

# CENTER FOR Autism Spectrum Disorders

[www.childrensnational.org/CASD](http://www.childrensnational.org/CASD)



Children's National.

## CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

### Meet The CASD Team



Dear CASD Families and Friends,

We are so grateful to work with a tremendous team of faculty and staff who make CASD run efficiently. We wanted to take time to introduce you to our team!

We have not been able to meet as a group due to COVID-19, so we are sharing a group picture from the

past showing some current CASD members as well as members who have moved on to different positions – but still just an email (or zoom) away. Some faculty and staff eluded the photographer, but you will see many familiar names along with their pictures. During the pandemic, we are thankful to be able to still virtually gather as a group!

Click here for the Children's National Hospital CASD website to meet the team with more information on each member and links to additional resources <https://childrensnational.org/departments/center-for-neuroscience-and-behavioral-medicine/programs-and-services/center-for-autism-spectrum-disorders/meet-the-team>. Below, we are sharing many new resources including a Back To School Toolkit for DC students that has tips relevant for many other schools and *Unstuck and On Target* online resources. (This CHAT was written by Dr. Angela Bollich, with the help of Jessica Smith, a CASD RA).



Starting in upper left corner from left to right: Angela Bollich, Chelsea Armour, Annie Inge, Amy Youmatz, Kylie Campbell, Johanna Niesen, Rachael Tillman, Dani Novick, Deborah Potvin, Megan Graves, Allison Ratto, Rachael Arowolo, Rachael Yates, Meagan Wills, Srishti Rau, Lauren Kenworthy, Serene Habayeb, Chelsea Farrall, Abigail Brandt, Colleen Morgan, John Strang

## Meet our Faculty



**Dr. Lauren Kenworthy,**  
Director of CASD,  
Associate Division Chief



**Dr. Anne Inge, Clinical  
Director**



**Dr. Kelly Register-Brown,**  
Medical Director



**Dr. Kathleen Atmore,**  
Developmental



**Dr. Angela Bollich,**  
Neuropsychologist



**Dr. Serene Habayeb,**  
Clinical Psychologist

**Psychologist**



**Dr. Cara Pugliese, Clinical Psychologist**



**Dr. Deborah Potvin, Neuropsychologist**



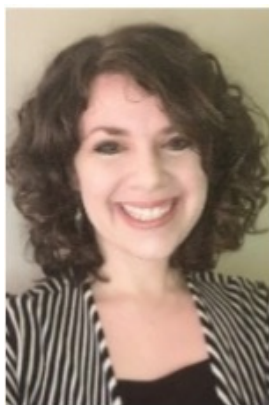
**Dr. Allison Ratto, Clinical Psychologist**



