



Family Member's Guide to Conference

Why should a caregiver or family member attend the conference?

The Minnesota autism conference presents opportunities to connect with other caregivers, meet adults on the spectrum, find new resources, and get revitalized! You'll come away with new strategies, new resources, and a community of people who understand.

Navigating Conference

To help you make the most of your conference experience, this guide includes recommendations for family members. Be sure you visit the AuSM Shop, a place where you can pick up reading materials on everything from the humor in autism to sexuality. Discover additional resources in the exhibit hall. You'll also be able to connect with other caregivers as well as educators, adults on the spectrum, and professionals if you join us for lunch on Thursday and Friday. Below is a guide to some suggested sessions.

AuSM Shop

To help you keep growing throughout the year, we've stocked our AuSM Shop with hand-selected titles to address all ages and concerns, from behaviors to sensory issues to relationships. If you're looking for help with a particular topic, visit the AuSM Shop and we will help you find the right resource. We'll also have tons of fidgets ready for all needs.



Wednesday, April 26, 12:30-4:30 p.m. Foundational Conference Workshop Conference Keynote Presentations

- Thursday, April 27, 8-9:30 a.m.
Understanding Emotions and Strategies to Develop Self-Regulation, presented by Kari Zweber Palmer (Social Thinking)
- Thursday, April 27, 1:15-2:45 p.m.
A New Vision for Supporting Autistic and Neurodivergent Students, presented by Dr. Mona Delahooke
- Friday, April 28, 8-9:30 a.m.
The Past, Present, and Future of Autism Politics, presented by Eric Garcia

Conference Breakout Sessions

Thursday, April 27

10-11 a.m.

- Strategies for Choosing the Right Goals and Following Through, presented by James Rechs
- Building Inclusion: A Movement Towards Communities as Purposeful Natural Supports, presented by Sonya Emerick and Paula Luxenberg
- Supporting Self-Advocacy for Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities, presented by Cole Sorensen
- Creating Accessible Events From the Ground Up, Presented by Zephyr James

11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

- The Intersection of Autism, Literacy, and Communication, presented by Kayna Plaisted
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace: The Power of Unlocking Different Talents and Perspectives, presented by Aja Wolfe

3-4 p.m.

- Trauma, Special Needs and Interventions, presented by Tamera Pulver
- Centering the Margins: Intersectionality, Power and Radical Solidarity, presented by Ashley Oolman
- The Importance of Sexual Education for Autistic People (Including AAC Users), presented by Donnie Denome

Conference Breakout Sessions (cont.)

Friday, April 28

10-11 a.m.

- Regulation Stations, presented by Elizabeth Duffy and Michelle Pettit
- What is Disability Justice and Why Does It Matter?, presented by Jules Edwards, Brittanie Hernandez-Wilson, and Jillian Nelson
- Using DBT to Help Adolescents Manage Stress and Anxiety, presented by Ann Duevel
- Transitioning Together: Promoting Culturally Responsive Approaches to Transition Planning, presented by Fatima Molas, Rufo Jiru, Rebekah Hudock, Maren Christenson Hofer, Chimei Lee, and Erika Schulz

11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

- Clearing up the Confusion about Transition from School to Adulthood (part 1 of 2), presented by Lindsey Horowitz and Alyssa Klein

1:15-2:15 p.m.

- Updates to the DSM: How the DSM 5 TR Expands Recognition of Autism Characteristics in AFAB and Racially Diverse Individuals, presented by Beth Pitchford
- Clearing up the Confusion about Transition from School to Adulthood (part 2 of 2), presented by Abbie Wells-Herzog and Margie Webb
- MNprov Recess – Stretch Your Legs and Stretch Your Brain, presented by Michael Bruckmueller and Kelly Kautz
- Working as a Team to Support Our Students: Navigating the IEP System and a Student’s Legal Rights in Education, presented by Ryan Haenze and Yumma Moore

2:30-3:30 p.m.

- When the Frontal Lobe Does Not Cooperate, presented by Sara Swan
- Don’t Sleep on Sleep – Practical Sensory Approaches to Support Rest presented by Meagan Flom

Virtual Sessions

- Intersections of Self: Autistic and LGBTQIA+ presented by Lydia Rhoads
- Neurodivergence, Sex, and Sensory Processing presented by Sarah Hernandez
- Bereavement As A Spectrum: Supporting Autistics Through Grief & Loss presented by Colleen E McCluskey
- Building the Foundation: The Role of Regulation in Managing Mental Health and Independence presented by Michaela Faretta and Trish Layde
- Looking Ahead: Financial Planning for the Future presented by Bob Johnston and Paul Brokenshire

What’s Next

Stay involved with AuSM! Over the summer we have dozens of social and recreation opportunities that will let your loved one tap in to a special interest, make new friends, and engage with the community. We also have AuSM Skillshops, two hour mini-workshops on important community topics. We invite you to join us at this year’s Steps for Autism on May 21 at the Como Lakeside Pavilion. AuSM will offer participants a walk route, fun activities, an autism resource fair, and opportunities for community connections. Finally, consider visiting our Caregiver Support Group, a free place to develop and build meaningful relationships with this community. Stay connected to AuSM with our twice monthly e-newsletter, AuSM Connections. You can sign up on our website at the bottom of any page. **Visit www.ausm.org to get started.**