

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 books and gifts. If you're looking for books on 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 any classroom, office, or home.



Recommended Sessions for Family Members

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.

- Decreasing the Stigma – Talking to Children about Neurodivergence presented by Melissa Fischer
- Burnout Busters: Navigating Neurodivergent Burnout with Style presented by Tiffany Schroerer, Revel Weber, and Chelsey Hendrickx*
- Navigating the Next Steps: Empowering Autistic Adults Post-Diagnosis presented by Jessica Hogan, Alex McLaughlin, and Priyanka Rao

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
- Telling Your Child's Unique Story presented by Tiffany Hammond*

Conference Breakout Sessions (cont.)

Thursday, April 18

1:15-2:15 p.m.

- Choosing Goals and Interventions for Autistic Individuals presented by Megan Helmen*
- Strategies for Supporting Independence in Daily Living presented by Lauren Gunhus and Nicole Ogren

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*
- Neurodivergent Parenting presented by Keeri Tramm, Milena Bates, Mike Schneider, Emma Rohrer, and Jillian Nelson
- Empathy in Crisis Intervention: Harm Reduction and Intersectional Approaches for Autistic People presented by Elizabeth Duffy, Santanna Ficken, Nikki Huelsman, and Aster Gallus

1:15-2:15 p.m.

- Everything That's Wrong with IEPs (and How to Fix It!): Legal and Practical Tricks for Creating Better IEPs for Neurodiverse Students presented by Jessica Heiser and Ryan Haenze
- 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

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. Check out our upcoming AuSM Workshops, including 1.5 hour options or half day sessions. We invite you to join us at this year's Steps for Autism on May 18 at the ROC at the St. Louis Park Rec Center. Come together with your community for activities, a festival atmosphere, resources and more! Finally, consider visiting our Caregiver Support Group, a free place to develop and build meaningful relationships with this community.

To stay in the know, make sure you visit www.ausm.org to sign up for our twice monthly e-newsletter, AuSM Connections. You can find the sign up at the bottom of any page on AuSM's website.

Visit www.ausm.org for details.