



2024

EASTERSEALS MIDWEST VIRTUAL AUTISM CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 7, 2024 | 8:30 AM - 11:45 AM

NOVEMBER 8, 2024 | 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

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REGISTRATION INFORMATION



Scan the QR code to register.

Conference Dates:

November 7, 2024 | 8:30 AM -11:45 AM
November 8, 2024 | 8:30 AM -12:00 PM

Cost for Attendees:

Professionals: \$55 for both days
Families and Individuals: Free
Group Rate (6-15 professionals): \$275 for both days
Larger groups can contact Ashley Hartmann for a quote at 573.339.9300 or ashley.hartmann@esmw.org.

SCHEDULE

November 7

Welcome and Opening Keynote Liane Holliday Willey When Autism and Mental Health Issues Co-Mingle	8:30 AM – 10:00 AM
Break	10:00 AM – 10:15 AM
Breakout Session 1 Session A: A to Z: Autism, Advocacy, Self-Care, Trauma, and the Zillion Things in Between Session B: Behavior Blueprint: Your Guide to Positive Behavior Change	10:15 AM – 11:45 AM

November 8

Breakout Session 2 Session A: Crisis Response and Strategies across the Lifespan in Missouri Session B: Medication Use in Kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder	8:30 AM – 9:30 AM
Break	9:30 AM – 9:45 AM
Breakout Session 3 Session A: Internet Safety: How to Protect against Fraud, Prevent Financial Exploitation, and Recognize Online Threats Session B: Tools for Toilet Training	9:45 AM – 10:45 AM
Break	10:45 AM – 11:00 AM
Closing Keynote Jennifer Cook Relentless Positivity (and a Little Bit of Caffeine)	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM



When Autism and Mental Health Issues Co-Mingle

Opening Keynote

Presented by: Liane Holliday Willey, EdH, Author, Academic, Autism Educator

Thursday, November 7 | 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Liane is a Doctor of Education with a specialty in psycholinguistics and learning style differences. She is an academic and internationally renowned author whose books, papers, grant work, and keynote presentations have earned international praise and awards. In every role Liane pursues, her goal is to help others understand the joy that happens when we celebrate differences and individuality.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Research reports that people with autism are at a higher risk for mental health challenges than people without autism are. Yet, there is still a woefully inadequate understanding of how best to support people with autism who are in crisis. Barriers to treatment, inadequate analysis of best support practices, and incomplete understanding of autism contribute to the gap in knowledge. Individuals with autism are joining the ranks of professionals to bridge this gap with their insight and experience. In this talk, autistic author and educator Liane Holliday Willey will share her personal experiences with mental health challenges, current academic research, and thoughtful conclusions for effective autistic mental health supports.



A to Z: Autism, Advocacy, Self-Care, Trauma, and the Zillion Things in Between

Session A

Presented by: Tracy Francis MSW, LCSW

Thursday, November 7 | 10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Tracy Foster Francis is the mother of three amazing children, the youngest of whom is a child with developmental disabilities. She has spent the last 23 years navigating the world and looking at it as a mother who only wants the best for her child. Tracy began writing “Raising Someone Special” after realizing that her experiences raising her daughter were not commonly talked about.

In this journey of raising someone special, Tracy became a special education teacher. Being in the educational system allowed her to see yet another area where there were challenges she didn’t realize existed. She could now see things from both sides - that of a parent and as an educator. Following that, she went on to get a degree in social work and became a therapist who also works with individuals with disabilities.

Recently, Tracy has been helping people in her village and community advocate for their loved ones, especially related to school settings and physical and mental health issues. Tracy has made it a personal goal to speak with anyone who will slow down and listen about these issues no matter if they have a special someone, know a special someone, or if they are some amazing individuals who would like to be more aware of those who are special and their loved ones.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session will cover Tracy’s journey with her daughter from birth to the age of 23. The family has advocated for many things throughout their daughter’s life thus far, including the trauma that has been sprinkled throughout their journey. You may be surprised where trauma shows up, just like Tracy was. This presentation will talk about why self-care is important. Most importantly, Tracy will explore her village, how to build your own, and how to become an important part of someone else’s.



