

2023

PHILADELPHIA AUTISM PROJECT  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Embracing Intersecting Identities Through



# ALLYSHIP & ADVOCACY



(In-Person)

WEDNESDAY  
OCT 11



Community Behavioral Health

801 Market Street, 11th Floor,  
Philadelphia, PA



(Virtual by Zoom)

FRIDAY  
OCT 13

ALL VIRTUAL SESSIONS CAN BE ACCESSED  
VIA ZOOM AFTER REGISTERING AT THIS LINK:

<http://bit.ly/PhillyAP2023> Register

Call In: +1 267 831 0333  
Meeting ID: 834 6138 8351



PHILADELPHIA  
AUTISM PROJECT  
*Guided by the  
Autism Community*

#### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Office of Councilmember  
**MICHAEL DRISCOLL**



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA



DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
Division of Behavioral  
Healthcare Education  
College of Medicine



## Conference Vision

Provide a forum to discuss best practices, tools and resources to support individuals on the spectrum, families and communities. Strengthen support networks through information sharing, and engagement with the wider Philadelphia community.

## Target Audience

Autistic individuals, family members and caregivers, professionals, community members, businesses, and anyone who wants to learn more about supporting individuals on the spectrum.

## Educational Objectives

- Utilize concepts, tools, and resources to support individuals on the spectrum and/or their family members to plan for the future.
- Summarize the latest research and/or best practices for individuals across the life span, including children, teens and young adults, and older adults.
- Recommend additional content areas to explore for session speakers and conference planners.

## Continuing Education Credits

Please note that you do not need to attend all sessions to receive credits for the sessions. You will receive credit for each session that you attend. If you have indicated an interest in continuing education credits during the registration process, we will follow up after the conference ends with the validation form for you to complete. If you are interested but did not indicate it in the registration form, you can also email us after the conference, and we will provide you with the validation form for completion.

**LSW/LCSW/LPC/LMFT (PA SBSWE Licensed Social Workers in Pennsylvania):** Drexel University College of Medicine is a preapproved provider of continuing education for Social Workers and Clinical Social Workers. This program is being offered for up to 7.5 hours of continuing education.

**PA Educators Act 48:** Drexel University College of Medicine, Behavioral Healthcare Education is recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to offer continuing education credits under Act 48 guidelines. Drexel University College of Medicine, Behavioral Healthcare Education adheres to Act 48 Continuing Education Guidelines. PA educators will receive a maximum of 7.5 hours of credit for attending this program.

**Note: On the validation form please note that the Professional ID# is required.**

## Virtual Resource Map

Please visit our [virtual resource map here](#) for resources shared throughout the conference!

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**Please note:** The language used throughout the creation of this agenda booklet was left to the speakers for their preference. We will maintain the same format throughout the conference – deferring to the speakers' preference.



## WELCOME



Thank you for joining us at the **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Philadelphia Autism Project Conference: Embracing Intersecting Identities through Allyship and Advocacy!** We are so excited to be back in person this year, in addition to offering content sessions virtually. One of the challenges that may arise in our work to develop best practices, tools, and resources to support individuals on the spectrum, is the “one size fits all” approach. This approach doesn’t acknowledge the vast variety in type, symptoms, and overall experiences of individuals on the spectrum and their families. This is especially true, when you consider intersectionality and how individuals can experience and be influenced by a variety of identities such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and many more.

During this conference, we will explore the theme of *Embracing Intersectionality Through Allyship and Advocacy*. We will engage individuals on the spectrum, caregivers, advocates, providers, educators, and others, and dive into how their intersecting identities influence their experiences, the types of challenges they face, levels of support, access to resources, and more. In doing so we aim to foster a greater sense of understanding of the complexity and nuances of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), learn how we can be better allies and advocates, and how we can provide better support both individually and systemically. We hope that you will leave this conference with helpful information and resources, while also feeling supported and more connected to the Philadelphia Autism community.

