ASPEN’S ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE
Autism Spectrum Over the Lifespan

Keynote Presenter
Jesse A. Saperstein
Best-Selling Author, Autism Advocate, Consultant & Motivational Speaker
Embracing Changes with Self-Advocacy and Positivity

Plus All 8 Workshops!
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2020

Virtual Pre-recorded Video Conference
(May be viewed from the comfort of your home.)
Registration includes the Keynote Presentation AND ALL Eight (8) Workshops!
For the second time in more than 23 years, we at ASPEN have found ourselves in an unusual position concerning our semi-annual conferences. As you know, it was necessary to cancel our Spring 2020 conference due to the prohibition of public gatherings as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Months later, people around the world are still being affected by this terrible virus. As we are still socially distancing, we have made the decision to hold a Virtual Pre-recorded Video Conference for our fall event. This will allow people to register for the conference, and watch the keynote presentation and all of the workshops, from the comfort of their home, at their own pace. We will send links to each registrant for the keynote session and links for each of the 8 workshops. The links will be active (and the videos will be available) for 3 days, beginning 9am Sunday, October 25, 2020. We will not be “snail mailing” any registration forms, the only notice you will receive is via Constant Contact email and on our website. Handouts, including Power Point slides, will be available for download via the links sent to you. Questions may be submitted to an email address that will be provided. As the conference will not be live-streamed, questions will be sent to the individual presenters for responses following the conference. We will notify you in advance which delivery platform (i.e. Zoom) we will be using.

Stay well and be safe. We hope to connect with you at our 46th conference on October 25th!

Autism Spectrum Over the Lifespan

ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Jesse A. Saperstein

Embracing Changes with Self-Advocacy and Positivity

A wise man once said, "The sooner you make friends with change the easier your life will be." But for the autism population it is easier said than done. Our world is rocked by changes, often in a negative way. The life of 38-year old Jesse Saperstein has conditioned him to despise and fear change with a passion. And who can blame him? Changes in his life were synonymous with a resurgence of bullying, fixing what was finally working wonderfully in the most recent experience, and oftentimes epic failure.

This presentation will be an honest discussion of how Jesse has battled changes with the passion of Don Quixote fighting windmills. He even went trick-or-treating until the age of 31-years-old! But changes are oftentimes inevitable. Trying to fight them is essentially like using a wine glass to bail out the Titanic. The pandemic affected the autism population more tenaciously due to the perfect storm of changes. Individuals with autism saw their jobs, normal social lives, and cherished routines decimated like flipping off a light switch. Jesse will talk about how he made it through the pandemic and will give strategies for the audience members on how we may support our individuals with strategies such as "incremental backing off," nostalgic YouTube videos, and holding on for dear life to what we have control over in this life.
A) ASD: The Sky is the Limit
presented by Judithanne Arcaro

The minute you hear the diagnosis, you freeze. What does it mean? What will my child miss out on? What will my child be able to do? How am I going to handle this?

This presentation provides a perspective on what parents can and should do over the course of their child’s development to help to achieve attainable goals. Establishing goals is the first step toward creating a plan for the future. This plan for life is constantly changing as the child learns and grows. This personal plan can help to guide the numerous IEPs and Transition Plans that you will encounter over the educational career of your child keeping in mind that the schools are there to help, but you are responsible for the ultimate outcome and will live with the consequences.

B) NJCAN: The NJ Career Assistance Navigator
presented by Joanne Hamza

NJCAN is a FREE web-based career navigation system, provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, that provides comprehensive information for students to develop well informed college and career plans. It includes tools that encourage self-assessment, career and post-secondary education exploration, goal setting, and decision making. The site helps students make informed decisions about their future based on relevant actionable information.

