

**Subject:** College Autism Network - April 2023 Updates

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**COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK**  
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

## College Autism Network News and Notes

April 2023

### So much stuff in this issue!

- College Autism Summit Call for Programs and Registration Are Open!
- Starting a New Autism Program? Here's Where You Start
- Autism Coach Certification Course Offered This Summer
- CAN Award Nominations Sought
- New Workshop Series on Healthy Substance Use Offers Compensation to Participants
- Webinar with Author of New Book on Neurodiversity and Employment
- Excellent and Authentic Article Provides Glimpse Into Autistic Campus Life
- Psychology Today Article Links Theory of Mind and Self Esteem
- OAR Webinar Lineup Has Great Sessions on Dating, Relationships, Friendship
- John Elder Robinson and Dena Gassner Publish Useful Article on Current Autism Info

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### College Autism Summit Call for Programs and Registration Now Open!

Omg. Omg. Omg. It's happening! **Summit #7** has launched! Our theme this year is "Finding a Balance." In every aspect of our work, seeking the appropriate balance of sometimes- competing factors is essential to excellent work and a healthy life. We are asking you to consider how to find the balance between:



[Submit Program](#)

- Research and practice
- Inclusion and rigor
- Individual and community interests
- How it's been done and what might work better
- What is needed and what is desired

**The Summit** is a place to reflect, consider and pursue appropriate balances to improve our commitment to supporting neurodiversity on campuses and in the workplace.

We are currently accepting **program proposals** for the 2023 College Autism Summit, to be held in Nashville, TN October 18-20. If you are an autism support professional, a researcher interested in higher education and autism, an employer with a commitment to hiring neurodiverse talent, or, most importantly, a self-advocate who wants to influence these conversations, join us at the Summit. The deadline for program proposals is June 5. Notification of acceptance is July 14.

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## Are You Launching a New Autism Initiative or Program? Not Sure Where to Start?



Are you considering a new initiative or program to recruit, support and retain autistic and other neurodivergent students on your campus? Wondering where to start? What it might look like? How you'll incorporate evidence-guided practices into its

structure?



We've got you covered! We're pleased to invite you to sign up for "**Square One: Launching a Campus-Based Autism Initiative,**" a three-part online series in early June that will give you all the tools and building blocks you'll need to start your program off in the right direction. Facilitated by nationally-recognized autism program experts **Jane Thierfeld Brown and Laurie Ackles**, Square One is a cohort-based week-long curriculum. The class will meet virtually (in real time) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, June 5, 7 and 9, from 3-4:30 pm ET. Following this week of instruction, discussion and planning, a mentor will continue to meet with the cohort during the coming year for resource-sharing, guidance, and mutual support.

This is a low-cost way to launch your program and establish a network of colleagues who will support your efforts. The cost for CAN members is \$550, and for non-members is \$750, and includes all instruction, materials and a year of mentoring by a seasoned professional. Additional participants from the same campus can register at a reduced cost. For more information and to register, visit our [\*\*website\*\*](#).

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## **Asperger's/Autism Employment Coach Certification: Summer 2023 Group Begins June 15**

This **comprehensive, 8-week program** features weekly, live sessions over the Internet, plus a 6-week supervised practicum. It is approved for 21 Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) credits.

You will learn how to coach individuals with Asperger's Syndrome and similar autism spectrum profiles to choose the right job or career, find an internship/employment, and stay hired. The program combines instruction, mentoring and weekly assignments with personalized feedback. A variety of spectrum profiles are presented, along with tools and techniques to address communication, executive function and sensory processing difficulties.

The program is presented by Barbara Bissonnette, Principal, Forward Motion Coaching. She shares tips and techniques honed during her work with more than 1,000 clients.

Group size is limited! For details and to request an application, visit the Forward Motion Coaching [website](#) or email [Barbara@ForwardMotion.info](mailto:Barbara@ForwardMotion.info).

