



Empowering Autistic College Students

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ASAN

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Nothing About Us Without Us!



NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

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ELSI Symposium Goes Live

Over \$1 billion has been spent over the course of the last decade on autism research funding. During a time of constant budget cuts and increasing fiscal...

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- ASAN Statement Applauding New Administration on Community Living
- ELSI Symposium Goes Live
- Disability Community Across the Country Mourns Disabled People Murdered by...
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- [» ASAN Talking Points on DSM-5](#)
- [» Former JRC teacher calls for end to torture](#)
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Publications

- [PDF Autism Speaks – Consider the Facts](#)
- [PDF Navigating College Handbook](#)
- [PDF Keeping the Promise](#)

“Empowerment is when you have gained the confidence in yourself to have the light bulb go on in your head. You realize you can take control of your life and you understand that now you have done it.”
—Nancy Ward

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ASAN Talking Points on DSM-5

The final public commenting period is now open for the upcoming fifth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, which provides...

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A Poem

by Dona Raymaker
When the numbers roll in, I see where

I fall:
1 in 1,000
1 in 150
1 in 88
children America has committed to prevent from being...

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ASAN Statement Applauding New Administration on Community Living

Contacting Scott Michael Robertson

- Email: srobertson@ist.psu.edu, srobertson@autisticadvocacy.org
 - Mention the words *autism* or *disabilities* in the subject line
 - Reference where you met me in the email message's body (i.e., ASERT higher education conference in Wayne, NJ)
- Can connect via instant messaging [e.g., AOL IM, Yahoo IM, MSN/Windows Live, Gmail Chat, Skype, Jabber, ICQ, & IRC]
- Generally prefer online over telephone communication (partly due to auditory comprehension issues)



Presentation Overview

- Autism 101
- Widespread Disability Support Model (LD)
- Moving Beyond the LD Model
- The Autism Campus Inclusion project



Autism 101...

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.” —Henry David Thoreau, philosopher

- Autism: Lifelong Neurological-Developmental Disability
- Currently estimated @ 1% of adults & youth in U.S./worldwide
- Highly Diverse
- Cognitive Profile of Strengths & Weaknesses in 4 core areas:
 - Language & Communication
 - Social Interaction
 - Sensory-Motor Interaction
 - Goal-oriented, Self-reflexive, & Self-regulative Thinking



Acceptance of autism:
http://www.autreat.com/dont_mourn.html (1993)

No Myths

- Public Service Announcement (PSA) about autism jointly produced by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) and the Dan Marino Foundation in 2008
- Entirely involved autistic adults & youth as participants
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_dPZDcX_ck



Something About Us

- Video jointly produced by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) & Outreach/Treehouse (in the United Kingdom) in 2008 (20 minutes)
- Involved numerous autistic adults & teens from countries worldwide (e.g., U.S., U.K., Australia, Spain, Germany)
- Part I: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-014P0hQ6w>
- Part II: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dna1Z41_w3c



Some Notes on Language Usage: Identity-First Language for Autism

- The International Autistic Self-Advocacy & Allied community prefers identity-first language (e.g., autistic people) over person-first language (e.g., people with autism) to refer to autistic adults & youth (all persons carrying an autism spectrum identification)
 - Reflects the view that autism forms part of the human identity & way of being of autistic people
 - Draws from the blind & Deaf communities & cultures [blind, deaf people]
 - Sometimes we use bridging terms (e.g., people on the autism spectrum) to refer to autistic people
- We respect usage of people-first language for other disability communities (& cross-disability)



Autistic Community of Israel



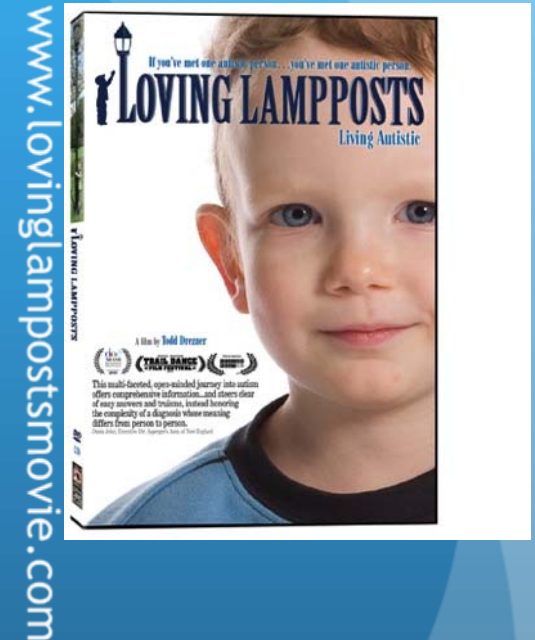
Some Notes on Language Usage: Functional Language & Autism

- The phrases “high-functioning” (HF) and “low-functioning” (LF) appear widely in written & spoken discourse to describe autistic people
- HF & LF reflect a false dichotomy
 - Autism is a far more diverse neurological-developmental disability than these grading levels indicate
 - Dichotomy not supported by research
 - Functioning is always contextual & situational
- HF/LF use can be disrespectful of autistic people
 - HF->minimizes barriers, challenges, difficulties
 - LF->minimizes gifts, talents, abilities

neurotypical

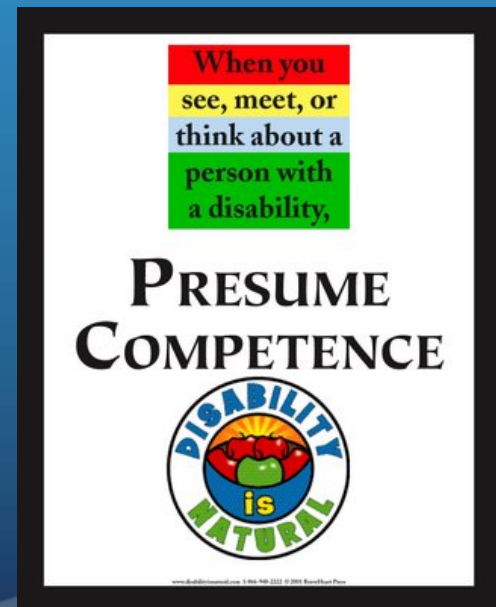
Normal is a cycle on a washing machine.

