



Neurodiversity in the Workplace

A Collaborative National Conference

March 22–24, 2023 | Marriott Marquis Washington, DC Hotel

Event Schedule

Wednesday, March 22

4 – 8 p.m.

Registration/Help Desk Open
Independence Foyer

6 – 8 p.m.

Evening Event
Let's Roam! DC Scavenger Hunt (Offsite)

Get ready to explore Washington D.C., with a scavenger hunt organized by Let's Roam! Beginning at the hotel, you'll complete challenges, explore the city and earn points along the way. (Pre-registration required)

Thursday, March 23

7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Registration/Help Desk Open
Independence Foyer

7:30 – 9 a.m.

Breakfast

9 – 9:10 a.m.

Welcome Remarks from Conference Co-Chair
Stacey Herman, Kennedy Krieger Institute

9:10 – 9:45 a.m.

Opening Keynote
Keynote Speaker: Haben Girma, Human Rights Lawyer and Author

The first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, Haben believes disability is an opportunity for innovation, and she teaches organizations the importance of choosing inclusion. Named a White House Champion of Change by President Obama, Haben has also received the Helen Keller Achievement Award as well as a spot on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, and she has delivered a TIME100 Talk.

Break-Out Session 1

10 – 11 a.m.

Building Healthy Relationships at Work
Kathy McLaughlin, Elevatus Training

People with developmental disabilities are often left out of the conversation about sexuality and relationships, almost as if they are incapable of having thoughts, feelings, and needs. In reality, they, too, are sexual beings that need information and skills for making healthy decisions about sexuality. We will explore what are topics and main points to teach and examine techniques for helping employers manage challenging workplace scenarios.

10 – 11 a.m.

Campus to Corporate: Overview of Collaboration to Support Neurodivergent Emerging Talent
Karen Krainz Edison and Erin Harris, The Ohio State University Nisonger Center;
Jeff Cowgill, JP Morgan Chase

Research shows autistic individuals have the lowest employment rates across all disabilities; autistic college graduates fare no better than peers without degrees. Join JP Morgan Chase's Neuro-Diversity/Office of Disability Inclusion and The Ohio State University's Autism College Experience (Ace!) to hear about a flourishing partnership of Campus and Corporate. Learn how JPMC is building internal structures to support a pipeline for interns and apprentices from OSU and Columbus State Community College.





Thursday, March 23 (continued)

- 10 – 11 a.m. **Using Inclusion Practices to Retain Employees and Expand Your Talent Pool**
Felicia Nurmsen, National Organization on Disability
Disability Inclusive Workforce – where to start! Learn from Felicia Nurmsen, Managing Director, Professional Services, National Organization on Disability on how Toyota reviewed policy and process, made investments in accessibility and is hiring people with disabilities with intention – starting with data from NOD’s Employment Tracker.
- 10 – 11 a.m. **Neurodiverse Recruitment & Retention for Collaborative Transformation**
Craig Powell and Nicole Hardesty, Itineris
Creating awareness and partnerships among employers about the opportunity to evolve hiring practices to engage neuro-diverse candidates and a robust effort to support neuro-diverse individuals retain meaningful employment is Itineris’ vision for transformation.
- 10 – 11 a.m. **Why Talented Neurodiverse Students Are Overlooked in the Hiring Process**
Susan S. Conrad, Marymount University
Neurodiverse individuals often have behavioral idiosyncrasies such as body fidgeting, lack of eye contact, stuttering, and other uncontrollable behaviors which can negatively impact their success in convincing employers about their actual abilities. The presentation will discuss workforce readiness strategies targeted to prepare neurodiverse students for the interview process and provide employers insights as to why neurodiverse students enhance their workplace as employees.
- 10 – 11 a.m. **Neurodiversity in the Workplace - In Action**
Katie McMurray, Sensory Tool House, LLC; Lauren Howard, Sensory Tool House, LLC
Sensory Tool House, LLC is a small business making a big impact. By providing reasonable accommodations and leaning into the strengths of a 90% neurodivergent staff, Sensory Tool House is affecting positive, inclusive change for their community as a whole. Their inclusive model is a strong representation of success for both employee and business.
- 10 – 11 a.m. **SPIRIT Club Demo**
Chris McCrae, Trainer
We put a focus on functional fitness and movements that are used in our daily lives with our own SPIRIT Club spin to make the workouts fun and engaging for members and supporters. Classes start with introductions, allowing each member to feel comfortable and integrated into the group. We then lead warm ups, an exercise circuit focused on our class theme, partner exercises, and a fun team relay race to test what we learned throughout the class. Lastly, we stretch, cool down and relax. Participants just need their energy, water and some SPIRIT!
- 11 – 11:15 a.m. **Networking Break**
- 11:15 – 12:15 p.m. **Break-Out Session 2**
EveryOne Works - Provider Collaborative to Increase Employment Opportunities
Steve Blanks and Pamela Toole, SEEC
We all know two heads are better than one. Just imagine if vocational providers came together as one to tackle employment barriers for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Four Montgomery County, MD providers have come together to launch an employment collaborative to improve employment outcomes and ensure our services are well matched to the employer needs within our community.