## Call for CAN Award Nominations-Deadline June 15

In order to recognize the outstanding work being done by our colleagues, the College Autism Network seeks nominations for our annual **College Autism Network Excellence in Autism Practice and Research Awards**. **Nominations may be submitted** by colleagues, though self-nominations will also be accepted. Recipients will be recognized at the 2023 **College Autism Summit**. *The deadline for nominations is June 15.*

### ★ Outstanding Autism Support Program ★

This award is given to a campus-based support program or initiative that has demonstrated excellence in implementation of evidence-guided practices. These may include some or all of the following:

- Individual practices, clusters or combination of activities
- Programs or initiatives that focus on autistic students directly, neurotypical students/peers or faculty/staff in relation to autistic students, or relevant to/about other key stakeholders
- Program may be longstanding or newly-created
- Program may be implemented by campus-based units, departments, or other programs, or may be initiated by independent entities that focus on college students and the higher education setting

### ★ Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative ★

This award is given to an employer who has established a workplace initiative that recruits and supports autistic and other neurodivergent employees and encourages professional growth and advancement. These may include some or all of the following:

- Support of, and connection to, campus resources and initiatives
- Effective recruiting of neurodivergent applicants
- Outreach and education to all employees about neurodiversity
- Initiatives, policies and processes that demonstrate ongoing support of, and attention to, neurodivergent employees in their professional growth and advancement

### ★ Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education ★

This award is given to an individual (or research team) who has, in the previous

year (2021-22), produced original scholarship advancing research, policy, and/or practice in ways that facilitate college success for autistic students. Such scholarship may include any/all of the following:

- Journal articles
- Project reports
- Books
- Research briefs

### ★ CAN Contributor of the Year ★

This award is given to an individual whose contributions to the College Autism Network, its members, and its mission, have been outstanding during the previous year. Contributions may include:

- Presentations at College Autism Summit or other event
- Consultations with other campuses
- Contributions to CAN's mission to support autistic college students and the professionals who work with them
- Engagement and/or service in CAN programming, including CANVAS, Program Director Calls, Summit planning

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## New Workshop Series on Substance Use Offers Compensation

A 6-session online workshop on building a healthy relationship with alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or other substances is currently recruiting participants. This class is offered by AANE. It is co-taught by one autistic and one non-autistic facilitator. Participants have the option to participate in a CUNY research study that will evaluate the workshop. Compensation up to \$200 for participation. Classes begin in April and May 2023. Adults on the spectrum ages 18+ may be eligible. Contact: **Laura Graham Holmes**, telephone: 646-585-7886 (call or text).

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## Webinar with Author of New Book on Neurodiversity and Employment

On April 27th at 3 pm ET, the **Frist Center for Autism and Innovation** will host a free webinar with speaker Ed Thompson. Ed is CEO and founder of Uptimize and author of the new book "A Middle Force: Unlocking The Potential of Neurodiversity at Work". **Register here** to join the discussion with one of the leading experts on creating inclusive work environments and candidates who will thrive in them. Ed's

forthcoming book is “an essential tool for any leader or colleague wishing to be truly inclusive at work.”

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## **Hearing Autistic Student Voices**

We love to feature articles written by and about students, especially when they include so much of the student voice. [This is an article](#) published in the University of Memphis’ student newspaper about the autistic student experience. It’s a great resource to share with students as part of a peer mentor or student leader training.

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## **Interesting Article from Psychology Today on Theory of Mind**

Theory of Mind has been part of the autism diagnosis discourse for years. Is it still relevant? Accurate? Fair? Or is it a construct developed by non-autistic clinicians to describe what they think is the experience of autistic individuals? [This article](#), written by a parent and spouse of autistic individuals pokes some holes in the concept.

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## **OAR Presents Webinars on Dating, Sex, Friendship and Other Simple Topics**

The Organization for Autism Research has an [impressive lineup of April webinars](#) on autism and relationships. These may be both interesting and useful for students trying to figure out the social landscape of college.

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## **“There’s No Epidemic of Autism. There’s an Epidemic of Need:” Autistic Authors Pen Useful Article About the State of Autism Diagnosis and Support**

This is an important (and highly readable) [thought piece](#) co-authored by John Elder Robinson, author of the critical autism bio “Look Me In the Eye” (with Dena Gassner). “Most autistics report bullying not only from students but also from therapists and educators. It should not surprise anyone that autistics have poor graduation rates”... “Wealth, race, or cognitive/educational privilege should not be the deciding factor predicting who survives and prospers in living an autistic life.”

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Phew!

*This newsletter is published monthly by the **College Autism Network**, an independent 501(c)3 organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Post a job opportunity in autism support services? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 1500 self-advocates and professionals. Send it **to Lee** and we'll share it.*

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