

Autistic Community Summit 2024



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How to Use this Guide

The information in this social narrative is intended to help prepare guests to attend AuSM's 7th Annual Autistic Community Summit.

AuSM welcomes participants to come as their authentic selves! We recognize that everyone has different communication and socialization styles; self-regulation needs; accessibility concerns; and more.

If you have questions or concerns during the event, please seek assistance from AuSM staff who can be reached at events@ausm.org before the event or at the registration desk during the event.

What is Summit?

The purpose of Summit is to provide a space for community building and sharing the knowledge and perspectives of Minnesota's autistic community.

Summit is a busy event attended by hundreds of people. Attendees include autistic individuals, parents & caregivers, educators, other professionals, and more! It may be crowded as I navigate the Summit. I can identify spaces at Woodlake Church where I can go if I need a break from other people.

Before Summit

I can review the Summit schedule on the [AuSM website](#).

I will also receive a hard copy of the Summit Program when I register at the event. I will hold onto my Summit Program, as it is the best source of information about the event.

I can select which break-out sessions I want to attend before arriving at the event. I can also decide when I'm at the conference or change my mind in the moment.

I will be sent a link that will give me access to the handouts one week before the Summit. The link will also have a password I can use to access the handouts. If I want a hard copy of a handout, I will need to print it off the AuSM website.

General Information

I am attending AuSM's 7th Annual Autistic Community Summit at Woodlake Church in Richfield. The Summit is on November 9; it starts at 9:00 am and ends at 4:30 pm. I may choose to attend as much or as little of the event as I like. The event will be livestreamed and sessions will be recorded, so I can watch them live or afterwards if I choose.

Event Details

- Date:
 - Saturday, November 9, 2024
- Time:
 - Registration 9-10 a.m.
 - 10:00 am- 4:30 pm
- Location:

