

CENTER FOR Autism Spectrum Disorders

www.childrensnational.org/CASD



Children's National

CASD CHAT E-Newsletter

Family Resources for Disclosing an ASD Diagnosis

Dear CASD families and friends,

May's CASD Chat (by Srishti Rau, PhD, with the support of research assistant Jessica Smith, BS) focuses on providing families resources and strategies for disclosing an autism diagnosis to youth.

Families may struggle to determine whether to disclose an autism diagnosis to a child or adolescent and how and when to do so. Clinical psychologist Marcia Eckard, PhD notes that children as young as 8 years old can understand a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) Level 1. If the child is working with a therapist, their family can seek guidance and consultation from the professional about how and when to initiate discussions about the diagnosis. It is important to remember that **disclosure need not be a one time event; rather consider it a process that unfolds gradually** as and when the child offers signs they are ready to learn more about the diagnosis and how it relates to them.

The best way to initiate the discussion of the diagnosis is to **wait for the topic to come up naturally when youth provide openings** (e.g., if they ask questions about feeling different or having social difficulties). Waiting for this type of opening is especially important when disclosing the diagnosis to teenagers, as they may demonstrate more resistance to the idea of being "different" relative to peers.

The amount of information families provide should be guided by the child's age. For 8-12-year-olds, provide fewer details and present them at a developmentally appropriate level. For youth of all ages, **use concrete examples from the child's own experiences**, avoiding metaphors or abstract ideas.

It is important to **emphasize and celebrate how autism related differences can serve as strengths** (e.g., the ability to hyper-focus on areas of interest, honesty). Moreover, help youth understand they are not alone in their experiences. Families can read books about individuals with ASD together, which may also serve as an opening to begin the discussion about the diagnosis.

Additional websites, books, and articles that may be helpful for families to guide disclosing the diagnosis include:

- *Autism: What Does It Mean to Me?: A Workbook Explaining Self Awareness and Life Lessons to the Child or Youth with High Functioning Autism or Aspergers* by Catherine Faherty (2000)
- *Finding Out About Asperger Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism and PDD* by

Gunilla Gerland (2000)

- Getting Started: Introducing Your Child to His or Her Diagnosis of Autism by Marci Wheeler
- "You Have Autism" by Shelly McLaughlin
- Welcome to the Autistic Community! A handbook, written in plain language, welcomes newly-diagnosed autistic people and autistic people who have just learned of their diagnosis to the Autistic community. It addresses the most common questions that people may have about their diagnosis, emphasizes that they are not alone, and celebrates their new identity. This booklet is available in two versions for two different age groups: Adolescent and Adult

Profiles Celebrating Neurodiversity

Lei Wiley-Mydske is an Autistic activist, wife and homeschooling mom. After being misdiagnosed for many years, Lei was diagnosed as Autistic when she was in her thirties. Lei is also the director and founder of the Ed Wiley Autism Acceptance Lending Library, which serves the communities of Stanwood & Camano Island, WA by lending books and materials that promote the ideas of autism acceptance, social justice, disability rights and neurodiversity. *The Ed Wiley Autism Acceptance Lending Library is also a wonderful source of information on explaining autism to your child; check out the Neurodivergent Narwhal series here:*

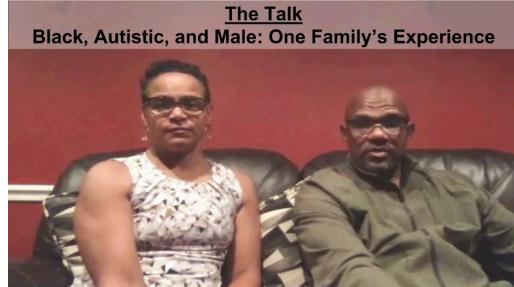
<https://neurodiversitylibrary.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/ask-a-neurodivergent-narwhal.pdf>

She is an administrator on the popular Facebook page "Parenting Autistic Children With Love & Acceptance" In her spare time, Lei enjoys "reading, painting, cooking, hiking, science fiction, comic books, and just spending time with her autistic husband and amazing Autistic kid."