C) NJDVRS: Transition and Services for Individuals with ASD
presented by Nanci Hiller, Gilda Escobar-Brito and William Schulz

This presentation will provide educators, families, guardians, advocates, consumers, and employers with an overview of the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and the transition to the adult services process and the services available. The NJDVRS is a Division in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development designated to assist eligible Individuals with Disabilities to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs, abilities and capabilities. The NJDVRS assists students with disabilities who will need services to prepare for, get, and keep a job. The ultimate goal is to create a smooth transition from school to work so that upon graduation, a student is prepared to begin work or post-secondary training that leads to employment.

D) Twice-Exceptional Students on the Autism Spectrum
presented by Jacqui Byrne and Lynne Henwood

Twice-exceptional students on the autism spectrum frequently struggle in traditional school settings. This session will discuss shifts in differentiation, alternate assessments, classroom management, space, size, and accommodations that FlexSchool has experimented with that have reduced anxiety in those on the spectrum and can be applied to public and private schools.

E) Making Screen Time Work for Your Child and Your Family in 2020
presented by Dr. Robert Keder

Screen time and children with Asperger Syndrome/Asperger Syndrome/Autism are often like peas in a pod. What makes an interest versus geeking out versus a restricted interest? The challenge of screen time in 2020 is that it portable and can literally be everywhere. Digital technology is growing so quickly that it is difficult to keep up as a parent. Dr. Keder will discuss some of the current research on how screen time can affect a child/teen’s behavior and development. All screen time is not created equal, and it is important to be able to distinguish between what contributes to a healthy versus unhealthy screen time diet. This session will provide parents with tools and strategies to guide their child/teen’s use of screen time.
F) Sexual Identity 101
presented by Melissa Keyes-DiGioia and Tracy Higgins

Sexual identity is a part of the unique mosaic of what makes you…YOU! In this session, we will explain the different components of sexual identity: gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. We will also share common terms people use in relation to sexual identity. Finally, we will explore ways to be affirming of people of varying gender identities and sexual orientations.

G) Navigating the School Maze: Working Together with Your School District
presented by Hillary Freeman

The most effective individualized education plans (IEPs) are written collaboratively by team members who trust and support one another during the process. Unfortunately, derision and divisiveness have often come to define the IEP process, and parents are left to their own devices to navigate the laws and IEP best practices. This workshop will provide both parents and educators with practical tools to evaluate the needs of a child, and intervene appropriately. A strength-based evidence-based approach will provide tools for academic, social, emotional and behavioral-based problem solving, while revealing powerful ways to strengthen the parent-school partnership.

H) Parenting Children and Teens with Anxiety and ASD
presented by Dr. Anton Shcherbakov

Anxiety disorders are common among individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Current estimates suggest that about 40% of young people with ASD also have clinically elevated levels of anxiety. In this presentation, you will learn how to recognize common symptoms of anxiety and how to help your child/teen cope more effectively. We will discuss evidence-based strategies that you can implement with them on your own. You will also learn when you should consult a professional for help and how to find a specialist that will be able to treat your child/teen most effectively.

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JESSE A. SAPERSTEIN is a best-selling author, autism advocate and motivational speaker. He is considered one of the most respected leaders in the Anti-Bullying movement of his generation. Jesse also has a form of autism called Asperger Syndrome (AS) that gives individuals some profound talents and challenges.

After graduating from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2004 with a BA degree in English, Jesse set out to conquer the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail to benefit the Joey DiPaolo AIDS Foundation. He began hiking from Georgia to Maine on March 9, 2005 and successfully completed the journey on October 18, 2005, raising more than $19,000 for children to attend summer camp who had contracted HIV/AIDS through prenatal transmission. Shortly after his hike ended, Jesse was exposed to some of the harsh realities of living as an adult on the autism spectrum and was treated with fear by members of the community who did not understand. His decision to write a book was an opportunity to escape these realities and advocate for his peers who are not always granted a voice. Jesse's story, *Atypical: Life with Asperger's in 20 1/3 Chapter* was published by Penguin Group (USA) in April 2010 and immediately became a best-selling memoir due to its practical advice and humor.

