

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL SENDER] College Autism Network - August 2021 Updates

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**From:** College Autism Network

**To:** Jackson, Brittany 1.



## COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK

ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

### College Autism Network Newsletter August 2021

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- Television: It's Still Relevant ("Atypical" and "Love on the Spectrum")

#### Mark those calendars for the College Autism Summit!

October 26-29, 2021

#### [College Autism Summit Preconference Opportunities](#)

As if the Summit wasn't enough. Consider joining one of our three preconference events on **Tuesday, October 26:**



## **Building, Expanding or Improving a College Program for Students with Autism**

*1:00-4:00 pm ET*

If you're in the process of starting a program, or want to take yours to the next level, join Jane Thierfeld Brown and Laurie Ackles for a 3-hour preconference workshop to get good tips, great info, and insights from two of the best thinkers in the field. [Preregistration](#) required, \$50 fee.

## **Preparing Students to Transition to Employment**

*1:00-4:00 pm ET*

Few topics feel as critical right now as how to best prepare your students to enter the workforce. This workshop, led by Brad McGarry from Mercyhurst University and Neil Barnett from Microsoft, will challenge you to think differently about strategies and opportunities. [Preregistration](#) required, \$50 fee.

## **A Research Symposium on Mental Health and Autism**

*1:00-5:00 pm ET*

Join Brett Ranon Nachman and several of the best scholars and practitioners in an exploration of current research and practice on mental health. Create actionable, thoughtful, and data-driven resources that will shape both research and practice. [Preregistration](#) required, **no additional fee**.

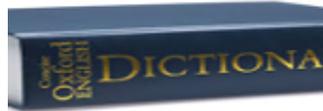
**All participants must also be [registered](#) for the College Autism Summit.**

[Register Today](#)

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## **A Strengths-Based Approach to Neurodiversity**

Words matter, as is clear in this [thoughtful article](#) published in the journal *Autism*, co-authored by Heather Brown, Aubyn Stahmer, Patrick Dwyer and Susan Rivera. *A strengths-based* view of neurodiversity, rather than a *deficit* approach, can make an enormous difference in outcomes for a neurodivergent person and their family. “A strengths-based approach to share developmental and diagnostic information can change the way parents view their autistic children, which in turn change the way autistic children view themselves, leading to greater empowerment in adulthood ([Urbanowicz et al., 2019](#))” The authors offer practical suggestions for diagnosticians, with a focus on early childhood, but clear implications abound for how those who work with college students can change their own framework to great, and positive effect.



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## Autism-Friendly AND Online: It Can Work

[This recent article](#) in EdTech features two autism-specific programs (ASPs) that excel at providing online education for autistic students. And of course, if you provide excellent services for autistic students, all learners benefit, as this article, which references Universal Design for Learning, makes clear. It also features CAN friend Sara Sanders Gardner at Bellevue College whose work we admire. The other program is a SUNY collaboration housed in the system's new Center for Autism Inclusivity.

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## University of California Takes Giant Steps Forward on Neurodiversity

We're excited about the work of a group of advocates, led by CAN member (and Summit presenter) Patrick Dwyer, is doing at the University of California--the whole enormous system. Patrick is president of Aggie Neurodiversity Community at UC Davis, and reports that the group has been successful in seeking an endorsement from the UC-wide Senate. For a more comprehensive view, [give this](#) a read. And the recommendations are an excellent place to start on every campus, so take a look at Patrick's list:

- Establishing disability cultural centers
- Recognizing neurodiversity as a DEI issue (considering intersectionality, collecting data on and working to improve representation, etc.)
- Neurodiversity training for everyone
- Neurodivergent people to be leaders in neurodiversity initiatives
- Trying to get a sort of one-stop-shop model for accommodations rather than scattering so many of them over at housing or human resources etc.
- Making disability status easier to demonstrate, especially by accepting IEPs as proof
- Treating sensory issues seriously in terms of housing & dining accommodations, construction & renovations
- Transition supports **into** college
- Transition supports **out of** college

- Improving mental health support (hiring people with neurodiversity expertise, offering ongoing support not crisis model, neurodiversity mental health groups)
- A speedy remediation process if accommodations not provided
- Offering flexibility of communication modalities (e.g., not forcing people to use phone to book an appointment)
- Letting people bring along an advocate/family member/support person without fuss if desired – having a straightforward process to verify the support person’s presence is desired and not an imposition

Patrick also wanted to give “a shout-out to TC Waisman: the executive summary of TC’s thesis (providing a list of steps for making an autism-inclusive campus) was very helpful as we prepared these recommendations.” We are so proud of, and excited for, TC and Patrick and look forward to helping their efforts take hold on every campus.

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## Atypical is Back for Season 4

If you attended the College Autism Summit last October, you might have heard Brett’s terrific interview with *Atypical* creator and producer Robia Rashid. Season 3 followed the trials and successes of Sam, an autistic college student just starting his freshman year. In the final season, Sam encounters challenges many of you might find familiar. Here’s a [good summary](#) with the season 4 trailer embedded.



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## Speaking of Hollywood...

We got a request from Sean Bowman, Associate Producer of “Love on the Spectrum,” and we said we’d pass it on. This could be your big break:



*I'm working on a documentary series about dating and relationships featuring neurodiverse people, for a major streaming service. (It's a US version of the Australian 'Love on the Spectrum' on Netflix). Our aim with the series is to send a positive message, that people on the spectrum can and do find love, while helping educate the audience about Autism Spectrum Disorder by breaking down some of the myths, misconceptions and stereotypical views, and celebrating difference. It's important to us to tell the diverse stories of real people, in their own voices. We're currently in pre-production for the show and open to filming in any part of the U.S. We are looking to hear from anyone 18 and older who might be interested in being a part the series! In addition to speaking with anyone who is interested in participating, we are looking for a specific type of person in these certain regions:*

**SAN FRANCISCO & SURROUNDING AREAS** - *We are looking for single females between the ages of 40-70 who may be on the autism spectrum or have a mild learning disability. (We would also like to speak with anyone interested in participating in the SF area).*

**LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH/ORANGE COUNTY & SURROUNDING AREAS** - *We are looking for single females between the ages of 25-39 who may be on the autism spectrum or have a mild learning disability (We would also like to speak with anyone interested in participating in the the Southern California area).*

**MASSACHUSETTS AREA** - *We are looking for single females between the ages of 25-39 who may be on the autism spectrum or have a mild learning disability (We would also like to speak with anyone interested in participating in the Massachusetts area).*

*As mentioned above we are also open to meeting anyone who might be interested in speaking with us. They can be neurodiverse, neurotypical, with or without a disability, and open to dating someone on the autism spectrum! We would also like to meet couples already in a relationship, where at least one of them is on the spectrum.*

*(Since we are speaking to numerous potential participants, please know that any contact we have with people in this 'casting' phase is very informal, and in no way a commitment for them to be on the series).*

*Thank you so much,*

*Sean Bowman  
Associate Producer  
'LOVE ON THE SPECTRUM'  
[sean@lotsproduction.com](mailto:sean@lotsproduction.com)*

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*This newsletter is published monthly by the [College Autism Network](#), an organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 1000 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.*