Behavior Blueprint: Your Guide to Positive Behavior Change

Session B

Presented by: Stefanie Schrieber, PhD, BCBA

Thursday, November 7 | 10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Stefanie Schrieber received her PhD in School Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2021. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the May Institute in Randolph, MA and her post-doctoral fellowship at the Munroe Meyer Institute in Omaha, NE. Dr. Schrieber holds certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and is a licensed psychologist. Dr. Schrieber has had extensive experience with assessment and treatment of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other related neurodevelopmental disorders across school, home, and clinic settings. Prior to her current role in Massachusetts, Dr. Schrieber was part of the Autism Team at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. During this time, she conducted evaluations, facilitated a variety of group and individual caregiver coaching programs, and aided in the development of a school-based behavioral health consultation team. Her primary research interests include development and evaluation of practical behavioral interventions in the school setting.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Join us for a practical workshop on managing challenging behaviors and fostering positive outcomes for children with autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. During this presentation, Dr. Schrieber will discuss evidence-based strategies for assessing, preventing, and responding to challenging behaviors, as well as strategies for teaching new positive behaviors and social skills. Strategies will be discussed through a behavioral lens, with considerations for both the home and school settings. The goal of this presentation is for attendees to leave the session equipped with actionable tools they can apply immediately at home and school.



Crisis Response Resources and Strategies across the Lifespan in Missouri

Session A

Presented by: Lauren Parsons, MA, BCBA, LBA

Friday, November 8 | 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Lauren Parsons is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst currently serving as a Crisis Behavior Analyst at Easterseals Midwest where she provides critical support in the Crisis Services and Treatment Program. With a strong foundation in both special education and applied behavior analysis, Lauren brings a wealth of experience from her roles as a behavioral clinician, special education teacher, and licensed behavior analyst. Her expertise extends across various settings, from educational environments to clinical and crisis intervention.

Lauren earned her Master's Degree in special education with an emphasis in applied behavior analysis from the University of Iowa, complementing her undergraduate degree in elementary education. Her dedication to advancing behavioral health is evident in her comprehensive approach to supporting individuals and implementing effective, evidence-based interventions.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

In this presentation, we will explore effective strategies for managing and understanding crises within the family and community context. This session will provide valuable insights into defining and describing individual experiences with crises in observable and measurable terms. We will delve into the comprehensive range of resources available in Missouri, including the 988-crisis hotline, behavioral health crisis centers, and mobile crisis response teams. Participants will gain knowledge about community behavioral health liaisons and the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program.

Additionally, the presentation will cover practical strategies for handling challenging behaviors and crises at home. Emphasis will be placed on positive behavior supports and the Tools of Choice curriculum, including training and coaching opportunities for parents and guardians. Key safety and risk considerations will also be addressed to ensure a well-rounded approach to crisis management. Join us to enhance your skills and access crucial resources for effectively supporting and guiding individuals through challenging times.



Medication Use in Kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Session B

Presented by: Dr. Hanein H. Edrees, MD, FAAP

Friday, November 8 | 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Hanein Edrees, MD, is a developmental and behavioral pediatrician at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, MO. She is also Assistant Professor of Pediatrics for the University of Missouri - Kansas City. She completed her medical degree at the George Washington University School of Medicine, followed by a pediatric residency at University of Illinois at Chicago, and then a developmental and behavioral pediatrics fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Dr. Edrees sees and treats children with a wide range of developmental and behavioral concerns and conditions, including autism, ADHD, and developmental delays.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

There is no specific medicine to treat autism. However, there are medications that may be helpful in targeting certain behaviors or conditions associated with autism. Along with therapy, medicines may help children function more successfully. This talk will introduce you to some of the medicines that may be recommended by your health care provider. We will talk about medication groups and what symptoms they target, including anxiety, ADHD, and aggression/irritability. We will also talk about how to monitor if a medication is working and some side effects of commonly used medicines. We will go through what questions to ask your provider if you are considering starting a medication. Additional resources and references will be provided.



Internet Safety

How to Protect against Fraud, Prevent Financial Exploitation, and Recognize Online Threats

Session A

Presented by: Special Agent Josh Morrill & Special Agent Foster Biggers

Friday, November 8 | 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Special Agent Josh Morrill is a Springfield, MO native who joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2011. He is currently assigned to the FBI St. Louis Division where he investigates complex financial crimes. Prior to returning to Missouri, Agent Morrill worked at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in the Civil Rights Unit. His FBI career began in Baton Rouge where he investigated complex financial crimes and civil rights violations. He obtained his CPA license in 2007 through the State of Missouri after graduating with dual degrees in accounting and business management from Evangel University.