After receiving a grant from the Anderson Center for Autism (ACA) in Staatsburg, New York, Jesse completed his first skydiving jump in front of his community in an effort to eradicate bullying. "Free-Falling to End Bullying in 2012" is now a popular video on YouTube: www.youtube.com/jessesaperstein

Jesse visits schools on a regular basis and has been successful with eradicating, or at least dramatically alleviating, bullying with every presentation. He was part of the “Keeping it Real” project with New York University (NYU) that helped introduce a new anti-
bullying curriculum to New York City public schools. The web page is: www.projectkeepitreal.com. He has spoken in front of the United Nations and the Mall of America in Minneapolis, MN among many other places.

His second book, Getting a Life with Asperger's: Lessons Learned on the Bumpy Road to Adulthood was released in August 2014 and focuses on surviving the difficult transition into adulthood for someone with an autism spectrum disorder. Jesse moved to Albany in June 2015 to live in his first apartment as an independent adult. He serves as the Media and Activities Liaison for the College Experience that is run by Living Resources, Inc. The College Experience is a program that gives individuals with disabilities the ability to attend a mainstream college with a modified curriculum, and provides life skills as well as employment training. Feel free to check out his blog entries on their website www.thecollegeexperience.org. A current goal of his is to address the National Democratic Convention in 2020 to advocate for oppressed US citizens.

On April 2, 2019 Jesse had the honor of being included as one of the thirty-plus American heroes profiled within the anthology, American Spirit produced by New York Times Bestselling Authors Taya Kyle and Jim DeFelice. On January 22, 2020 Jesse appeared on the Dr. Phil Show after successfully pitching the producers to advocate for his friend, David Elmore Smith who was in dire need of resources to combat his morbid obesity. He is now working with the CEO of the American Red Cross to replenish the blood supply in hospitals, especially if it is the antibody-enchanced plasma harvested from survivors of COVID-19.

WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

Judithanne Arcaro, EdD, LDTC, has been an educator for over 30 years. During that time, she has taught gifted, general, and special education students. Dr. Arcaro’s specialty has been autism spectrum disorder since her 28 year old son was diagnosed nearly 25 years ago. The drive to open doors for him has led her to seek inclusion opportunities across the lifespan and create transition plans that work for individuals with disabilities. From pre-school experiences, sports, scouting, and enrichment programs, the possibilities are endless. She shares her secrets of success with all who are interested.

Joanne Hamza, statewide trainer and project coordinator at the Heldrich Center, is responsible for all training and user services for the New Jersey Department of Education-sponsored web resource, New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (NJCAN). Prior to joining the Heldrich Center, Mrs. Hamza was an educator with over seven years of experience teaching in New Jersey public schools. She holds a B.A. in education and psychology from Rowan University, and a Master’s in the Art of Teaching from MaryGrove College.

Nanci M. Hiller, MA, LPC, CRC, CPM, is a Program Planning Development Specialist at the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. She has worked for over 20 years in public service and non-profit sectors to improve employment opportunities for People with Disabilities in New Jersey through counseling, program development, education, training and advocacy.

Ms. Hiller holds a Master degree in Clinical Counseling from Montclair University, Post Master’s Certification in Professional Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University, is a NJ Licensed Professional Counselor, National Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, and Certified Public Manager.

Gilda O. Escobar-Brito, MS, CRC, CPM is the Supervising Counselor at the NJ Department of Labor, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), Jersey City office, serving the Hudson County area. As a supervising counselor, she supervises DVRS counselors who provide an array of vocational and employment services to individuals with disabilities. She has worked for DVRS for over 15 years, and in the area of vocational rehabilitation services for a total of 21 years.

She holds a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from the Rutgers University (formerly UMDNJ), Post-Graduate coursework from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Certificate from the Rehabilitation Counseling Commission, and a Certificate in Public Management.

