sensory spaces, the more we’re asked by others to help them. But we’ll let you in on a little secret we’re glad to share: It’s not all that complicated when you use the resources we freely share. We’ll teach you to fish.

Anyone can take simple steps to make spaces more sensory friendly for visitors. Here’s another non-secret worth sharing: You won’t just attract more people with autism; you’ll attract more people overall. Sensory spaces benefit many people outside of the autism community, like people with ADHD, those with anxiety, and neurotypical people who just like to chill. It’s like the curb-cut effect when sidewalks everywhere became more accessible; everybody benefits. Working together, we can make Minnesota the most inclusive community for autistics to thrive.
The Bakken Museum
3537 Zenith Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55416
thebakken.org/accessibility

A social narrative and experience planning guide is available on the museum’s website to help individuals prepare for their visit. Visit thebakken.org/accessibility to access digital versions of the planning documents. At the museum, complimentary sensory-friendly backpacks are available. The packs include a printed copy of the social narrative, a room-to-room experience guide, noise-dampening headphones, and sunglasses. In addition, museum staff can provide visitors with a quiet room and sensory items such as fidgets.

Bell Museum of Natural History
2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55113
www.bellmuseum.umn.edu

The Bell Museum is fully committed to creating an inclusive environment. Visitors are welcome to check out additional resources like our quiet spaces, visual timers, weighted lap pads, and hearing protection if it helps makes the visit more enjoyable. Visitors can also download our Social Narrative on our website (https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/access) to prepare for their visit. Sensory Friendly Saturdays are held from 8-10 a.m.

Sensory Friendly Saturdays for 2023
January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20

Children’s Performing Arts
4941 Long Ave., White Bear Lake, MN 55110
childrensperformingartsmn.org

For every mainstage show in our season, Children’s Performing Arts hosts a sensory-friendly performance. This allows patrons with sensory, social, physical, and cognitive needs to attend a production in a safe and welcoming environment. Modifications to this performance include lights remaining dim in the audience, elimination of intense lighting and sound effects, and audiences being free to move around the space and make any noises they need to make. Fidgets, noise-canceling headphones, and modified seating are also welcome into the space. Children’s Performing Arts also recognizes that some patrons may need additional accommodations. We are willing to make adjustments as needed to meet each individual’s specific needs. As an organization, CPA strives to be a home for everyone, creating a safe, calm, and enjoyable theatre experience for all of our patrons.

2023 Sensory Friendly Performances
Mary Poppins Jr.: Tuesday, January 31, 6:30 p.m.
Heathers the Musical: TBA
Beauty and the Beast: Thursday, August 10, 2:00 p.m.

Children’s Theatre Company
2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404
www.childrenstheatre.org

Children’s Theatre Company (CTC) believes that the theatre can be a powerful force to illuminate connections, create common bonds, and transform lives by building bridges to empathy, understanding, inclusion, and opportunity. Historically, many have been excluded from participating in the theatre due to implications of racism, discrimination, bias, and classism. The cost of tickets, accessibility for those with disabilities, and a lack of welcome and invitation to communities of color have created further barriers, both real and perceived. As the national leader in the field of theatre for young audiences and their communities, CTC recognizes the urgent need to address these past injustices and inequities on an institutional level. ACT One is our plan to accomplish this internal and external transformation.
2023 Sensory Friendly Performances

Locomotion: Friday, March 3, 7 p.m.

Corduroy: Saturday, April 1, 11 a.m.

An American Tail the Musical: Friday, June 16, 7 p.m.

City of Eagan
3830 Pilot Knob Rd., Eagan, MN 55122
www.cityofeagan.com

The City of Eagan’s Parks and Recreation department has been working hard to create opportunities and make our programs inclusive for all people. Many of our events and activities have a Sensory Tent and Sensory Bags available for those who need them. The Sensory Tent has beanbag chairs, blankets, fidgets, and other tools for those who need a break in a quiet atmosphere. Sensory Bags are available for check out and use during events and activities. They contain various fidgets, noise canceling earmuffs, sunglasses, and other tools.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities

SWEETHEART DANCE: Friday, February 10, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

This sensory friendly event will take place in a smaller event space, taking into account lighting and sound variations that are sensory inclusive. This event will be a magical evening of dancing, light dinner, crafts and photo opportunities. Guests are invited to spend the night making memories in their favorite fancy attire.

SENSORY INCLUSIVE PLAY AT THE BLAST! Monday, March 20, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and Tuesday, May 23, 1-3 p.m.