Special Agent Foster Biggers has been with the FBI for seven years. In 2017, SA Biggers joined the Bureau as a member of the Specialized Surveillance Team and was stationed in the Albuquerque, NM field office. Biggers and his team worked Counter Terrorism, Counterintelligence, and Criminal cases while in Albuquerque. In 2022, SA Biggers completed his training in Quantico, VA to become a Special Agent and reported to the St. Louis field office. SA Biggers currently works on the Violent Crime Against Children team and previously worked on the Threat to Life Guardian team. SA Biggers is originally from Oklahoma City, OK, is married and has three children.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Special Agent Josh Morrill will be presenting on online financial exploitation while Special Agent Foster Biggers will be presenting on online threats as they relate to sexual abuse. These sessions are designed to inform participants about various dangers when online. While these presentations may not be directly related to people with disabilities, important information will be presented that will be beneficial to people of all backgrounds and ages.



Tools for Toilet Training

Session B

Presented by: Allison Palmer, MA, BCBA, LBA

Friday, November 8 | 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM

BIOGRAPHY

Allison Palmer is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who works out of Easterseals Midwest's Cape Girardeau office. Allison lives in southern Illinois with her husband and daughter. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2016 and her Master's Degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Ball State University in 2019. Allison has been a BCBA for three years and has worked for Easterseals Midwest for the past six years.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This presentation discusses tools to implement when toilet training children. The toilet training process is intensive, however, it has been shown to be effective. Allison will discuss pre-toilet training skills to teach first, toilet training interventions, and how to know when your child is ready to toilet train. This presentation focuses on urinary toilet training and reviews bowel movement training, as well.



Relentless Positivity (and a Little Bit of Caffeine)

Closing Keynote

Presented by: Jennifer Cook

Friday, November 8 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer Cook was identified as being on the spectrum in 2011. An autism advocate, on-camera expert for Netflix's triple-E Emmy Award-Winning "Love on the Spectrum US," star of Joey Travolta's "Lights, Camera, Friendship!," and Autism Spectrum Disorder expert for HBO Max, she also consults for companies like Twitch and Amazon. Jennifer is the author of nine bestselling books, available in eight languages – including the foundational "The Asperkids (Secret) Book of Social Rules", groundbreaking memoir "Autism in Heels", and newest "My Friend Julia: A Sesame Street Book About Autism". Among her titles are a Wall Street Journal Bestseller, Autism Society of America's Book of the Year, a Publishers Weekly "Best Book" title winner, and six of BookAuthority's "Best-Selling," "Best Memoir," and "Top Autism Books of All Time" picks.

Jennifer is an alumna of Brown and Columbia Universities. She sits on the Autism Society of America's Council of Autistic Advisors, as well as the Advisory Boards for Holly Robinson Peete's HollyRod Foundation and NEXT for Autism. Jennifer consults for Congress' Autism Research Panel and is a multi-award-winning international presenter who has spoken everywhere from the

White House to the National Institutes of Health to royal audiences in Europe. In her work, she helps unzip hidden social rules for neurodiverse people of all ages, coaching them toward more connected, fulfilling lives and relationships. Jennifer is based in Charlotte, NC.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Whatever the particulars of your personal journey, let's be real: autism isn't for sissies. While we all mean well, it takes a whole lot of extra devotion to genuinely seek perspective shifts to ask – patiently, curiously – what does the world actually look like from your shoes? Or from mine? How can we help each other see what we see, experience what we experience, feel what we feel? And once we do, what then? In this promises-not-to-be-boring, let's-keep-it-real talk full of optical illusions and soul-met honesty, Jennifer will share her own experience of neurodivergence and of parenting neurodivergent kids. She'll shine a light on anxiety and connection, explore the import of "unspoken" social rules, and tease apart "normal" from "typical." Most importantly, she'll share the choice central to building a life of relentless positivity, and to uniting us all, one community, together on the human spectrum.