Woodlake Church
2120 W 76th St
Richfield, MN 55423

<https://ausm.org/events/autistic-community-summit/>

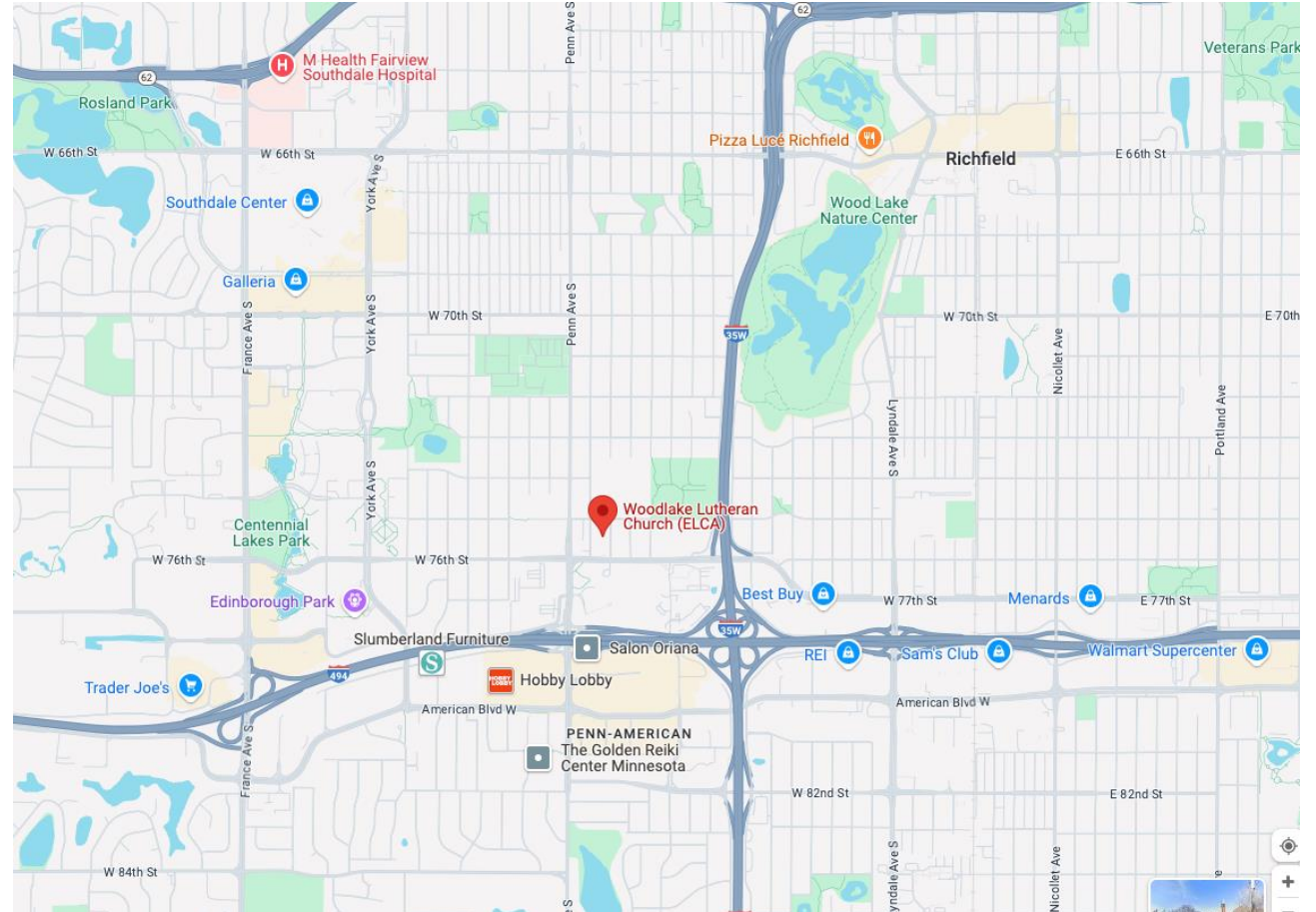


Getting to the Event

[Driving Directions](#)

Free parking is available

The Metro Green Line stops approximately half a mile from the venue, and the 540 busline stops directly in front of the venue.



Arrival & Check-in

- The week before Summit, I will receive a confirmation email with details about when and where to check-in.
- I can enter through the main doorway, which leads into the Narthex. If I park in the main parking lot, this will be the closest entrance. When I enter, I will turn left to walk down a hallway and find the registration table.

Arrival & Check-in

When it is my turn, I will give my name to the AuSM volunteers at the registration table. Once they locate my name in their records, they will give me my program with summit information.

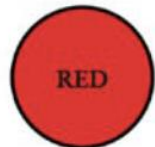
There will be stickers available at the registration tables. I can choose to wear stickers that indicate how comfortable I am with social interaction. The guide to using interaction stickers is in my Summit Program. I can also choose to wear a sticker to indicate which pronouns I use. Use of these stickers is optional.



I am interested in interacting, but I have trouble approaching others and initiating interaction. Please feel free to initiate conversation with me.



I am interested in interacting with others, but only with those I'm familiar. Please approach or initiate only if you know me.



Please do not approach me or initiate interaction with me at this time.