The conversation doesn’t end with this annual event. In the past year, we have been collecting your experiences on what is and is not working in Philadelphia through listening sessions and survey feedback. To share your experiences and suggestions with us, please take the listening session survey here: [https://bit.ly/ListeningSession\\_survey23](https://bit.ly/ListeningSession_survey23)



# OVERVIEW

**The Philadelphia Autism Project** is a citywide initiative supported through the Office of Councilmember Mike Driscoll and established by the Office of Former Councilmember-At-Large Dennis M. O'Brien. We would also like to thank Former Councilmember-At-Large Derek Green for his support these past few years. The Philadelphia Autism Project is conducted in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) and Community Behavioral Health (CBH). The Philadelphia Autism Project is based at the Policy and Analytics Center, at the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University.

The goal of the Philadelphia Autism Project is to examine the services and supports for individuals on the spectrum and their families in Philadelphia. This effort represents the first of its kind at the municipal level and is working in conjunction with the ASERT Collaborative.

The Philadelphia Autism Project supports the community through:



## EDUCATION

Training, eLearning courses, and resource development.



## CONNECTIONS

Collaborations, centralized resource hub, and calendar of events.



## INNOVATION

Seed funding to develop new projects, annual conference, and new program development.



Please visit our website  
**[WWW.PHILLYAUTISMPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.PHILLYAUTISMPROJECT.ORG)**  
to learn more.



## THANK YOU

Thank you to the Philadelphia Autism Project Conference Planning Committee, for which this work would not be possible.

**Rachel Guttentag**

Community Autism Peer Specialist (CAPS) Graduate

**Katy Kaplan, PhD**

Community Behavioral Health

**Mary Beth Morgan**

Liberty Resources

**Dennis M. O' Brien**

Community Behavioral Health

**Valarie Oulds, JD**

Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services

**Cecelia Thompson**

Board Member - School District of Philadelphia

Commissioner - Mayors Commission on People with Disabilities - Philadelphia

Panel Member - Governors Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

**Luke Tomczuk**

Temple University and Community Integrated Services (CIS)

Commissioner - Mayors Commission on People with Disabilities - Philadelphia

**Matthew Walsh**

Mental Health Partnerships

**Office of Councilmember Mike Driscoll**

**Department of Behavioral and Intellectual disAbility Services (DHBIDS) and Community Behavioral Health (CBH)**

**School District of Philadelphia**

2023

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ALLYSHIP & ADVOCACY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Office of Councilmember MICHAEL DRISCOLL



# AGENDA AT A GLANCE

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

[REGISTER HERE](#)

WED.  
OCT. 11



Community Behavioral Health  
801 Market St.,  
11th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA

## 9:00 AM – 10:45 AM | WELCOME REMARKS

Mike Driscoll, Philadelphia City Councilmember

Amy Nieves, Executive Director, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

**KEYNOTE** | The Journey to Self-Discovery, Camille Proctor and Dr. Yulanda Harris

## 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

**SESSION 1A** | Panel on University/College Programs & Resources, Room 1154A

**SESSION 1B** | Listening Session: Autism and Justice Interactions, Room 1154B

## 1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

**SESSION 2A** | Autism and LGBTQ+ Panel, Room 1154A

**SESSION 2B** | Panel on Diagnosis Journey, Room 1154B

## 2:45 PM – 3:00 PM

End of conference day, childcare pick up, and evaluations.

FRI.  
OCT. 13



VIRTUAL

Call In:  
+1 267 831 0333

Meeting ID:  
834 6138 8351

## 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM | WELCOME REMARKS

Seth Bluestein, City Commissioner, Board of Elections

Jill Bowen, PhD, Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS)

**KEYNOTE** | The Non-Speaking Autistic Experience: Insights into Life Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), ImpAACT Voices

## 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

The Intersection of Autism and PTSD

## 1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Autism Disclosure and College

## 3:00 PM

End of conference day and evaluations.