Thursday, March 23 (continued)

- 11:15 – 12:15 p.m. **Neurodiversity Employment Research: Review of the Research Landscape Past, Present, and Future**
Hala Annabi, University of Washington; Andrew Begel, Carnegie Mellon University; Kathryn Dow-Berger, University of Maryland
- The employment of neurodivergent people has attracted the attention of industry, scholars, and practitioners over the last decade. The added attention and growth of employment programs present questions about how to best support neurodivergent people: How are educational institutions preparing them, service providers supporting them, and employers growing their careers once they have been hired? This presentation draws from a review of the literature and themes of the Annual Autism at Work Research workshops.
- 11:15 – 12:15 p.m. **Neurodiversity in the Intelligence Community**
Katherine Wisener, Corina Adams, Nazaret Berhane and Anita Hawkins, Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)
- Neurodiversity is a concept that is progressing in the workplace and poised to become the next strategic focus area for diversity awareness. Neurodivergent individuals represent a different way of thinking and neurodiversity programs are increasingly being considered as a means to invite innovation from underutilized experts. In this panel, officers from the intelligence community will discuss the value of a neurodiverse intelligence workforce.
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Project SEARCH: 6 Degrees of Success**
Holly Lynn Opatick and Susie Rutkowski, Project SEARCH/Cincinnati Children's Hospital
- Project SEARCH is an international transition program. Young adults with disabilities are immersed in a quality host business participating in three internships, learning competitive job skills with the outcome of competitive, integrated employment. Through a discussion of the six model fidelity components of Project SEARCH, participants will learn why the model consistently gains over 70% employment for its interns.
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **People with Behavior Plans Can Work Community-Based Jobs Too: Destigmatizing People Who have Challenging Behaviors**
Jillian Fisher-Bouchelle and Cimone Coulbourn, SEEC
- A case study and review of best practices for supporting people with histories of challenging behaviors. We will review the evolution of disability support in the workplace and explore the stigma that people who experience challenging behaviors continue to face as they seek employment. This interactive presentation will include group activities to practice identifying specific job matches through sample cases and techniques that ensure successful job placement.
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Using Higher Education Pre-Employment Transition Programming to Prepare Autistic Job Seekers for Success in the Workforce**
Kendra Evans and Laurie Ackles, Rochester Institute of Technology
- Job readiness programming that teaches the unspoken soft skills employers value (e.g. teamwork, flexibility, communication, customer focus) as well as key elements of the job search process (e.g. resume building, interviewing, follow-up) is essential in preparing autistic job seekers for success in the workplace.
- 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. **Lunch**





Thursday, March 23 (continued)

1:15 – 2 p.m.