Pronoun Stickers



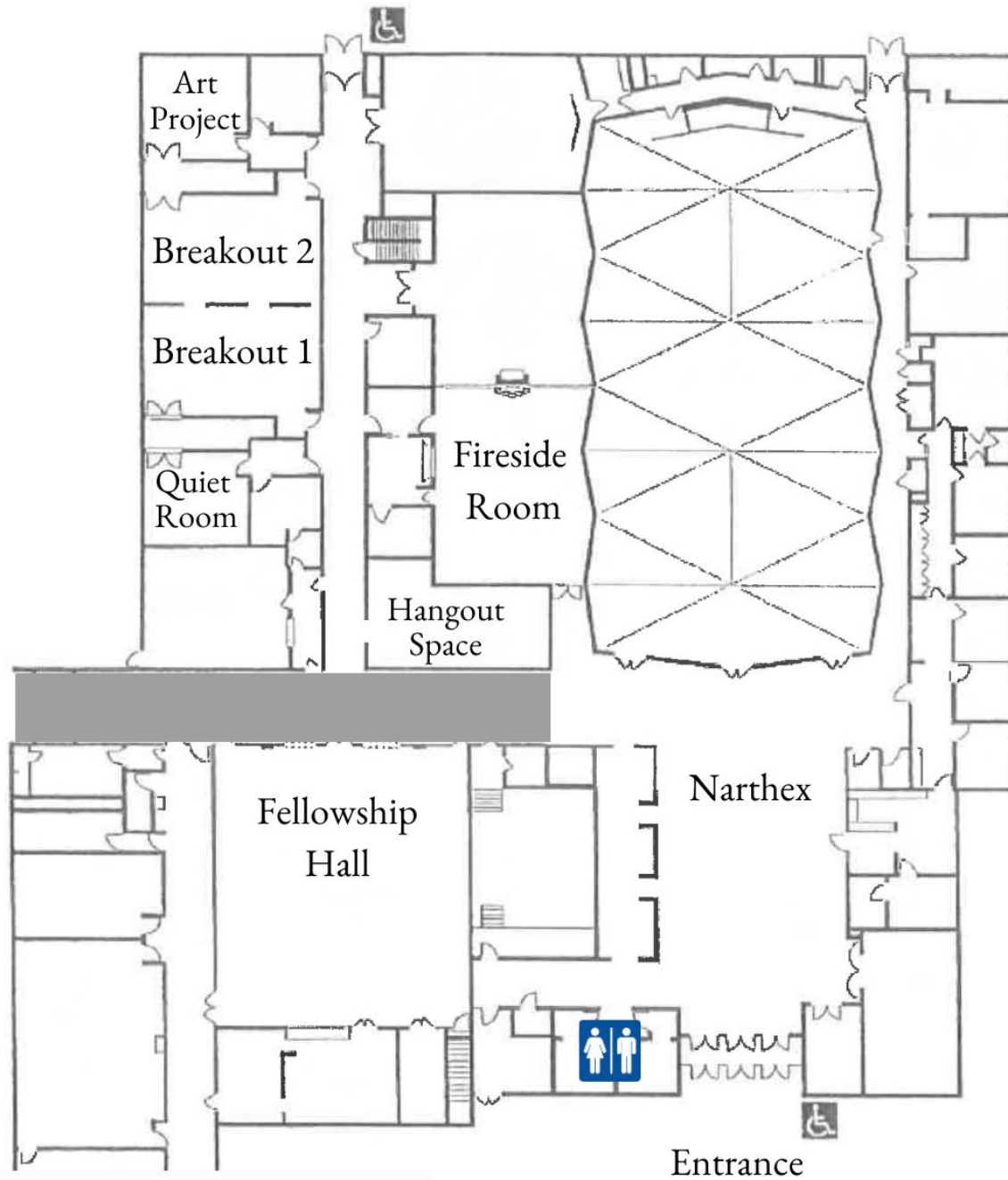
An integral part of making the most of everyone's conference experience is helping everyone feel included, respected, and appreciated. A person's name, their clothing, or any other outward signals don't necessarily tell you how that person identifies. To assist with gender-inclusive communication, pronoun stickers are available by the nametags near registration.

Navigating Summit

There is a map of Summit session locations in my Summit Program.

I can use the map to locate where each presentation will be held, where to find the AuSM Shop, Quiet Room, bathrooms, exhibitors, Hangout Space, and more.

Venue Map



Session Locations

- The keynote presentation will take place in the Fellowship Hall.
- Breakout sessions will take place in the Fellowship Hall, Breakout 1, and Breakout 2.
- There are signs on the walls that will help me locate where the different rooms are. Additional signage will be posted to clarify where each session is.
- It may be crowded during the keynote, as there are no breakout sessions during that time. I can plan to get to the session early to find a preferred seat.
- If I need additional help finding anything at the conference, I can ask an AuSM staff member for assistance.
- Each presentation in the Summit Program has its location listed after the topic.

