

Autistic's Guide to Conference



Why should an autistic attend the conference?

The Minnesota Autism Conference presents a great opportunity to meet your peers, learn more about services that can improve your life, trade strategies with other self-advocates, and even help expand people's conceptions of what autism can look like. You'll learn from autistic presenters, find resources and services, and connect with your community. You'll also find great fidgets and tailored books at the AuSM Shop.

What to see, do, and expect at the conference

This guide was created to help individuals on the spectrum navigate the Minnesota autism conference. Each day at the conference will be a little different, but you generally can expect to enter the hotel, check in at the registration table, and have some time to explore before sessions begin. If you prefer, you can simply find your seat for the opening keynote speech. Refreshments are available each day. The AuSM Shop and exhibit tables providing information about resources will be open throughout the conference. After that, you'll have the option to choose which sessions you attend. On Thursday and Friday, lunch will be served buffet style. Once you've gotten your food, you can select a seat in the ballroom or choose to eat elsewhere. After lunch, we hold more breakout sessions. If you ever have questions, stop by AuSM Headquarters to ask.

Accessibility

To make the event more accessible, AuSM offers a discounted rate to individuals with autism. We also have scholarships available. You can apply for a scholarship through the registration form. To learn about the accommodations that AuSM offers at the conference, [click here](#). We will also provide a social narrative, available on our website, as we get closer to the event.

Recommended Sessions for Autistics

Wednesday, April 16, 12:30-4:30 p.m. Foundational Conference Workshop

Conference Keynote Presentations

- Thursday, April 17, 8-9:30 a.m.
Storytelling as Advocacy: Why Telling Our Stories Matters presented by Tiffany Hammond
- Thursday, April 17, 2:30-4 p.m.
Using Emotion (Co)Regulation to Stay Upright When You Feel Like Falling Apart presented by Anne Gearity
- Friday, April 18, 8-9:30 a.m.
Reading Between the Lines: Ableism in Literacy Education presented by Mash Makhlyagina

Conference Breakout Sessions

Thursday, April 17

10-11 a.m.

- Navigating the Next Steps: Empowering Autistic Adults Post-Diagnosis presented by Jessica Hogan, Alex McLaughlin, and Priyanka Rao
- Burnout Busters: Navigating Neurodivergent Burnout with Style presented by Tiffany Schroeer, Revel Weber, and Chelsey Hendrickx*

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

- Social Security Disability 101: What Goes into a Benefits Decision presented by Sarah Dicks
- Navigating the Intersection of ADHD and Autism presented by Gerard Balan

Conference Breakout Sessions (cont.)

Thursday, April 18

1:15-2:15 p.m.

- Choosing Goals and Interventions for Autistic Individuals presented by Megan Helmen*
- Autism: Beyond the Male Phenotype presented by Glenis Benson

Friday, April 19

10-11 a.m.

- Communicating With Scripts: An Introduction to Gestalt Language Processing presented by Emily Zimmer
- Games as a Play-Based Therapy Tool for Clinicians and Families presented by Megan Armstrong

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

- The Importance of Integrated Employment and the Power of Mentorship presented by Olivia Lape*
- Empathy in Crisis Intervention: Harm Reduction and Intersectional Approaches for Autistic People presented by Elizabeth Duffy, Santanna Ficken, Nikki Huelsman, and Aster Gallus
- Neurodivergent Parenting presented by Keeri Tramm, Milena Bates, Mike Schneider, Emma Rohrer, and Jillian Nelson

1:15-2:15 p.m.

- Accounting for Advocacy presented by Jeremy Goldberg
- Beyond the Basics: Further Education in Autistic Sexuality presented by Mason Esposito
- Proprioception and Sensory-based Strategies for Improved Emotional Regulation using a Family-Centered Approach presented by Oana Zayic and Alyssa Norenberg*

2:30-3:30 p.m.

- Pathological Demand Avoidance: Understanding, Accepting, and Supporting PDAers presented by Joe Falkner*
- Heading into Adulthood presented by Sara Swan
- Activism and Advocacy: How to Find Your Role in Social Justice Movements presented by Chelsea O'Neil

*Session included in the virtual package

What's Next

AuSM has more than just education, and we want to support you with resources throughout the year. That's why we have three support groups for adults on the spectrum, including Adults with ASD, Women with ASD, and LBGTQIA Autistic Adults. To stay connected with AuSM, sign up for our twice monthly e-newsletter, AuSM Connections. You can find the sign up on our website at the bottom of any page. Additionally, we have dozens of free resources available on our website under the "Resources" header. Check out the education section of the website for our Adult Coffee Club and upcoming AuSM workshops. Many of these sessions are geared directly to autistic adults. We're also looking forward to our seventh annual Autistic Community Summit this November, a full day of speakers, round tables, and information. This is an event by autistics, for autistics.

Visit www.ausm.org for details.