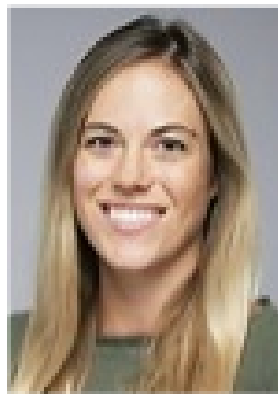
**Dr. Srishti Rau, Neuropsychologist**



**Dr. John Strang, Neuropsychologist**



**Dr. Eliana Sudikoff, Neuropsychologist**



**Dr. Meagan Wills, Clinical Psychologist**



**Dr. Rachael Yates, Neuropsychologist**

**Meet our Trainees**





**Rachael Arowolo,  
Postdoctoral Fellow**



**Yangfeifei Gao,  
Postdoctoral Fellow**



**Children's National.**



**Rachael Tillman,  
Postdoctoral Fellow**



**Johanna Nielsen,  
Postdoctoral Fellow**

**Nicole Zhong,  
Postdoctoral Fellow**

## Meet our Speech-Language Pathologists

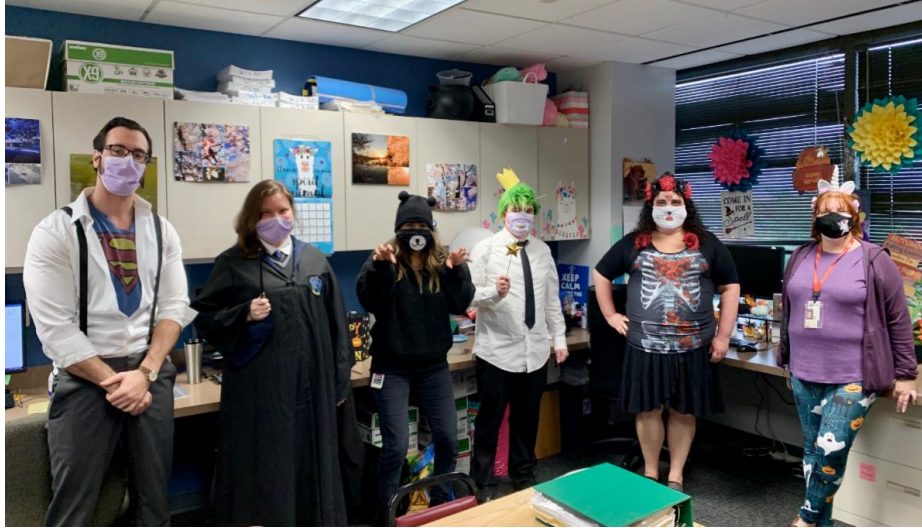


**Abigail Brandt**

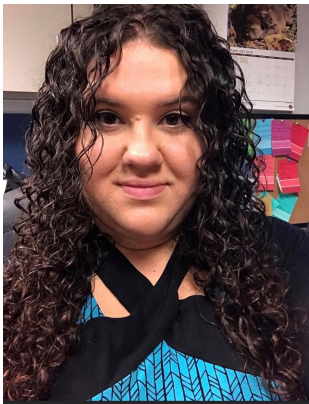


**Colleen Morgan**

## Meet our Staff



Our psychometrist team dressed up for Halloween 2020



**Justine Schellhammer,  
Psychometrist**



**Amy Youmatz, Lead  
Psychometrist**



**Alyssa Verbalis, Clinical  
Research Program Lead**



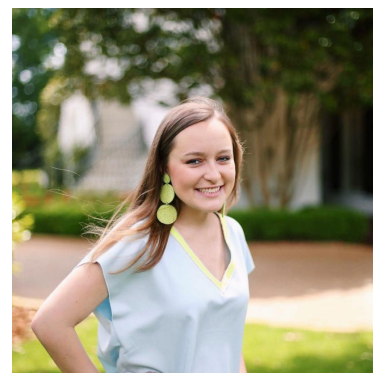
**Anna Chelsea Armour, Research  
Coordinator**



**Rebecca Handsman, Research  
Assistant**



**Lucy McClellan, Research Assistant**

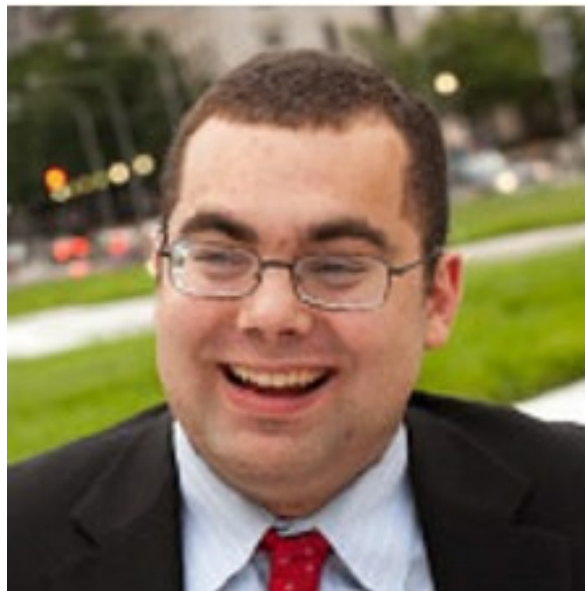


**Jessica Smith, Research Assistant**



## Profiles Celebrating Neurodiversity

I was so excited when I first had the opportunity to hear Ari Ne'eman speak when he was a college student presenting to a parent/professional group in Southern Maryland ~15 years ago. His powerful presentation was a reflection of a well-earned growing reputation for being a strong advocate for his community. Mr. Ne'eman is the co-founder of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) and served as its President from 2006 to 2016; He currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of MySupport.com, an online platform designed to empower seniors and people with disabilities to self-direct their own services. He has served on both federal and nonfederal committees to support rights for individuals with autism (2010-2015 National Council on Disability from 2010-2015 during which time he chaired the Council's Committee on Entitlements Policy; 2010 to 2012, public member to the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, adviser to the DSM-5 Neurodevelopmental Disorders Workgroup convened by the American Psychiatric Association). If you are unfamiliar to ASAN, I strongly encourage you to review their [website](#).



Ari Ne'eman previously served as Vice Chair of the New Jersey Adults with Autism Task Force, where he represented autistic adults in reviewing the state's autism services. He also previously served on the New Jersey Special Education Review Commission, where he authored a minority report on the topic of aversives, restraint and seclusion. He is also a board member of the American Association of People with Disabilities and the World Institute on Disability. In addition, he was named by the New York Jewish Week as one of their "36 by 36" in 2010. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, where he studied political science in the Sondheim Public Affairs Scholars Program. - Written by Dr. Angie Bollich

## VCU-ACE Lunch & Learn

**Where:** Virtual

**When:** September 16, 12-1pm

This presentation is for professionals and parents to hear from our CASD Director, Dr. Lauren Kenworthy talk about improving executive functioning for children with autism, ADHD, or related symptoms.