The Talk— Black, Autistic, and Male: One Family's Experience

We would like to share an interview with a family of a college-bound autistic young adult and an accompanying reflection by Tawara Goode, Director of the National Center for Cultural Competence and Director of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Click here for the
video



2021 Calendar of Events

Ivymount Resource Fair

Where: Ivymount Campus, 11614 Seven Locks Rd, Rockville, MD

When: Sunday, May 15, 12-3p

Join Ivymount for the 9th Annual Ivymount Outreach Resource Fair. [Register here.](#)

Integrate advisors is inviting autistic college students and graduates to apply for our [National Employer Connect](#) program.

This interactive networking program is designed for autistic and neurodivergent job seekers to facilitate their education, communication, and awareness. We provide candidates with the opportunity to meet with select employers who are eager to share their best practices when it comes to all aspects of a job search. Do you know anyone that would be interested? All areas of study are welcome to apply.

To be considered, candidates should submit their resume to the [National Employer Connect](#) posting on Integrate's website as the first step. Candidates will then be directed to complete an application, HireVue on-demand interview and lastly a Zoom interview. As a reminder, candidates who apply by the priority deadline will be given first consideration. Applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis so applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

****Priority deadline is May 6****

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.](#)

We want to highlight *Ivymount School Resource Guide* which provides information on a wide range of resources in the community including **Summer Camps** (since it is that time of year to schedule) www.ivymount.org/resourceguide2022

Dr. Shapiro is offering new courses for parents of different age groups. To learn more about these courses, please visit his website:
<http://www.parentchildjourney.com/>

Dr. Shapiro also offers **parent-child excursions**: stand-alone courses on

common topics in developmental and behavioral pediatrics: ADHD, anxiety, autism, social success, sibling relationships, eating, sleeping, violence, adolescence, gender, sexuality, and more.

These in-depth seminars are for parents of children with challenging temperaments or developmental differences. Each Excursion starts with a review of background concepts then dives deep into specific strategies. As with all Parent Child Journey courses, the emphasis here is on individualizing the approach for each child. Choose the topics that interest you. Real-life challenges. Real-life solutions.

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; Transitioning services and Job skills; Baby and Family Navigator programs, and new this month, Autism from the Autistic Perspective and free Pediatric Occupational Therapy Screening and more!

NEW VIDEOS ADDED!



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! **We have added new videos to address feedback from parents. Please click on our playlist to view our new 3-part video series on "troubleshooting."**

[Playlist of all videos](#)

[Recursos para padres](#)

Investigators at Children's National Center for Genetic Medicine Research, in collaboration with Invitae Corporation, are researching the genetic causes of human disease. If you or a family member have a known or uncertain genetic diagnosis or suspected genetic diagnosis, you may be eligible to participate in our research program. Please see the flyer to the left to learn more.



Pediatric Mendelian Genomics Research Center

Study of Undiagnosed and
Diagnosed Genetic Diseases.

Investigators at Children's National Center for Genetic Medicine Research, in collaboration with Invitae Corporation, are researching the genetic causes of human disease. If you or a family member have a known or uncertain genetic diagnosis or suspected genetic diagnosis, you may be eligible to participate in our research program.

If you are interested in learning more about our research program or are interested in participating, please submit a request for information here: <https://is.gd/PMGRCstudy> or email PMGRC@childrensnational.org.



20+ free resources available to view anytime, anywhere!

Enjoy these information-packed free webinars on your own or make them a powerful group learning event with your colleagues, friends, and family members. Topics include:

- Working/learning in groups
- Face-to-face communication
- Social anxiety
- Executive functions
- Children's stress
- Self-regulation
- Individual webinars on 10 core Social Thinking Vocabulary

Hosted by Social Thinking.

Community Resources & Events

Advocacy Resources

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

Resources on Anti-Racism

[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