 *IN-PERSON at CBH*  
801 Market Street

**WEDNESDAY**  
**OCTOBER 11**

**8 – 9 AM**  
Registration & Light Breakfast



**9 – 9:30 AM**  
Introduction & Conference Welcome

**Mike Driscoll,**  
Philadelphia City Councilmember

**Amy Nieves,**  
Executive Director, Mayor's Office  
for People with Disabilities



9:30 - 10:45 AM

KEYNOTE: Journey to Self-Discovery



### Speakers



**Dr. Yulanda Harris,**  
Trainingphase



**Camille Proctor,**  
The Color of Autism  
Foundation

In their compelling presentation, “Journey to Self Discovery,” Dr. Yulanda Harris shares her experience of receiving a late diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at the age of 58. Dr. Yulanda Harris shares her personal journey of self-discovery navigating the complexities of identity, self-acceptance, and societal perceptions as a black autistic woman. She hopes her presentation will help others who are on the autism spectrum to feel less alone and more empowered. With heartfelt anecdotes and profound insights, Camille Proctor explores the intersections of race, gender, and neurodiversity, highlighting the transformative power of embracing one’s unique self and fostering inclusive understanding.



### Educational Objectives

- Identify the intersections of race, gender, and neurodiversity.
- Describe the complexities of navigating identity, self-acceptance and societal expectations.
- Discuss resources, tools, or strategies that you can implement to support yourself and/or others.



### Speaker Bios

**Yulanda Harris, Ed.D, CNP** is a Neurodivergent Advocate and Certified Neurodiversity Professional (CNP) through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) who spent over 30 years in Training & Development and Talent Management, working in the Hospitality, Automotive, Education, Sales & Marketing and Healthcare industries. She received her Doctorate in Educational Leadership & Management and master’s in human resource management.

**Ms. Camille Proctor** is the mother of a teen son and an adult daughter. In 2008, shortly after her son’s second birthday, he was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. As she searched for support services for her family, she soon realized a disparity in the black community. In 2009 she founded The Color of Autism Foundation to support African American families with children on the autism spectrum. The Color of Autism Foundation is a US Non-Profit (501 c3) organization committed to educating and assisting African American families affected by autism spectrum disorders. They aim to help families identify the warning signs of autism early on, so they can become their child’s best advocate. Providing culturally competent support and training will improve outcomes for children in underserved communities on the autism spectrum. She has served as a diversity and inclusion advisor for both television and film. In September 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed her to the Michigan State Disability Council. The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council’s mission is to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams. She obtained a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Certificate from Cornell University in January 2023 and authored a CNN Essay “For the Walter Wallaces of the world, the police are not the answer” (October 2020).

**11 AM – 12:15 PM**  
**SESSION 1A****Panel on University/College  
Programs and Resources***Room 1154A***Session Description**

Hear from panelists representing colleges and universities about resources that they offer and some of the common challenges and strategies that they have come across in supporting autistic individuals and their loved ones.

**Educational Objectives**

- List postsecondary programs and resources in Philadelphia.
- Discuss common challenges and strategies as students experience college life.
- Identify at least 1 strategy, resource, or tool that can be implemented tomorrow in preparation for postsecondary life.

**Speaker Bios**

**Amy Edwards** is the Director of the Center for Autism and Neurodiversity (formerly the Drexel Autism Support Program) at Drexel University. Amy's program development and research has focused primarily on post-secondary education opportunities and the transition from high school to higher education and employment for students with autism. Her professional interest in autism stems from her personal life as a mother of four children, the oldest of which has autism spectrum disorder.



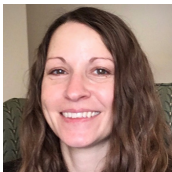
**Alli Gatta**, Associate Director of College Autism Support in the ASPIRE program, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from West Chester University. Alli strives to help students have a successful college experience while gaining valuable social and life skills. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor as well as a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Pennsylvania.



**Michael Hanowitz** is a clinical social worker that noticed a need for socialization opportunities for students that identified as having ASD. Michael started the Social Xchanges Group in 2013 to help provide students a place to meet other students struggling with similar challenges and use their combined experiences to help each other feel more connected on campus and be successful in completing their degrees.



