



Virginia Autism Hope Summit Workshop Descriptions

Concurrent Session 1 | 10:15-11:00am

Autism 101: What Everybody Should Know (Y)

Alisa Bahl, PhD, BCBA-D, University of Virginia

This session is a must for families with a child who has been recently diagnosed. It will include an overview of how the diagnosis was made, how to explain ASD to others, impact on families, and introduction to understanding how autism may impact teaching methods for everyday skills.

Parent Advocacy in the Educational Process (S)

Angela Lello, Senior Director, Public Policy (Autism Speaks)

It can be challenging to work with your school system to make sure that your child is receiving an appropriate education. Parents might feel like the decisions aren't always addressing their child's unique challenges and needs. They might also feel overwhelmed due to the complexity of special education law and its processes. This workshop will empower parents. It will address the fine line that parents need to walk in the IEP negotiation process and give tips on what to do when things aren't working so well.

Preparing for the SIS: How to be a Good Respondent (A)

Jessica Cifizzari, Regional Coordinator (Wall Residences)

Understanding how to be an effective respondent to the SIS. The purpose of the session is to educate on what is being asked, how to answer and understanding the implications of the SIS.

In the Lion's Den: Parent Wellness Amidst On-going Stress (E)

Donna Cattell-Gordon, LBA, Clinical Director (Compass Connections)

At the heart of every prognosis for a child with autism lies the family. What do research and personal narratives tell us about how parents might stay steady and strong, or not.

Gender Differences and Real-life Implications (E)

Erica Fornaris Rouch, PhD, University of Virginia

Traditionally, four times as many men as women have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. But in recent assessments by the Centers for Disease Control, the differences in diagnosis between men and women have begun to shrink due to better diagnostic practices and an increased understanding that symptoms and effects of autism may present very differently for girls than for boys. The challenges of women and girls on the spectrum are unique. In this presentation, core differences in autism symptoms and expression will be described, and recommendations for supporting females on the spectrum will be made.



Concurrent Session 2 | 11:15-12:00pm

Evidence-based Interventions for Young Children with Autism (Y)

Rose Nevill, PhD, University of Virginia

The workshop will focus on the need for evidence-based interventions, identifying effective interventions, and basic principles of effective early intervention, with a particular focus on naturalistic developmental behavioral interventions.

Sexuality and the Spectrum: Lessons of Sex, Dating, & Love, Autism Style (S, A)

Amy Gravino, MA, Certified Autism Specialist, A.S.C.O.T Consulting, LLC

Individuals on the autism spectrum are sexual beings, yet we are usually not taught the necessary skills to be successful in sexual and romantic relationships. This workshop illustrates the challenges faced in this area through the firsthand perspective of a woman on the spectrum. The effects of puberty on autistic adolescents will be addressed, along with myths and misconceptions surrounding autism and relationships, and strategies will be provided for parents and professionals to open a dialogue with their children and clients about dating, relationships, and sexuality.

Transition Services and Employment (A)

Deborah Anama, Parent Resource Center Coordinator (Piedmont Regional Education Program)

Why is planning early for transition after high school so important? What resources and community connections are available locally to assist with employment?

Making Connections Online and in Real Life: How to Encourage Positive Interactions (E)

Janet Seide, STAR Family Navigator, University of Virginia

Our children find themselves in social situations all day long. How do we get them to be more comfortable and more confident in those interactions? This discussion between the facilitator and participants will focus on social skill building, and what the research tells us about social skills, relationships, and ASD. In addition, resources will be provided on how to stay safe on-line.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Exploring Common Co-occurring Medical Conditions (E)

Beth Ellen Davis, MD, MPH, University of Virginia

We know that autism is a spectrum disorder, and it affects people in many different ways and to varying levels of challenge and strength. Each individual with autism is unique. Additionally, there are a wide range of medical conditions that may co-occur with autism such as seizures, gastrointestinal disorders, eating and feeding challenges and sleep disturbances. This workshop will address common medical conditions that may accompany autism (see separate workshop for Mental Health and Autism).



Concurrent Session # 3 | 1:30-2:15pm

Accessing Resources Roadmap for the Newly Diagnosed (Y)

Hilary Nagel, MSW, LCSW; Debbie Vermillion, STAR Patient and Family Navigator; Betsy Phipps, LCSW

Once a child has received an autism spectrum diagnosis, families must decide what to do next. Deciding which direction to move in can seem overwhelming. This workshop will provide parents with some guidelines for accessing services and locating resources.

The ABCs of ABA (S, A)

Einar Ingvarsson, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Virginia Institute of Autism

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has profoundly influenced intervention and education for individuals with ASD. Yet, misconceptions about the nature of ABA abound. In this presentation, I will give a brief overview of the practice of ABA and address some of the common misconceptions that surround it.

Housing and Service Solutions Panel (A)

Robert Kreps, Parent and Moderator

Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group (CRAAG) Panelists: Matthew Osborne, MS, BCBA, Director of Adult and Residential Services, Faison Center; Sharon Wood, Parent; Tim Alley, Parent; Eric Williams, Director of Provider Development, DBHDS; Marie Fraticelli, Integrated Community Options Specialist, DBHDS; Heather Hines, Senior Director of Adult Development Services, Region Ten; Keven Schock, MA, BCBA, Lead Clinical Director, Aveanna (former Associate Director of Licensing, DBHDS)

Interactive panel discussion of residential services and housing addressing the diversity of need for individuals with autism, ranging from those needing minimal assistance to those requiring more intensive supports. Panel includes housing and service providers, DBHDS specialists, and parents.

Building on Individual Skills and Strengths (E)

Jake Frazier, MA, BCBA, LBA, Virginia Institute of Autism; Jessica Doucette, MS, BCBA, LBA, Director of Adult Services (Virginia Institute of Autism)

It can be easy to focus on the weaknesses and challenges children may have. We will discuss ways to capitalize on your learner's strengths and skills in order to make learning more rewarding, efficient, effective, and preferred. We will also discuss methods to facilitate mastery in challenging areas.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Exploring Common Co-occurring Mental Health Conditions (E)

Micah Mazurek, PhD, University of Virginia

This session will cover mental health challenges that often co-occur with autism. The session will provide an overview of the most common mental health conditions and symptoms experienced by individuals with autism, and will highlight evidence-based strategies for support and management of these issues.