www.neuro-typical.com



Grading People

- <http://vimeo.com/12901883>
- 9-minute video produced by an autistic rights advocate to highlight problems w/ the usage of the terms “high functioning” and “low-functioning” to grade autistic adults & youth
- Describes broader history of grading people w/ disabilities (including usage to characterize people w/ intellectual & developmental disabilities)



Typical model for supporting autistic college students (LD model)

- Test-taking: Extended time, quiet room for exams
- Notes support: Note takers, supplemental notes, etc.
- Dorm living accommodation: Single room possibly as social accommodation
- Task entry: Use of a computer to complete assignments and exams

Typical Model for Supports: Disability Registration

- This tableau of supports may partially explain registrations w/ campus disability services
- Autistic college students on college campuses often register w/ a diagnosis of LD rather than an autism spectrum identification
- LD as a plurality category for disability supports on college campuses may include many students w/ a wide array of cognitive and developmental disabilities

Going beyond the LD Model for autistic students: Social Supports

- Social supports: Peer coaches, mentors (faculty, staff, students); clubs/groups for students w/ disabilities and allies; campus social environment training
- Dorm living: specialized training of RAs and residence life staff (w/ junior/senior and graduate autistic students possibly involved in training)
- Campus culture: workshops and trainings for all members of the campus community; explicit intention to include and integrate autistic students and other students w/ disabilities

Going Beyond the LD Model for autistic students: Academic work

- Support for organization/planning: workshops/seminars; individualized instruction
- Transition from college to employment: trainings w/the career services office; workshops on how to apply academic learning to a career
- Self-Advocacy and leadership development: workshops and one-on one instruction

Going beyond the LD model: Inspirations from LGBT resources

- Empowerment of LGBT students provides an aspirational perspective for campus cultural/community supports
- No federal law requires that college campuses provide resources and supports for LGBT students
- Yet, hundreds of colleges and universities provide supports and resources
- The best schools provide:
 - Peer mentoring and mentoring from faculty and staff
 - In-depth trainings w/ faculty, staff, and students
 - Stop-in community resource centers
 - Leadership training for LGBT students and allies
 - Initiatives to counters stigmatization of LGBT students
 - Campus groups of LGBT students and allies

Going Beyond the LD Model: Financial Costs

- Most support programs for autistic college students have extra fees and costs beyond general school tuition
- This financial cost may present a barrier to entry for autistic students to participate, especially for students from low socio-economic status and experiencing situational financial hardships
- This barrier to entry also sends a message that autistic people must pay far more to receive supports to succeed
- Through grants, contracts, donations, and other funding streams aim to move toward models that reduce or eliminate a dependency on students paying fees beyond tuition to participate and receive supports

ASAN's Autism Campus Inclusion Project

- Goal to improve inclusion, acceptance, and supports for all autistic college students
- Seek to accomplish this goal through educational outreach, trainings, and other initiatives
- Grant funding from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, the HSC Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the DJ Fiddle Foundation, and a partnership w/ the Autism NOW center (federal funding)

ACI: Publications

- Navigating College
 - Guide to college life, accommodations/supports, and campus living for autistic college students
 - All chapters written by autistic people w/ at least undergraduate experience (and graduate school experience in some cases)
 - Visit www.navigatingcollege.org to order a print copy (\$15) or download an electronic copy (PDF)
- DJF-ASAN Empowering Student Leaders
 - Companion guide to Navigating College
 - This book will focus more on development of leadership and campus advocacy skills among college students w/ disabilities

ACI: Leadership-Training Academy

- Novel approach to train empowered autistic college students as disability rights leaders
- ASAN Hosting the first academy as a five-day workshop August 13-17, 2012
- National Federation of the Blind's conference center in Baltimore serves as the host for the 1st academy
- A group of 18 autistic college students from college campuses nationwide will participate
- ASAN will reimburse their travel (e.g., airfare) and house them in nearby dorms
- These participants competitively applied to participate

ACI Leadership-Training Academy

Academy Activities

- Experienced autistic leaders in disability rights advocacy and allies will serve as the academy's trainers
- These trainers will teach leadership, self-advocacy, and campus advocacy skills to the student leaders
- 2 Primary goals of instructional activities w/ the group of student leaders:
 - A. Teach participants knowledge skill sets to empower their academic and extracurricular activities
 - B. Empower participants to drive systems change on their home campuses to improve inclusion, acceptance, and support for students w/ disabilities

Academy:

Post-Academy Activities

- ASAN will provide ongoing technical assistance to academy alumni
- Student leaders will network with each other and ASAN leaders through online communication (i.e., instant messaging, email, etc.)
- With support, student leaders will establish groups on their home campuses for autistic college students and college students w/ disabilities more broadly
- Student leaders will also educate and train members of their campus community about college students w/ disabilities and their barriers/challenges
- Upon graduation, student leaders will continue these pursuits in workplaces and local communities