Plenary – Lived Experiences: Young Adults’ Meaningful Community Engagement

Moderator: Dr. Bradley L. Schlaggar, President and CEO, Kennedy Krieger Institute

Tyler Shallue, Oscar Martinez and Sydney Thompson, CORE Foundations Community Members; Nygil Sims and Ethan Copeland, Kennedy Krieger Institute Employees

Neurodiversity at Work at Kennedy Krieger Institute supports young adults engaged in meaningful day experiences. These experiences include volunteer work activities, competitive supportive employment, and activities that involve engagement in the local community. Five panelists with varied experiences will answer vital questions and speak about the successes and challenges of their post-school careers. Learning from our panelists’ experiences is essential as we continue to work together to enhance support and meaningful community experiences for individuals who identify as neurodiverse.

2 – 2:15 p.m.

Networking Break

Break-Out Session 3

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Blending Customized Employment and Behavior Analysis to Improve Outcomes for Adults on the Spectrum

Lauren Eaton, Itineris

Most of our clients do not struggle with learning the skills needed to perform their job; however, they often struggle with essential job-related social skills and behavioral expectations. This presentation will provide an overview of Itineris’ customized employment model and describe an empirically-validated Vocational Social Skills Assessment (VSSA). Throughout the presentation we will provide references, resources, and suggestions for how you might incorporate this assessment into your support model.

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Building Healthy Relationships at Work (Second Presentation)

Kathy McLaughlin, Elevatus Training

People with developmental disabilities are often left out of the conversation about sexuality and relationships, almost as if they are incapable of having thoughts, feelings, and needs. In reality, they, too, are sexual beings that need information and skills for making healthy decisions about sexuality. We will explore what are topics and main points to teach and examine techniques for helping employers manage challenging workplace scenarios.

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Capital Region ND at Work Hub

Teresa Thomas, MITRE Corp.; Nancy Forsythe, University of Maryland

Join members of the Capital Region Neurodiversity at Work Hub for a roundtable discussion of our group’s activities and goals. Learn our background and the connection to national and international partners, hear about current projects and learn how we work with neurodivergent job candidates, students, school and higher ed professionals, employers, and service providers.

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Inclusive Pathways to Upward Mobility: Developing Training and Certifications for Persons with Disabilities

Brittany A. Heine, Subject Matter Expert - Upward Mobility; Brian DeAtley, SourceAmerica

Persons with significant disabilities often have limited access to opportunities for professionalization and career progression. SourceAmerica will discuss their work in developing inclusive training and certification programs for workers with disabilities and Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). This presentation explores increasing the upward and outward mobility of persons with disabilities and improving the knowledge and skill base of DSPs working in community rehabilitation programs.





Thursday, March 23 (continued)

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Journey to Employment: Case Studies of Success
Karley R. Kent and Loden Coleman, Els for Autism Foundation®

This presentation will take participants through a journey to employment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This journey begins with outlining current statistics of the involvement of individuals with ASD in the workforce, the steps involved that lead up to obtaining successful meaningful employment in the community, and the evidenced based supports and strategies used to maintain employment stabilization.

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Ready...Set...Work! Perspectives on Employment from Special Olympics Athletes
Jeffrey Abel and Jason Schriml, Special Olympics Maryland

There are over 500,000 Special Olympics Athletes in the United States, and many are well-equipped for employment! This session will feature a panel of Special Olympics Maryland athletes sharing their perspectives on how their sports training through Special Olympics has helped them in the workplace.

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

Networking Break

Break-Out Session 4

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Autism and Neurodiversity in Mental Health and Human Service Settings
Alden Welles, Freelance Neurodiversity Presenter/Instructor

This presentation will discuss how mental health and human service organizations can embrace and accommodate neurodiversity, regarding both employees and clients. Topics will include: defining autism/neurodiversity, history of neurodiversity, language/terminology, common myths/microaggressions, ways to assist neurodivergent employees, therapeutic interventions for neurodivergent clients, types of coaching such as job training and social skills practice, autism organizations and activists to follow, and how to seek diagnosis/further assistance.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Best Practices and Evidence Based Strategies for the Transition to Adulthood and Inclusion in Vocational, Academics and Workplaces
Dr. Moraima Garcia Rohena, Clinical Psychologist & Autism Specialist