Summit Schedule

9:00-10:00 a.m. Registration is open

10-10:30 a.m. Welcome Sessions

- Orientation Session
- Coffee Hour
- Support Check In

10:30-10:45 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Keynote: A World of Possibilities: Rethinking Autistic Contribution and Work presented by AJ Locashio

11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Lunch Break

12:45 p.m.-1:45 p.m. Breakout Session 1

- Ask a Neurodivergent Therapist: Community and Workplace Accessibility and Accommodations presented by Elizabeth Duffy (she/her), Nikki Huelsman (she/her), Aster Letterman (he/him), and Santanna Ficken (they/them)
- Be Kind to Your Mind: Embracing Neurodiversity presented by Amanda Vo
- The Intersection of Addiction and Neurodiversity presented by James Fulton (he/him)

1:45- 2:00 p.m. Break

Summit Schedule

2:00-3:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions 2

- Advocating When Your Communication Skills Take the Day Off presented by Jason Wierdsma (he/him)
- Navigating the Healthcare System as an Autistic Adult presented by Jennifer Presnell (she/her)
- Embracing Change on the Autism Spectrum presented by Jordan Salzano (she/her)
- Creating Sensory Tools with Household Objects in the Hangout Room

3:00-3:30 p.m. Break

3:30-4:30 p.m. Breakout Session 3

- And Justice for All, Unless You Have Autism: Navigating the Justice System on the Spectrum presented by Meg Lietzau (she/her)
- Autistic in the 20th Century, A Panel of Age 50+ Adults presented by Anna Skytta-Gurkanlar (she/her)
- Disclosing Autism at Work presented by Daren Howard (he/him)
- Powerpoint Party in the Hangout Room

Visit <https://ausm.org/events/autistic-community-summit-2024/autistic-community-summit-detailed-schedule/> for detailed descriptions of each presentation.

Keynote & Breakout Sessions

Breakout sessions are one hour in length, and there will be 3 sessions occurring at the same time. I can choose which breakout session to attend.

The rooms might have different seating options. There will be some rows reserved near the front for people who need to be close for accessibility needs. I can also sit on the floor if I want. If I want to find a preferred seat, I should arrive to the presentation early. Seating is first-come, first-served.

I should keep my belongings under my seat or on the table in front of me so that chairs are available for other people.

Exhibitor Tables

There will be many exhibitors from various organizations at the event providing resources about their services. I can find a list of exhibitors in my Summit Program.

The tables will be located in the Fireside Room.

AuSM Shop

The AuSM Shop is located in the Fireside Room.

There will be many items for sale including books, sensory tools, and more! Most of AuSM's books will be for sale up to 80% off.

I should bring cash and/or credit cards with me to the Summit if I want to purchase anything from the AuSM shop.

I can ask AuSM Shop staff for help finding items or if I have any questions about the items.

Exhibitor Tables & AuSM Shop

The exhibitor tables and AuSM Shop can become crowded, especially during registration and lunch hours. I may have to wait in line to visit a vendor or check out the shop. There will be AuSM staff there to keep lines moving as quickly as possible.

I can also wait to visit these areas until there are fewer people which is usually during presentation times.

The AuSM Shop and the exhibitor tables are open all day.

Eating Lunch

When I registered for the event, I could choose to add a box lunch to my registration. If I bought a box lunch, I can pick it up at 11:45 in the Narthex.

If I didn't buy a box lunch, I can bring my own food or leave to buy food on my own. I can eat in the Fellowship Hall or the Breakout Rooms. There will be some social groups I can join if I like:

1. Parent
2. Late diagnosed
3. Elders
4. LGBTQ
5. Autistic Professionals

Sensory & Accessibility

Bathrooms are located throughout the space. I can locate the bathrooms on the map in my Summit Program. There is a gender-neutral restroom available.