**Laura Sibbald** is the Executive Director of Neurodiversity Initiatives at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA. She is passionate about neurodiversity advocacy and empowerment, with over ten years of experience supporting and advocating for students with learning differences and their families. She is a nationally certified speech-language pathologist, a published author, and an invited speaker on the topics of trauma-informed best practices, supporting self-advocacy and self-determination, and developing neurodiversity-affirming interventions.



**Sharon Thompson** is a Licensed Psychologist who specializes in trauma and neurodivergence (particularly autism). For the past nine years, she has been the Coordinator for the College Success Program at Eastern University--a program that provides social, campus life, and academic support to college students with autism and provides education on neurodivergence to the campus community.

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 **ALLYSHIP &  
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IN-PERSON at CBH, 801 Market Street

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11**



**11 AM – 12:15 PM**  
**SESSION 1B**

## Listening Session: Autism and Justice Interactions

*Room 1154B*



### Session Description

In the past year, the Philadelphia Autism Project held listening sessions and asked participants to vote on the top two topics that they would like the next listening sessions to focus on. Criminal justice interaction was one of the top voted topics. This listening session is focused on providing a space for participants to share their experiences and suggestions as it relates to criminal justice interactions. Facilitated by Kate Hooven, ASERT's Justice Project Coordinator, this session will provide a forum so that participants can share what is working, what isn't, and what they would like the Philadelphia Autism Project to focus on in the coming years.



### Educational Objectives

- Identify reasons why autistic individuals are more likely to interface with law enforcement and emergency responders.
- Discuss what is working well, what needs improvement, and initiatives that should be focused on in the coming years.
- Explain strategies and resources for interaction between law enforcement, autistic individuals, and their support networks that promote safety and positive outcomes for everyone involved.



### Speaker Bio



**Kate Hooven** is the Justice System Project Coordinator for ASERT (Autism Services, Education, Resources and Training) where she is using her former background in PA's Juvenile Justice System and her passion for advocating for autistic individuals by training probation officers, police officers, attorneys, judges, correctional officers and others employed in the justice system to raise awareness of the impact an autism diagnosis has on those individuals involved in our juvenile and criminal justice systems. Prior to Mrs. Hooven's decision to stay home with her three children, one of whom has an Autism Spectrum Disorder, she was a Juvenile Court Consultant for the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges Commission, a Home and School Visitor for Central Dauphin School District and a Juvenile Probation Officer for Dauphin County Juvenile Probation.

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**ALLYSHIP &  
ADVOCACY**



IN-PERSON at CBH, 801 Market Street

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11**



**1:30 PM – 2:45 PM**  
**SESSION 1A**

**Autism and LGBTQ+ Panel**

*Room 1154A*



### Session Description

Panelists will share their views and experiences as LGBTQ+ autistic persons and answer questions.



### Educational Objectives

- Identify how individuals experience their various identities and how they inform one another.
- List resources, tools, and/or strategies that can be helpful to people in their roles as allies.
- List resources, tools, and/or strategies that can be helpful to people in advocating for themselves.



### Panelists Bios



**Rachel Guttentag** works with the Philadelphia Autism Project and other organizations like ASDNext (where you can read her writing on various topics via her blog posts) lending her voice and point of view as an autistic self-advocate. With a BA in psychology from Temple University and hope for a Psy.D. one day, she tries to straddle both sides of disability advocacy between the personal and the academic perspective.

**Makayla Maddison** is a trans autistic woman. Makayla works as a general manager at an escape room but also does advocacy and activism work in her spare time.



**Evander "Ev" Smith** (They/He) has a strong desire to make the world more accepting & accessible for disabled people at all stages of life, and a commitment to helping others. They are an Autistic self-advocate and speaker specializing in Autistic culture, LGBTQIA+ Autistic identities, and disability inclusion & celebration. Ev has a background in public speaking, disability advocacy, and has worked with many organizations regarding disabled rights, representation, and access. They currently serve on the advisory board for the Neurodiversity Employment Network. Ev has worked as Diversity Specialist at a PreK-12 school for Autistic students, for 4 years.