In this presentation, we will define and discuss the concepts of inclusion, transition and self-advocacy, along with their controversies and meanings. We will also identify and discuss the challenges (social determinants) faced by people with functional diversity in the process of transition to adult life (professional, academic, social) and learn about strategies and strengths that support fair inclusion, using the study of two clinical cases.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Farming with a Social Purpose: Red Wiggler Community Farm
Andrea Barnhart and Woody Woodroof, Red Wiggler Community Farm;
Gabrielle Zwi, Care Farming Network

Founded in 1996, Red Wiggler Community Farm is a certified organic vegetable farm that provides meaningful employment and healthy food for adults with developmental disabilities. Attendees will learn how Red Wiggler employs neurodivergent adults in a production work environment and is establishing a national network of Care Farms to work with people with intellectual or developmental differences. Learn the benefits of Care Farming and how its neurodiversity-inclusive practices can be replicated nationwide.





Thursday, March 23 (continued)

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Leveraging Self-Management Technologies for Obtaining and Sustaining Employment
Toby Rickard and Tom Keating, Cognitopia

This session presents a collaborative effort between the Supporting Learning Living and Earning with Autism (SLLEA) program and Cognitopia to provide neurodiverse transition-aged students and young adults with self management tools for obtaining and sustaining employment. The project is currently in its second year, with students continuing to work with a vocational consultant and a neurodivergent video production team to develop multimedia employment portfolios and utilize the Cognitopia self management platform for ongoing goal development and social communication skills.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Working Within Federal Parameters to Create Employment Opportunities
Elizabeth Foster, Melwood Horticultural Training Center; Teresa Thomas, MITRE

Federal agencies are being encouraged to create inclusive workplaces. Inclusion goes beyond the completion of a Schedule A. The Neurodiverse Federal Workforce pilot panel will discuss the process of delivering an externship within existing federal requirements and norms. Discussions will include all partners including the unique perspectives of the externs themselves.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

SPIRIT Club Demo – Zumba
Denny Pruitt, Trainer

A fun, music-based exercise experience aimed to improve your cardiovascular endurance, balance, flexibility and more, all while enjoying the many benefits of dance and movement. Classes offer a high-energy atmosphere that can help push you to be as active as possible! Appropriate for individuals of all ability levels, including both people who prefer to exercise seated or standing.

6 – 8 p.m.

Networking Reception
Featuring The NeuroDiversity Rock Band

Join us to mix, mingle and rock out with the NeuroDiversity Rock Band. This jammin' group of neurodiverse musicians can't wait to hit the stage! They are members of the Monday Night Jam – a rock band program formed through the combined efforts of Jenn Lynn, Upcounty Community Resources (UCR), and Zach Lasko, GrooveToday. UCR + GrooveToday = Dynamite!





Friday, March 24

7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Registration/Help Desk Open
Independence Foyer

7:30 – 9 a.m.

Breakfast

9 – 9:45 a.m.

Morning Keynote: Dis-Impos-Ability
Cody Clark, Professional Magician and Autistic Self-Advocate

When Cody was diagnosed with autism, the family doctor told his parents he'd never walk, talk, go to college, or even tell his parents he loved them. Over his 29 years of life, he's proved every one of those prognoses wrong! He went from being non-verbal to never shutting up, had a wonderful childhood, got his college degree, and is now a small business owner. In this talk, he shows why disability does not mean impossibility. He'll share the highlights of his experiences growing up autistic and the lessons any person can apply to their own life from his story, plus a little magic!

Break-Out Session 1

10 – 11 a.m.

A PATH to Inclusive Internships for Neurodivergent Students
Chiara Latimer, Rowan University; Tara Haney, Lockheed Martin

Rowan University's Autism PATH Program and Lockheed Martin's Moorestown, NJ location developed an internship program for neurodivergent college students. In this overview of the internship experience and the process to identify and retain candidates, we will provide strategies utilized to develop the internship experience along with applicable resources for higher education institutions and employer partners, as well as the experiences of the interns, managers, and neurodiversity champions who piloted the program.