**VCU-ACE "LUNCH and LEARN"**  
Thursday, September 16, 2021 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**Facilitated by:**  
Lauren Kenworthy, Ph.D. (she/her)  
Pediatric Neuropsychologist  
Director, Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Associate Chief, Division of Pediatric Neuropsychology  
Children's National Hospital (Washington DC)  
Professor, Pediatrics, Neurology, Psychiatry  
George Washington University Medical School

**Unstuck and On Target: Improving Executive Function, On-Task and Flexible Behavior in Elementary School Age Children**

This presentation is for professionals and parents who work with children with autism, ADHD, traumatic brain injury and other disorders linked to executive dysfunction. Executive Function problems are common in children and cause academic, social and adaptive problems. I will introduce you to tools you can use today that help you identify when a child is having trouble with EF, so that you can better distinguish a "can't" from a "won't" and therefore intervene more effectively. I will describe the Unstuck and On Target intervention, which is a cognitive-behavioral school- and home-based intervention program targeting flexibility, goal-setting and planning. I will provide demonstrations and video models of key skills.

**Zoom Registration Information:**  
<https://vcuautismcenter.org/te/lunchandlearn.cfm>

## Ivymount IvyMoves Club

**Where:** Ivymount School

**When:** Thursdays 4-4:45 pm

Featuring a mix of stretches, beginner's yoga, and fitness exercises along with music to get you moving and shaking at home. Ivymount's own Adapted Physical Education teacher, Mr. M, will be leading the fun! During each class, participants will engage in upper body, lower body, cardio or strength training movements. Fitness challenges and rewards will be celebrated throughout the session. [Register here.](#)

## Free Parent Support Group

**Where:** Virtual

**When:** every Monday at 1 PM EST

Dr. Dan Shapiro, friend of CASD, will be offering a free parent support group, every Monday at 1 PM EST. To register, [click here.](#)

## TGIF Yoga Series

**Where:** Virtual

**When:** Once a Month every Friday at 4:30p

Pathfinders for Autism and [Child's Heart Yoga](#) are teaming up for a series of FREE yoga classes to try and provide a much needed mental health break for everyone during this hectic time.

Starting on Friday, March 12th at 4:30 p.m. and continuing once a month until September, please join us for a free, virtual, all ages, family friendly yoga class taught by Bridget Strama of [Child's Heart Yoga](#).

The event(s) are free, but a one-time registration is required. Please register below. A Zoom link will be sent out before each class to join in. You only need to register once to sign up for the series. Feel free to attend one or all of the classes! For more details, [please see here.](#)

## Montgomery County: xMindsWire Events

Montgomery County: xMindsWire is hosting an **IEP clinic** on Saturday September 18 that will address compensatory services MCPS may provide to address what their children missed due to the pandemic- early registration is required (<https://www.xminds.org/event-4469677>). XMindsWire also offers a **monthly discussion group for MoCo parents/guardians of an autistic child in middle or high school on approaching the transition to adulthood** in English (<https://www.xminds.org/event-4474748>) and Spanish (<https://www.xminds.org/event-4476738>).

## **Pathfinders for Autism**

(<https://pathfindersforautism.org/calendar/>) provides a list of programs for all ages including video group for spouses/partners of adults with Asperger's; Social clubs divided by ages ranging from 6 years to adult on July 10; Baby Navigator - what every parent needs to know on July 15 and more!

## **Act Early DC Parents Cafe**

**Where:** Virtual

**When:** October 2, 2021, 10am-12pm

Parent Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where parents and caregivers talk about the challenges and victories of raising a family. The parent cafe on October 2 will be themed "Resiliency in a Time of Change." Those with children ages 0-8 diagnosed with Autism or other related disabilities are encouraged to attend. Please see the flyer for more details.

**The Parents' Place of MD proudly presents the 2021**

## **Wrightslaw Special Education Law & Advocacy Conference**

**Virtual**

### **WHEN**

**October 12-13,  
2021**

9:00 am – 12: 00 pm

This training will be virtual and held on Zoom.

### **Cost:**

**\$160 for Families\***

**\$210 for Professionals\***

\*The increased cost includes the set of books mailed to you

[Purchase your family ticket here.](#)

[Purchase your professional ticket here.](#)

Join us for a 2 day virtual

conference on special education and advocacy. Topics that will be covered are:

- Special education law, rights, and responsibilities;
- Tests and measurements to measure progress and regression;
- Smart IEPs (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Limited) and;
- Introduction to tactics and strategies for effective advocacy.