1:30 PM – 2:45 PM  
SESSION 1B

## Panel on Diagnosis Journey

Room 1154B



### Session Description

Hear from panelists as they share their experiences learning about autism and supporting their loved ones on the spectrum as well as themselves. The discussion will give light to some of the challenges from their point of view while highlighting some amazing and beautiful moments.



### Educational Objectives

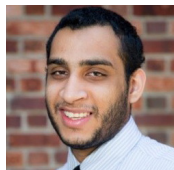
- Demonstrate understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by defining what autism is and isn't.
- Discuss facets of life with autism and the diagnosis journey.
- List tools, strategies, and resources that you can utilize daily.



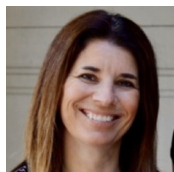
### Panelist Bios



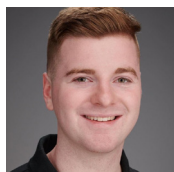
**Icylee L. Basketbill** (*Facilitator*) is a parent of a daughter diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). She has volunteered with a variety of organizations, including Parent-to-Parent of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Autism Network, and the LADDER Family Center Program at La Salle University. Icylee is currently employed as a Family and Community Liaison with the Philadelphia Autism Project and as the Lead Program Facilitator for Philadelphia Area Sexual Health Initiative (PASHI) with Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC). In 2015, Icylee won a car for helping families with special needs and was highlighted on Channel 6. Icylee is a graduate of Harcum College with an Associates of Arts in Human Services and Chestnut Hill College with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services.



**William Del Toro Vargas:** *Hablamos Español!* William is a lifelong advocate. He started out at the #IWantToWork Campaign as the Lead Legislative Advocate. In his role as legislative advocate, he was instrumental in educating legislators to create Act No. 26: Work Experience for High School Students with Disabilities also known as Pre-Employment Transition Services. He was also instrumental in helping advocate for Act No. 36: Employment First which helped reinforce Governor Tom Wolf's Executive order for an Employment First Pennsylvania to secure that all people with disabilities have access to competitive employment. William has been advocating for the Hispanic community in North Philadelphia even before he was out of high school.



**Cheryl Stehle** is a mother of 3, one child with autism and two who are neurotypical. She considers herself to be a support, a reference and a person who's been there. She doesn't claim to know all the answers, but she has experience to share and a willingness to listen.



**Josh Stehle** is an author and autism advocate from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is the co-founder of the autism awareness brand, The Stehle Bros, which has received millions of views on TikTok and has been featured on ABC News, PHL17 news, Autism Parenting Magazine, and more. (@thestehle.bros) Josh's book, "I am a Superhero Expert," is a look at autism from a new perspective. The perspective of a younger brother, who sees his older, autistic brother as his best friend and personal superhero.

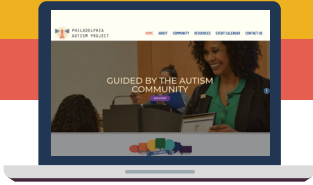


**Susanne Tuckerman** and her husband are the proud parents of 3 adult sons. She has been involved in the disability community in Philadelphia since her twin sons were diagnosed with autism in 2000. She has supported families and individuals with disabilities in both paid and unpaid positions in the Early Intervention, School Age and Adult Systems including Behavior Health. She currently works as a Family Advisor for the PA Family Network at Vison for Equality. Sue is also a Temple graduate with a Bachelors of Business Administration.



# ZOOM ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS

We hope the below will support you in accessing conference sessions throughout the week.



## Weblink

[http://bit.ly/PhillyAP2023\\_Register](http://bit.ly/PhillyAP2023_Register)

By clicking on the above link, you will be able to join any of our conference sessions. The first time you access any of the conference sessions, you will be asked to complete a brief registration form. You can then use this same link for all sessions you are interested in attending.



## Call-in Information

**Call In:** (267) 831-0333  
**Meeting ID:** 834 6138 8351

You can also join conference sessions by calling in. **Please dial: (267) 831-0333**, when prompted to enter a meeting ID, please enter: **834 6138 8351**

## For an optimal experience for the conference:



Please join on a computer. If that is not an option, the Zoom app may be downloaded onto a smartphone.