10 – 11 a.m.

Co-mentorship as an Organic Solution to Neurodiverse Hiring
Abigayle Jayroe, NEXT for AUTISM

NEXT Connects was created with the belief that aspiring professionals with autism, and established professionals, can learn from one another. Co-mentoring is an intense mutual mentoring relationship that is common among peers but transcends age, rank, and organizational level boundaries. Business professionals are invited to participate in a live NEXT Connects mentorship session and see the power of co-mentorship for themselves.

10 – 11 a.m.

Diversity in Action: Opening Doors Through Sustainable Farming
Chantelle Walker, REED Autism Services; Jennifer Faust, Greens Do Good

Greens Do Good addresses critical needs for work based learning, readiness and social communications through Controlled Environment Agriculture. GDG is an approved provider of work based learning experiences as part of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. These services are designed to be an early start at job exploration for students with disabilities necessary for movement from school to post school activities that will maximize their potential to enter competitive integrated employment.





Friday, March 24 (continued)

10 – 11 a.m.

Recognizing Employee Diversity and Capitalizing on Performance

Maureen van Stone, Kennedy Krieger Institute

A brief introduction to employee diversity and the benefits of hiring a person with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Based on peer-reviewed literature, we will provide suggested interview techniques, behavioral observations, communication challenges, strategies for addressing challenges, legal protections for individuals with ASD, the hiring process, accommodations under federal law, disciplinary action, and case studies.

10 – 11 a.m.

The Case for Internships and Work-Based Learning: An Interactive Approach to Empowering Neurodivergent Young People in the Workplace

Austin Colorite and Carolyn Jepps, BroadFutures

Fewer than 50% of young neurodiverse people are employed, and many are underemployed or only employed part time. BroadFutures has created an innovative model that combines transitional work experiences with evidence based, interactive learning incorporating the arts, stress reduction techniques, individualized support and peer empowerment. By educating and supporting neurodivergent talent and employers, we can all help ensure successful, meaningful careers for young neurodivergent people while helping employers diversify their workplaces and make them more accessible.

10 – 11 a.m.

The Job Interview - How to Play the Social Skills Game and Win

Loralyn Mears and Brilly Semanova, STEERus

Social skills, aka soft skills or success skills, are critical to win the game at school, at work and in life. Neurodivergents have been labeled as having generally “poor” social skills but the reality is that neurotypicals aren’t that great at them either. In this dynamic discussion, plan to role-play with the speakers and other audience members as we get into some common job interview and workplace scenarios where a tip or two on what to do - and not to do - can make all the difference when it comes to “winning the game.”

11 – 11:15 a.m.

Networking Break

Break-Out Session 2

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Advocacy Is the Path Forward

Devin Wylie, Mat Rice and Tracy Wright, People On the Go Maryland

People On the Go Maryland has a 30+ year history. Learn about this statewide self-advocacy group, its initiatives and growth opportunities, and how people with disabilities develop advocacy as their career path.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Mentorship As An Alternative Way To Partner

Pamela Toole and Steve Blanks, SEEC; Jon Ryan, National Geographic

Discover our process to create and develop a Mentorship Pilot between SEEC and National Geographic during the pandemic, when conversations about internships and jobs were halted. Meet a mentor and mentee who participated and hear them tell their story. Learn how we began, how we tracked success and how mentorship led to future job creation.





Friday, March 24 (continued)

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Creating An Equitable and Accessible Workplace for Neurodiverse Employees

Caroline L. Hubbard-Pineau and Katelyn Szymanski, Itineris

Presenters will discuss how to support employees with neurodiversities in advocating for themselves and making reasonable accommodations based on their need and preference.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Employment Workshop to Assist Individuals Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Faris Rashad Kronfli, University of Florida Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

Employment rates are very low for individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Research shows that behavioral skills training is one of the most effective methods to teach skills necessary to apply, acquire, and maintain employment. Our 5-day employment workshop focused on behaviors such as resume development, successful interview skills, and interpersonal skills.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Improving Employment Outcomes for Neurodiverse Job Seekers by Creating Business And Educational Partnerships