There are water fountains outside the bathroom.

Sensory & Accessibility

Some attendees may be uncomfortable with physical touch, I will always ask for consent before touching someone else.

I should also refrain from using flash photography.

Some individuals may have mobility issues and/or move at a different pace, so I will pay attention to my surroundings to avoid bumping into others.

Sensory & Accessibility

If I need to relax, I can also visit the Quiet Room which is located in the Room 2. There will be some sensory tools available for me to use while I'm in that space. These items will stay in the Quiet Room.

Sensory & Accessibility

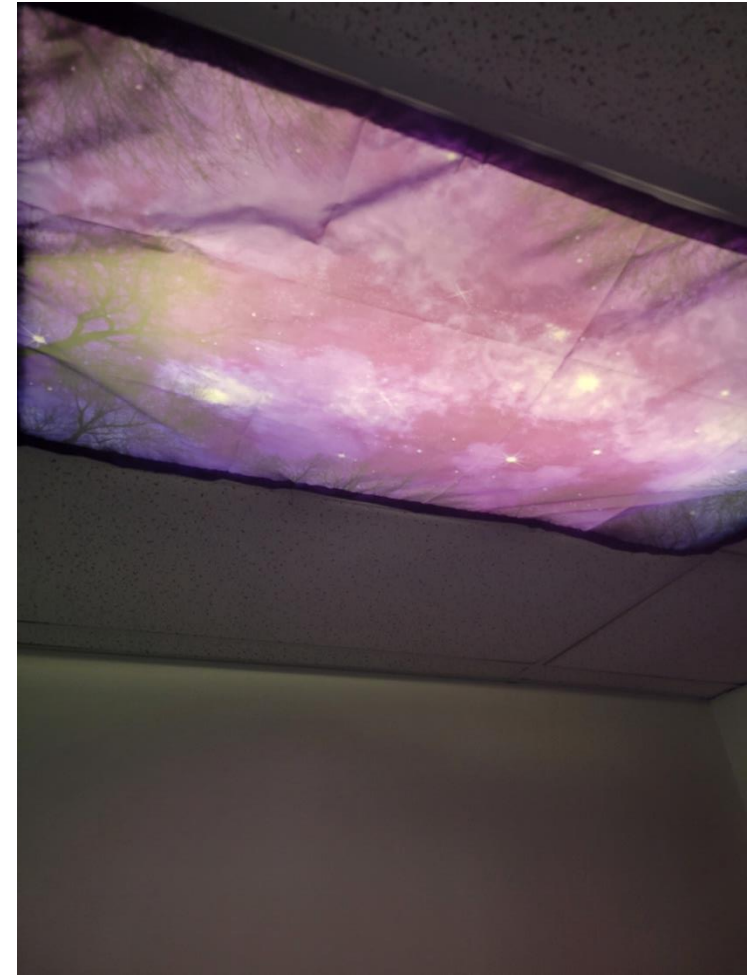
If I want to take some time away from the educational sessions but I don't want to be quiet, I can go to the Hangout Room. There will be sensory tools there and some activities will be held there too.



Sensory & Accessibility Details

There are overhead fluorescent lights in some of the spaces, however where possible AuSM will use the natural light.

I will hear crowd sounds, such as people talking and laughing, which may echo in larger spaces like the Fellowship Hall. Speakers will use a microphone during presentations in larger spaces.



Sensory & Accessibility

AuSM has asked attendees and staff not to wear scented lotions or perfumes during the conference; however, I may still smell soaps or shampoos while I am at Summit.

I should avoid wearing any scented products to the event, as others may be sensitive to smells.

If I am overwhelmed by any scents, I can step outside for a break.

Thank You for Attending!

After the Summit is over, I will receive an email with more information. It will include links to watch recordings of each of the sessions. I will have one month to watch these recordings if I missed any or want to re-watch anything.

The email will also include a survey. Filling out the survey helps AuSM make changes and improve the event next year.