To optimize bandwidth and reduce distractions, we will be muting and turning off video for all participants. You will be able to ask questions through the Q&A function.



You can access additional resources on [how to join and participate in a webinar here](#).

## Presentations



All session handouts that have been provided by presenters can be viewed and printed on our [conference webpage](#).



These services will be provided at the conference, but attendees will need access to Zoom via a computer or through the Zoom app on their phone to ensure they can most effectively use these services.

## Closed Captioning, American Sign Language Interpreting, and Spanish Interpreting

Please feel free to reach us with any questions at [phillyap@drexel.edu](mailto:phillyap@drexel.edu) or by phone at (215) 571-3209 or (215) 839-8207.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Office of Councilmember  
**MICHAEL DRISCOLL**



PHILADELPHIA  
AUTISM PROJECT

## JOIN OUR COMMUNITY!

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## CONTACT US:

[☎ \(215\) 571.3209 or \(215\) 839.8207](tel:(215)571.3209)  
[✉ phillyap@drexel.edu](mailto:phillyap@drexel.edu)  
[🌐 www.phillyautismproject.org](http://www.phillyautismproject.org)



 VIRTUAL by Zoom

**FRIDAY**  
**OCTOBER 13**

ALL SESSIONS CAN BE ACCESSED VIA ZOOM AT **THIS LINK:**  
[https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5Yim9Y3iQ3aCwKuE4q\\_b7Q](https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5Yim9Y3iQ3aCwKuE4q_b7Q)  
Call In: +1 267 831 0333 | Meeting ID: 834 6138 8351



**9 – 10:30 AM**  
**Opening Remarks**

**Seth Bluestein,**  
City Commissioner, Board of Elections

**Jill Bowen, PhD,**  
Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health  
and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS)



## KEYNOTE:

### Presented by [ImpAACT Voices](#)

# The Non-Speaking Autistic Experience: Insights into Life Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)



## Session Description

This panel discussion is presented by [ImpAACT Voices](#) to give a platform to a segment of the autistic population whose opinions and perspectives are usually unknown and unheard of. Our goal is to give a space for non-speaking autistic individuals who use AAC to convey their experiences. Additionally, we want the public to be able to benefit from their insights and perspectives into a world they probably know little about.



## Educational Objectives

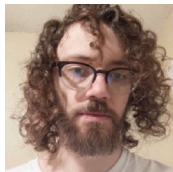
- Identify etiquette when communicating with individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication.
- Discuss the experiences of AAC users.
- List strategies, tools, and/or resources that AAC users and allies can use to support themselves and the AAC community.



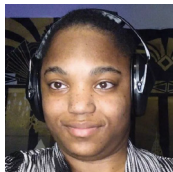
## Speaker Bios



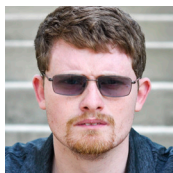
[ImpAACT Voices](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2020; A community run by AAC users for the benefit of AAC users. We strive to raise public awareness of AAC and advocate for the inclusion of AAC users into all parts of society. We support, empower and connect AAC users worldwide.



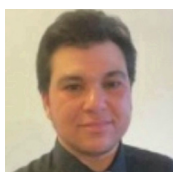
**Lance McLemore** (*Facilitator*) is a member of ImpAACT Voices' Board of Directors and an alumnus of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, holding a BA in studio art and philosophy. He is currently associated with PRC-Salttillo and the Center for AAC and Autism, and is a passionate advocate for AAC, regularly presenting on the subject at both domestic and international conferences.



**Kaishawna Fleming** is a 22-year-old African-American Deaf Low Vision Autistic Black woman. She uses AAC, sign language, and at times, unreliable vocal speech to communicate. Passionate about advocating for disability rights, she is currently attending college with the aspiration of becoming a teacher for students with disabilities and aims to educate non-disabled individuals.