William H. Schulz, MS, CRC, CPM is the manager of the Hudson County office of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) in Jersey City, NJ. Mr. Schulz has worked for DVRS for 15 years. He has worked in the field of vocational rehabilitation for 20 years. He has a Post-Master’s Certificate in Rehabilitation Counseling from Rutgers University, and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, as well as a Certified Public Manager.

Jacqui Byrne is the visionary behind FlexSchool, learning communities for gifted and 2e students. She loves all the creative, quirky, asynchronous minds, and enjoys discovering how to reach each child. Jacqui has a great deal of experience in education, teaching, counseling, and writing. She is the co-founder of the widely respected Ivy Ed college preparation and counseling firm. Jacqui
developed her own verbal test prep curriculum, wrote a test prep book for McGraw-Hill, and high school curriculum for English teachers for an educational publishing company. She is an acknowledged expert in education: training school district guidance counselors, speaking at colleges throughout New Jersey, and presenting at professional conferences. Prior to founding Ivy Ed, she taught creative writing to gifted students at Milton Academy, completed an operations management training program on Wall Street, and started a boutique marketing company. Jacqui earned a B.A. from Yale and has children who are twice-exceptional.

**Lynne Henwood** has been advocating for and serving the needs of gifted and twice-exceptional learners for over 7 years as a teacher of gifted students and program coordinator for Washington Township Schools in Morris County, New Jersey. In this role, Lynne designed and implemented strengths-based, student-driven programs throughout the district.

Lynne graduated from Dickinson College with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and earned her Gifted Education Certificate from Rutgers University, where she serves on the Gifted Education Advisory Board. Currently, Lynne is pursuing a master’s degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Connecticut Neag School of Education with a concentration in giftedness, creativity, and talent development. In 2018, Lynne was named New Jersey’s Gifted Teacher of the Year and is the 2019 Mensa Foundation’s Gifted Education Fellowship Award winner. She currently serves as President of the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children, where she continues to educate teachers, administrators, and legislators about the importance of recognizing and meeting the needs of our gifted population. As a parent of four uniquely gifted children, Lynne understands that all children need to feel valued, accepted, and respected. Lynne brings her deep knowledge of the social, emotional, academic needs of gifted children along with her curiosity and passion for learning to the FlexSchool community.

**Robert D. Keder, MD,** grew up in southern Connecticut. He studied Biology and Psychology at Fairfield University and then obtained his medical doctorate from the Loyola University of Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. He completed his residency in pediatrics at Connecticut Children’s and a fellowship in Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics at Boston Medical Center. He is now practicing at Connecticut Children’s and is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

He completed Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) through the University of Massachusetts Shriver Center. His clinical areas of expertise include diagnosing and helping children/families navigate growing up with autism, ADHD, learning difficulties, and other disabilities in addition to working with children involved in bullying situations.

**Melissa Keyes DiGioia, CSE** is a Certified Sexuality Educator by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists. As Director of Education, she facilitates professional development workshops and education sessions on varying sexuality and sexual health topics and specializes in program delivery for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Melissa is author of *Taking a Special Education Approach*, a guide for religious educators, implementing *Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Grades 7-9 (2nd Ed.)* to adapt lessons and methodology for audiences with special needs. She is coauthor of *Game On! The Ultimate Sexuality Education Gaming Guide* and contributing author to *Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power and Consent in Adult-Teen and Other Relationships (3rd Ed), Older Wiser Sexually Smarter*, and *Teaching Safer Sex (Volumes 1 & 2).* She has a graduate certificate in Human Sexuality from Montclair State University and received her BA with concentrations in Psychology and Women’s and Gender Studies from The College of New Jersey.