Kendra Evans and Laurie Ackles, Rochester Institute of Technology

Three factors significantly improve employment outcomes for neurodiverse job seekers: job readiness skill building programming in higher education, the implementation of universal design practices for employee hiring and supervision, and connecting neurodiverse candidates directly with employers in low stress environments. In this workshop, we will discuss the successful collaboration between employers and education professionals at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

12:15 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch

1:15 – 1:30 p.m. Zenaviv Virtual Art Gallery

Harish Bikmal, Zenaviv

Zenaviv is a social enterprise that showcases the visual and artistic strengths of neurodivergent individuals in new ways – to corporations, healthcare facilities, government agencies, and consumers – to jumpstart conversations about inclusion and develop a sense of safety and belonging. Zenaviv artists have earned recognition and support from organizations such as Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, Cisco, Adobe, Washington Post, The World Bank, and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Break-Out Session 3

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. ABLE Accounts: A New Tool to Support People with Disabilities, Your Employees and Your Community

Bette Ann Mobley, Maryland ABLE; Sara Hart Weir, ABLEtoday

Diversity, equity and inclusion are no longer an option; they are a priority. Helping neurodiverse individuals to save and earn through a tax-advantaged savings and investment account without jeopardizing means tested public benefits through an ABLE account can be life changing. Neurodiverse individuals or family members, service providers, educators, employers and policy stakeholders can all be catalysts for improving the DEI of neurodiverse individuals at work and in your community by learning about the benefits of ABLE accounts.





Friday, March 24 (continued)

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Equipping High School Diploma Graduates with Developmental Disabilities to Transition to Post-Secondary Employment and/or Education
Kelly Offutt, Ivymount Organization

Although provided with special education and the variety of services and supports that shape their support network during their entitlement phase, many high school diploma graduates with disabilities are left ill-prepared to transition into their next phase of education and/or employment. We'll identify who should "be at the table" for these transition-planning conversations, content and activities that must comprise this process, and the importance of focusing on social, emotional and physical wellness of students with disabilities as they transition into post-high school settings.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Success for All and How We Get There
Sam Mitchell, Autism Rocks and Rolls Corporation

Sam Mitchell, Executive Director, TEDX Speaker, and podcaster will redefine the words "normal, success, and disability." Sam found his voice through podcasting and went on to create a very successful non-profit called Autism Rocks and Rolls Corporation. Sam himself is on the autism spectrum and embraces who he is. He speaks about growing up with autism, the hard times in school, finding podcasting, and seeing a need for autism acceptance. Join him as he teaches not using the words "normal" or "disability." He will also attempt to redefine the word "success," something that is often not credited to the autism community.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

**The Marriage between Job Retention and Employer Relationships:
How Cultivating Long-Term Relationships Leads to Higher Retention Rates**
Nancy Eaby, Tona Craviotto and Pamela Toole, SEEC

SEEC's Project SEARCH and Employment Services teams will share how a realignment of resources to focus on business partnership and development has led to increased outcomes, better sustainability and expanded opportunities. We will walk you through our process for initiating employer relationships through all phases of job development to long term employment and demonstrate the importance of maintaining strong reciprocal relationships which can lead to development of additional jobs at the same employer.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

**Using a Neurodiversity Framework to Prepare Young Adults for
Successful Transition from School to Workplace**
Lindsay Wagner and Amy Faraone, League School of Greater Boston

This presentation will outline how use of a research-based, multidisciplinary educational model is used to support neurodiverse individuals in gaining the skills and confidence to transition from school-based to community-based employment. Methods for developing dynamic partnerships between schools and employers will be explored. This will include detailing job coach and colleague training, strategic data collection, and community building opportunities that support neurodiverse individuals and employers to feel prepared for expanding the employee profile within organizations.

3:00 p.m.

Closing Remarks from Conference Co-Chair
Stacey Herman, Kennedy Krieger Institute