Enjoy your time at the Blast during our Sensory Inclusive Sessions. There will be Sensory Bags for individuals that would like to borrow one during their time at the Blast as well as a quiet room to take a break if needed. Registration will be limited to provide the best possible experience for everyone attending.

BIG RIG RALLY: Thursday, June 1, 4-7 p.m.

Take a behind the scenes tour and get an up-close look at the big rigs! Guests will see fire trucks, police cars, mowers, plow trucks and the ever-famous garbage truck!

EAGAN MARKET FEST: Wednesdays, June-September

Shop from over 35 local vendors while enjoying live music and the great amenities at Eagan’s Central Park!

SERIES ALL PLAY: Various dates, June-August

Every session in the series will have a different topic for you to try something new. Participate in the fun activities and enjoy the accessible, all-inclusive playground all summer long.

FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL: Friday, August 11, 4-9 p.m.

Stop by for a night of great food, awesome music and local beer! Over 20 food trucks come to town to show off their delicious menus and it’s sure not to disappoint with flavors from around the world.

HOLZ FARM HARVEST FESTIVAL: Saturday, September 23, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Visit Historic Holz Farm and enjoy hayrides, live music, animals, and live demonstrations.

HALLOWEEN TRAIL WALK: Saturday, October 28, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Attendees will visit trick-or-treat stations, enjoy music, and play Halloween-themed games throughout the Plaza.

WINTER ART SALE: Saturday, November 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Join the Eagan Art House for our annual Winter Art Sale, featuring artwork by local artists and artisans including pottery, textiles, jewelry, holiday gifts, and more.

HOLZ FARM OLD FASHIONED HOLIDAY: Sunday, December 3, 12-3 p.m.

Enjoy an outdoor holiday celebration with a self-guided tour of the grounds, a hayride on a 1940’s Farmall tractor and a chance to warm up around the bonfire. Santa will be making an appearance from the North Pole.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory
1225 Estabrook Dr., St. Paul, MN 55103
www.comoziocconservery.org

Come to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory for Sensory Friendly Mornings! Sensory Friendly Mornings are from 9-10 a.m. on select dates. Spend time exploring exhibits before general public hours without the crowds. This inclusive experience is designed for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

Upcoming dates for Sensory Friendly Mornings can be found on our website.
Guthrie Theatre
818 South 2nd St. Minneapolis, MN 55415
www.guthrietheater.org
A relaxed performance is intended to be sensitive to and accepting of any audience member who may benefit from a more relaxed environment. Our staff, cast and crew invite patrons to come, be themselves and experience a live performance.
Although these performances are open to all patrons, they are intentionally modified to accommodate patrons with sensory and vestibular sensitivities, anxiety, dementia, autism spectrum disorders, learning differences and/or other challenges attending the theater.
Small modifications will be made to the performance, which may include reducing the volume of loud noises and effects, eliminating strobe lights, keeping the house lights on and having a relaxed attitude toward sound and movement in the audience. In addition to making adjustments onstage and in the theater, our lobbies and public spaces will include quiet areas, sensory-friendly activities and increased staff to create a safe, welcoming environment.
Open captions are provided at each relaxed performance.

2023 Sensory Friendly Performances
The Little Prince: Sunday, January 22, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.
Blues for an Alabama Sky: Sunday, March 5, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.
Hamlet: Sunday, April 30, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.
Murder on the Orient Express: Sunday, June 11, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.
Into the Woods: Sunday, July 30, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.
Shane: Wednesday, August 23, 1 p.m.; pre-show activities begin at 11:30 a.m.

Minnesota Historical Society
704 S 2nd St., Minneapolis, MN 55401
https://www.mnhs.org/calendar
Sensory Friendly Days are times when when people affiliated with AuSM can attend the museum for free. They include a quiet room, adjustable sound for some media pieces, t-coil, a social narrative, and sensory aware staff training.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities
Sensory Friendly Days are events designated for folks with autism. Museum galleries will be closed to the general public allowing visitors to enjoy the museum activities modified with neurodiversity in mind (examples: low volume for all media shows, signs with explanations of activities, allergy signs). At every site, participants can enjoy museum exhibits, short films, and hands-on activities.
The events are 1-2 hours long, however families can extend their visit into regular museum open time.
The events are by reservation only.

