

Subject: College Autism Network News and Notes

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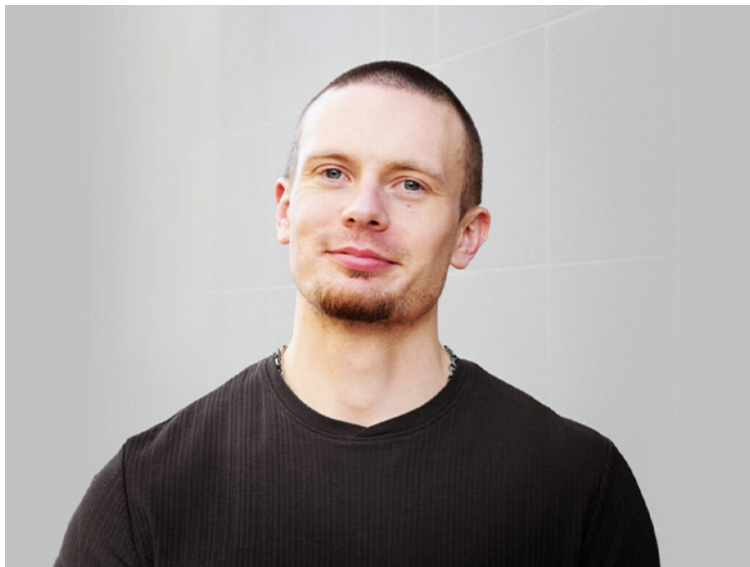
To: brittany@collegeautismnetwork.org



College Autism Network News and Notes

July 2023

COLLEGE AUTISM SUMMIT OPENING SPEAKER ANNOUNCED



“My life is a living contradiction.” Our 2023 College Autism Summit, to be held October 18-20 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, will be started off by a remarkable opening speaker, Russell Lehmann. Russell is an autistic poet, author and advocate known for sharing his life and ideas with a variety of audiences. Having spent most of his life in isolation, Russell has found his voice and independence in recent years. His passion for erasing

Newsletter Highlights

College Autism Summit
Opening Speaker
Announced

Summit Student Experience
Brings Students Into the
Conversation

Next CANVAS Call is July 14

Program Leaders Invited to
Focus Group on Virtual
Reality-based Learning Tool

Date Announced for
Webinar on HEARTS, a
Healthy Relationships
Curriculum

Upcoming Events and
Projects from CAN

Summer Reading (brief and
uplifting)



stigma and stereotypes about autism is shared through his moving, spoken-word poetry. As Russell shares, "I like to say you hold up a mirror to anybody, and that's what autism looks like. I don't expect anyone to be able to tell that I have autism just by looking at me. But hopefully, someday they won't be as shocked to find out." If you'd like to get a sense of why we felt Russell would make an ideal opening speaker for our Summit, we encourage you to watch his [TEDx Talk](#). His remarkable journey will inspire and challenge us to think deeply and differently about autism.

In addition to opening the [Summit](#) with a talk, Russell will meet with participants of our first Summit Student Engagement experience (see next story). For all of this and more, meet us at the Summit!

NEW THIS YEAR: GROWING THE NETWORK VIA THE SUMMIT STUDENT EXPERIENCE



This year, the [College Autism Summit](#) will feature the [Summit Student Experience](#), an opportunity for autistic and neurodivergent students to attend the Summit, meet peer advocates from other campuses, learn about the College Autism Network, and share their perspectives on "Finding A Balance" in college autism research and practice. The Summit Student Experience includes:

- A student preconference session focused on advocacy, leveraging lived experience/expertise, and networking,
- An exclusive student roundtable with keynote speaker, Russell Lehmann, and
- Optional presentation of a student plenary session for all conference attendees.

Thanks to generous sponsorship from [Mansfield Hall](#), the College Autism Network is awarding student travel scholarships of up to \$500 plus a waiver of the \$65 student registration fee. Interested students should apply [here](#) by July 15 or email helen.rottier@wisc.edu with questions. Decisions will be made in early August. Please share with any interested students in your network.