**ppmd.org**

We recommend checking out [an interview with Dr. Sarah Combs of Children's National Hospital](#) regarding the safety of children returning to school. Additionally, DC Autism Parents has created a Back to School Toolkit. [Click the link here to see the toolkit.](#)



## DC AUTISM PARENTS' BACK TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT



The videos made me  
feel less alone.  
--Parent

The strategies  
were very well  
explained.  
--Parent

**New Free Videos**  
 **UNSTUCK**  
AND ON TARGET

The *Unstuck* author team has created short videos to help parents of children with executive functioning difficulties. Please click the playlists below to view the videos in both English and Spanish!

If you like the videos and your child attends school in Virginia, ask your school about being involved in our *Unstuck* implementation project. You can learn more about the project here:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/nE4K95z/UOTelementaryschool>

**Playlists**  
**of**  
**parent**  
**videos**

Allysa Ware, Ph.D. Candidate at Catholic University of America is recruiting for her dissertation study, exploring African American parents' views and opinions on parenting a child with autism. The purpose of this survey is to find out your views on different areas of parenting a child with autism, or ASD, and parenting experiences. The survey takes around 15-20 minutes to complete. To qualify to participate in the survey you must be 18 years of age or older, identify as Black or African American, and be the parent or parenting caregiver of an African American child with autism or ASD (age 17 or younger). If you meet these qualifications, and would like to participate, please be assured that your individual responses are completely anonymous and therefore completely confidential. Your participation is also completely voluntary, and there are no penalties for not participating.

As an incentive for completing the survey, you will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card for a completed survey. Please note that if you have further questions about the survey, or its results, you are welcome to contact Ms. Ware directly at her email: 66ware@cua.edu, or her supervising major

professor, Dr. Michaela L. Z-Farber, PhD, LCSW-C at farber@cua.edu (office phone 202-319-5465). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Catholic University has approved the conduct of this survey. You can also call The Catholic University of America's Office of Sponsored Programs at (202) 319-5218.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please complete the survey by clicking the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/childrensnationalautism>

## Community Resources & Events

The Drexel Autism Institute is seeking youth **ages 13-29 on the autism spectrum** who are transitioning to adulthood. They are also looking for these youths' **caregivers and providers** to participate in a study about **Team Trestle, an application for transition planning and coordination**. This virtual tool is designed to help autistic individuals meet their life goals by engaging autistic youth/young adults, their parents/legal guardians, and providers in the collaborative process of **implementing and achieving goals during the transition to adulthood**. For more information, check out the flyer. If you're interested, fill out the Interest Form at <https://tinyurl.com/TrestleInterest> [[tinyurl.com](https://tinyurl.com)] or email our team at [sodi@drexel.edu](mailto:sodi@drexel.edu).

The Autism Institute at Drexel University is seeking parents/caregivers OR preschool/daycare providers of autistic children aged 24-60 months who have trouble speaking and use a communication tool (i.e., PECS, AAC device). We want **to better understand the use of communication tools** and how collaboration occurs about communication tool use in home/school settings **for minimally verbal preschool students with autism**. During a 90-minute focus group or interview we want to learn how teams work together to support children who use communication tools. If you are interested, please fill out the Interest Form

### Advocacy Resources

[Autistic Self Advocacy Network-Navigating College: A Handbook on Self Advocacy](#)

### Resources on Racism/Supporting Black People

[Spectrum Support's Social Stories on Racism](#)  
[ASAN's What is Police Violence?: A Plain Language Booklet](#)  
[@TheMorganCruise Worksheets for Black Children](#)

### COVID-19 Safety Resources

[Behavioral Directions LLC's Safety Teaching Protocol](#)

### COVID-19 National and Local Government Resources

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[World Health Organization](#)  
[DC Department of Health](#)  
[Maryland Department of Health](#)  
[Virginia Department of Health](#)  
[U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Part C Dispute Resolution Procedures](#)  
[U.S Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Part B Dispute Resolution Procedures](#)

Visit Children's National Hospital's COVID-19 Resources



Visit Ivymount 2021 Special Needs Resource Guide: Highlighting 70+ Local Organizations Find Information about Behavioral Services, ABA Therapy, Assessment & Treatment; Schools Educational Programs, Advocacy; Social, Recreational, Fitness; Transitioning Youth &

at <https://tinyurl.com/EPICfocus> [tinyurl.com] or email [sodi@drexel.edu](mailto:sodi@drexel.edu) and we will contact you.

Young Adults; Accessibility,  
Inclusion, Safety,  
Health; Therapeutic Services;  
Camps; Financial Planning,  
Insurance