MILL CITY MUSEUM: Sunday, February 12, 9 a.m.-10 a.m. (Valentine’s)
MN HISTORY CENTER: Saturday, March 25, 8-10 a.m. (Sherlock Holmes exhibit)
JAMES J. HILL HOUSE: Saturday, May 13, 9-10 a.m. (Train Day)
MILL CITY MUSEUM: Saturday, July 22, 9-10 a.m. (Archaeology Day)

Minnesota Orchestral Association
1111 Nicollet Mall Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403
www.minnesotaorchestra.org/
The Minnesota Orchestra’s Sensory-Friendly small ensemble concerts are inclusive experiences for patrons of all ages, including individuals with autism or sensory sensitivities. Concerts take place in a relaxed environment where all audience members are welcome to be who they are while enjoying music with family and friends. Fidgets, noise-canceling headphones, and quiet spaces are available at all Sensory-Friendly Concerts.

2023 Sensory Friendly Performances
Thur, February 23, 6 p.m.
Sat, April 1, 11 a.m.
Tue, April 23, 11 a.m.
Minnesota Streetcar Museum
PO Box 16509, Minneapolis, MN 55416-0609
www.trolleyride.org
Our two locations offer seasonal streetcar rides. We are always available to discuss accommodation requests. We offer events throughout the year, including specific neurodiversity events we call All Aboard, for neurodiverse folks, families and friends. Our platforms are wheelchair accessible but our historic vehicles are not. We attempt to assist those with mobility concerns. Please contact us in advance with any questions. We also offer charters for ceremonies, birthday, family gatherings, weddings, etc., and a Motorman charter where you learn to help operate the streetcar. We have kids’ clubs at the Como Harriet Location that are neurodiverse-friendly. Please contact Leah Harp for more information and any questions at leahharp@gmail.com.

Minnetonka Fire Department
14550 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, MN 55345
www.minnetonka.mn.gov
We are hosting our annual sensory friendly open house to provide an opportunity for those with autism and other sensory disorders to come to the fire station and learn about and interact with emergency personnel in a non-threatening and safe environment.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities
Annual Sensory Friendly Open House at Minnetonka Fire: Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
For those with family members or friends who have autism or another sensory disorder which makes attending large and loud open house events difficult.

MNeurodivergent
1105 Rushmore Dr., Burnsville, MN 55306
www.facebook.com/groups/mneurodivergent
We are a social organization run for and by Neurodivergent Minnesotans. Check the website for specific events.

The Museum of Russian Art
5500 Stevens Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55419
tmora.org
The Museum of Russian Art (TMORA) is an accessible and inclusive location for kids, teens, and adults with sensory processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or neurodiverse disabilities. TMORA has a social narrative tool that discusses the accessibility of our museum to ensure that all visitors feel prepared and safe for their visit. In consultation with AuSM, we ensure that visitors enjoy the museum in a calm environment with accommodations such as quiet spaces, fidgets, headphones, and sunglasses available. TMORA is currently developing a sensory friendly program so visitors with sensory processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or neurodiverse disabilities can experience current exhibitions with the galleries closed to the general public. Please stay tuned for updates on our upcoming sensory-friendly programming.

New Brighton Parks and Recreation
400 10th St. NW, New Brighton, MN 55112
www.newbrightonmn.gov/297/Parks-Recreation
Does your child or someone you are close to, have a child that has challenges with traditional playground settings? How about large crowds? New Brighton Parks and Recreation understands that not all children can attend the Eagles Nest during normal business timeframes. That is why we 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.
There will be a limited number of admissions sold at a reduced rate for each session. Each is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Attendees can guarantee admission by pre-purchasing admission for their children on the city’s website.
The Parks and Recreation Department will have additional staff on site to assist with accommodation requests, as well as a quiet space for those who need a break during the event.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities
Sundays, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
February 5, May 21, September 17
Cost: $5 per child
Northrup, University of Minnesota
84 Church St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
www.northrop.umn.edu

Sensory Friendly Lounge
In partnership with the Autism Society of Minnesota, Northrop is offering a Sensory Friendly Lounge equipped with sensory supports and staffed by trained volunteers during select performances. The lounge will allow guests who are experiencing hyper (too-much) or hypo (not-enough) sensitivities to watch the performance from a monitor, or take a break from the performance all together. Performances with a Sensory Friendly Lounge will include this icon on their event pages.