**NEXT CANVAS CALL SCHEDULED FOR
FRIDAY, JULY 14, 12 PM ET**



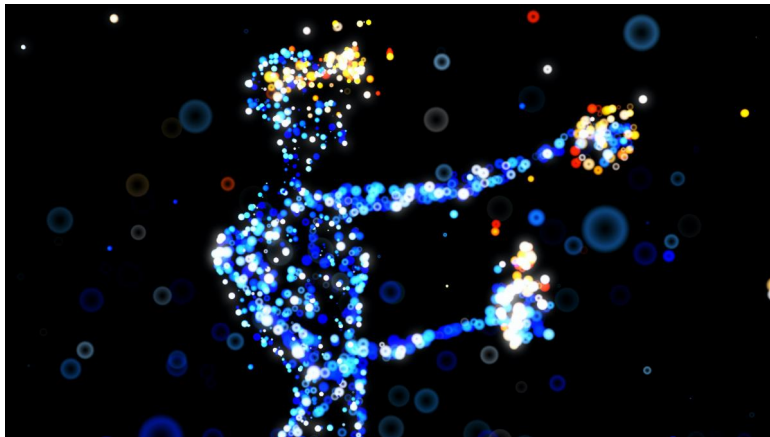
Join the CANVAS Community for another fascinating research presentation!

“Exploring Innovation Self-Efficacy in Neurodiverse Engineering Students” presented by Dr. Azadeh Bolhari (Associate Teaching Professor and Associate Director for Undergraduate Education of Environmental Engineering Program at the University of Colorado Boulder)

Description: It is critical to incorporate inclusive practices in the engineering curriculum which prepares neurodiverse students to achieve their full potential in the engineering workforce. This work-in-progress research seeks to capitalize on the unique strengths of marginalized neurodiverse engineering students. In this study, the innovation self-efficacy of engineering students who self-identify as neurodiverse is explored before and after a curricular intervention, which has been shown to have the potential to enhance innovation self-efficacy, in an environmental engineering target course.

Presentation Link: <https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/99183260081>
Meeting Agenda: Sign up [here](#)

**VIRTUAL REALITY TOOL: FOCUS GROUP FOR
PROGRAM LEADERS TO LEARN AND ADVISE
THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2-3 PM ET**



SocialWise VR (SWVR) is an on-demand social skill virtual reality application that is noteworthy for being the first VR social skill curriculum to be recorded with live actors. Its creators will join our monthly program leaders' call to share their work and seek feedback on how this intriguing new tool can be used by autistic and other neurodivergent students. Watch the Program Directors' listserv for the meeting link. (If you lead a program or initiative and wish to be added to our Program Directors' listserv, a valuable source of networking and resources, please email [Lee](#)).

**HEARTS: WEBINAR WILL INTRODUCE WORKSHOP ON
HEALTHY DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS**



Mark your calendar for Wednesday, September 6 at 4 pm ET! If you are seeking a tool to recommend to your students who are exploring dating and relationship strategies, HEARTS might be it. Join us for a one-hour webinar with Dr. Emily Rothman, co-developer of HEARTS, who will describe the content of the HEARTS class (a 12-session workshop for autistic adults who would like to learn about, and talk about, healthy friendship and dating relationships), how facilitators are trained, and how students can enroll in the October session. This webinar is free for members of the College Autism Network.

Register [here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROJECTS WE'RE WORKING ON AT CAN



Summer is definitely a more relaxed time at CAN HQ. But it doesn't mean we're not working hard to support the Network with activities, events and opportunities during these warm months and when the school year starts up. Here's some of what we're working on:

Autism-Friendly Campus: You may have heard of this, or even been part of our early discussions. We are working to create a template and plan for institutions that seek to achieve an "autism friendly" designation from CAN. Your college or university can earn this designation with training, resources and a neurodiversity-aware approach to everything you do. We have a planning committee in place, led by Dr. Brittany Jackson, and you'll be hearing more about this in future newsletters and emails from us.

CAN's Consultants' Collective: You may or may not know: we have a Collective of talented speakers and presenters who are available to come to your campus in person or virtually and help provide training and/or consultation with your autism/neurodiversity efforts. While we've done this

informally for the past year, we're in the process of developing a more structured approach, based on feedback from early users of the Collective. Our two consultants, Dr. Yasamin Bolourian and Dr. Sasha Zeedyk, are working this summer to assess and develop a structure that will serve both consultants and clients well. We'll announce more of these details this fall, but for the moment, you can explore our Collective [here](#).

WORTH A READ



This is a [nice reflection](#) on coming to terms with all of the ways we are different, including neurodivergence, from *Psychology Today*.

The most interesting and effective ideas for supporting autistic learners often come from those who have almost... but not quite...been thwarted by the obstacles of our educational systems. [This one](#) comes from Manchester, England.

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 2000 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.

Was someone nice enough to forward this newsletter to you? We're happy to add you to our mailing list to receive it directly. [Send us a note](#).

If you appreciate our work, please consider [joining CAN](#) to receive additional information and discounts on some of our resources and to support our work. Individual and organizational memberships are available.

The [College Autism Network](#) is supported in part by the [Frist Center for Autism and Innovation](#) at Vanderbilt University.

College Autism Network | 19 Ocean View Ave, Mystic, CT 06355

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