**David James "DJ" Savarese** directs the [Lives-in-Progress Collective](#) as Co-Chair of [The Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports](#), An [Iowa Arts Fellow](#) and former [OSF Human Rights Initiative Community Youth Fellow](#), he co-produced, and narrated the Peabody award-winning, Emmy-nominated documentary [Deej: Inclusion Shouldn't Be a Lottery](#) and teaches poetry writing through the [LYNX Project in Chicago](#). Since graduating from Oberlin College in 2017, he's authored *Swoon* (2022), *Studies in Brotherly Love* (co-author, 2021), and *A Doorknob for the Eye* (2017; digital version 2021).  
Photo Credit: DJ Savarese by Pamela Harvey Photography



**Rocky Schulsinger** is an autistic adult with a dual master's degree in special education and severe disabilities, utilizing AAC for communication. With over two decades of experience working with autistic children in New York, Florida, and Massachusetts, Rocky is passionate about empowering individuals with communication strategies for self-advocacy. He has delivered presentations to service providers, emphasizing the importance of providing age-appropriate language without limiting communicative potential.





11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

## SESSION 1:

## The Intersection of Autism and PTSD



## Session Description

Where once PTSD was thought to countermand a diagnosis of Autism, autistic voices and lived experiences strongly indicate their co-existence. Nevertheless, while research data demonstrates a higher risk of traumatic experiences in the autistic population, formal research into PTSD and autism lags. The importance of those autistic voices and experiences becomes essential. This presentation offers a unique insight of how PTSD and autism intersect, as well as how mainstream interventions for trauma can cause unintended harm to the autistic population. Considerations for more appropriate treatment are introduced.



## Educational Objectives

- Explain the latest research on PTSD and autism.
- Identify the intersection between PTSD and autism.
- Describe considerations for appropriate treatment options.



## Speaker Bio



**Dr. Donahue** earned her doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from the University at Albany, State University of New York. She maintains a clinical practice specializing in grief and trauma. Dr. Donahue works extensively with domestic and dating abuse, in both clinical and forensic atmospheres. She is well versed in neuropsychological testing which is how she discovered her passion of working in support of Autistic people. She is co-author of “Living with PTSD on the Autism spectrum,” as well as a member of an international team of subject matter experts who developed the “Warning Signs of Suicide for Autistic People.” Other public works include books, articles, podcasts, and training programs.

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

## SESSION 2:

## Autism Disclosure and College



## Session Description

Should students disclose their autism when applying to college? Should they disclose to staff, professors or peers once they begin attending college? We will address these questions and more!



## Educational Objectives

- Explain the pros and cons of disclosing one’s diagnosis when applying to and attending college.
- Describe some strategies or tools that can be implemented when requesting accommodations.
- Identify resources to further learn and prepare for disclosures.



## Speaker Bio



**Dr. Eric Endlich**, psychologist and founder of Top College Consultants, guides autistic students worldwide through the college application and transition process. An instructor, researcher and author, Dr. Endlich is also an autism parent and autistic adult.



# VENUE

Community Behavioral Health (CBH), 801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA

SESSIONS	ROOM
WELCOME REMARKS KEYNOTE	1154A
SESSION 1A   Panel on University/College Programs & Resources SESSION 2A   Autism and LGBTQ+ Panel	
SESSION 1B   Listening Session: Autism and Justice Interactions SESSION 2B   Panel on Diagnosis Journey	





# Thank you

Thank you for participating in the **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Philadelphia Autism Project Conference: Embracing Intersecting Identities through Allyship and Advocacy!** We hope that you have found this conference to be helpful, and that you have left with some resources and strategies to support yourself and others. We look forward to next year's conference with you. In the meantime, if you would like to get involved or learn more about our initiatives, please reach us using the below contact information!



**Tell us how we did with this conference and suggestions for the next conference!**



**DAY 1 EVALUATION:**

[https://bit.ly/2023\\_EvaluationDay1](https://bit.ly/2023_EvaluationDay1)



**DAY 2 EVALUATION:**

[https://bit.ly/2023\\_EvaluationDay\\_2](https://bit.ly/2023_EvaluationDay_2)




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