Sensory Friendly Events
These events allow attendees the opportunity to enjoy a live performance in a welcoming and supportive environment that accommodates specific needs. Look for events with “Sensory Friendly” in the title.
For more information, please contact nrpaccess@umn.edu or call the Box Office at 612-624-2345.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities
Pilobolus Rules @ Play: Saturday Apr. 15, 2:00 p.m.
A sensory friendly show created by one of the world’s most creative dance companies. We usually view rules negatively, but Rules @ Play explores how rules actually provide opportunities to solve problems and overcome challenges. They spark creativity, and in this case, give Pilobolus tools to make dances. Fun, engaging and accessible with lowered sound, raised lights, and a relaxed atmosphere, the dancers perform and analyze some of the company’s pieces through movement and discussion on and off stage, showcasing the benefit of playing by the rules.

Park Square Theatre
20 W 7th Pl • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102 • United States
parksquaretheatre.org
Sensory aids (such as fidgets, ear defenders, and ear plugs) are available at all performances and during all classes. There are also designated sensory break spaces for performances and classes. Additionally, Park Square Theatre offers specific sensory-friendly performances for all shows in the SteppingStone Youth & Family Series. Park Square Theatre’s educational programming is intentionally designed with accessibility in mind. Classes have structured routines, readily available support, and a welcoming atmosphere. Park Square Theatre is committed to staying up-to-date with trainings, and partners with AuSM to make this happen. Sensory-friendly performance dates and additional educational programming to be announced.

Reach for Resources, Inc.
5900 Green Oak Dr. #303, Minnetonka, MN 55343
www.reachforresources.org
Reach plans adaptive recreation programs for individuals of all abilities. We host a wide variety of programs so there is something for everyone! Examples of possible activities are movie nights, dances, bingo, karaoke, crafts, singles nights, social clubs, fishing activities, sports, and more! Everyone is welcome and we can make accommodations upon request or help direct you to the most appropriate program(s). Reach has quarterly newsletters with programs going on most days of the week. Please check out our calendar for the most up-to-date activities!

REM5 VR Lab
4950 W. 35th St., St. Louis Park, MN 55416
www.rem5forgood.com
We’ve worked with all ages across the spectrum since we opened four years ago. Our team has excellent training in making the virtual reality experience enjoyable and exciting while keeping specific needs in mind. While we can’t always control the sound of other guests in the space, we’re more than happy to help create an atmosphere that works best during our open hours including turning down the music and audio of the experiences and more. Always feel free to reach out before your visit so we can be ready when you arrive.
Science Museum of Minnesota
120 W Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102
www.new.smm.org
At the Science Museum, we know that all visitors learn differently. During Sensory Friendly hours, individuals and families can enjoy a quieter, less sensory-stimulating museum experience. We have a variety of tools available to help our visitors with sensory issues make the most of their visit. Ask at the Exhibits Entrance for sound dampening headphones, a timer, or a kit containing headphones, fidgets, gloves, and sunglasses. On the first Sunday of the month, the Science Museum hosts Sensory Friendly Sunday, where visitors who learn best in a calmer environment can experience a lights-up, sound-down Omnitheater show at 10 a.m. Ticket prices range from $9.95-$34.90. Discounts are available for individuals, families, and groups with limited incomes. Admission is free for working Personal Care Attendants when they’re visiting with a client.

Twin Cities Ballet
16368 Kendrick Ave., Lakeville, MN 55044
www.twincoitiesballet.org
TCB’s sensory-friendly, relaxed performances enable children and people with sensory sensitivities as a part of autism and/or sensory-processing disorders to experience the art of ballet with relaxed theater rules, such as the house lights staying on, theater doors remaining open, and a designated “quiet zone,” and more, to allow for increased comfort. Additionally, we typically have a staff member from AuSM present to facilitate the quiet space. Check the website for specific dates.

Walker Art Center
725 Vineland Pl., Minneapolis, MN 55403
walkerart.org
The Walker Art Center welcomes visitors of all abilities to engage with the visual, performing, and media arts of our time. The Walker Art Center offers Sensory Packs that are free to check out from the main desk and include accommodations such as sunglasses, fidgets, and headphones that are designed to help make the sensory experience in Walker exhibitions or programs more accessible for people with sensory sensitivities. The Walker is happy to arrange additional accommodations upon request.

2023 Sensory Friendly Activities
Second Sunday of each month: February 12, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10, 8-11 a.m.
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. Experience current Walker exhibitions, make art, or watch a short film. All friends and family members are welcome.

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www.ausm.org • 651.647.1083
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. We support everyone: the whole state, the whole lifespan, the whole spectrum.

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