**Tracy Higgins, MA, LPC** is Director of Counseling at Finding Your Individuality. She is a licensed professional counselor trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Applied Behavior Analysis. Tracy specializes in sexual trauma and abuse prevention for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Ms. Higgins has worked as a therapist for over 10 years and is responsible for the development of specialized services for survivors of sexual violence and at-risk adolescents and adults with I/DD. Tracy serves as a consultant to varying agencies, organizations and schools, providing workshops and training on sexual violence, behavior management, positive communication, relationship and social skills development. She serves on the ESCAPE-DD project Advisory Board at the Center for Opportunities and Outcomes for People with Disabilities at Columbia University, is Chairperson for the Developmental Disabilities Task Force in Morris County, NJ, and serves as Board Member for the Rose House, a service provider agency for people with I/DD in Morris County.

**Hillary D. Freeman, Esq.** is deeply committed to her work representing people with disabilities and their families. As the sister of a man with autism and national speaker in special education matters, she is able to combine personal experience with her legal training to help families advocate for services and supports through the IEP and 504 Plan processes. She is a national/international speaker in special education matters related to the rights of students with learning and developmental disabilities, and helps families zealously advocate for services and supports in special education under the IDEIA, Section 504, guardianship matters, estate planning and adult services.

Ms. Freeman is a frequent presenter on the legal rights of students and adults with special needs. In addition to being honored with numerous awards related to her advocacy work, she has presented at various conferences around the United States.
including, but not limited to, the United Nations for 2017 World Autism Awareness Day. Most recently in 2019, Ms. Freeman traveled to Africa to consult with Autism programs, the local citizens and government officials in Ghana and Liberia to raise Autism Awareness in their countries as well. She was named a Rising Star℠ by Super Lawyers & Magazine from 2013-2020. She holds a JD from Widener University School of Law, and practices in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Anton Shcherbakov, PsyD, BCBA is a Licensed Psychologist at the Center for Emotional Health of Greater Philadelphia, a private outpatient facility specializing in the evidence-based treatment of Anxiety Disorders, Body Focused Repetitive Behaviors, and Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders. He is also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and is the director of ThinkPsych, a private agency focused on improving educational outcomes for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through assessment, consultation, and products developed specifically for this population. Dr. Shcherbakov has previously presented at local and national conferences on topics that include reducing maladaptive behaviors in ASD, treatment of body-focused repetitive behaviors, and evaluating provider attitudes towards evidence-based treatment.

**WHO SHOULD REGISTER?**

Parents, grandparents, other family members and caregivers; individuals (age 14 and older) with Autism Spectrum Disorder; educational professionals; medical and health professionals; legal professionals.

Educators attending this virtual video conference will earn 6 Professional Development Hours.
• All registration fees are per person. Check, money order, or online via credit card, debit card or PayPal.
• Mailed-in registrations must be postmarked by 10/15/2020.
• Additional copies of this form may be downloaded from our website at www.aspennj.org.

• Cancellations and Changes - No refunds for cancellations received after 10/1/2020. Sorry, no exceptions. Kindly notify us in advance if substituting for original registrant.
• If, due to unforeseen circumstances, it becomes necessary to substitute speakers without advance notice, fees are non-refundable.

CUT AND RETURN THIS PORTION
REGISTRATION FORM:
FALL CONFERENCE
Sunday, October 25, 2020
Registration Discount Deadline 10/9/2020

Please Print:
Name(s) _____________________________________
Address _______________________________________
Phone (_____ ) ____________________________
Email address of each registrant (required)

Check One: Legal Professional _____
Parent _____ Medical/Health Professional _____
Grandparent _____ Educational Professional _____
Family Member _____ Young Adult with ASD _____

Registrants will receive links to the Keynote Presentation AND ALL 8 Workshops.

WORKSHOPS
A) ASD: The Sky is the Limit
B) NJCAN: NJ Career Assistance Navigator
C) NJDVRS: Transition & Services for ASD
D) Twice Exceptional Students on the Autism Spectrum
E) Making Screen Time Work for Your Child & Family
F) Sexual Identity 101
G) Navigating the School Maze: Working with Your District
H) Parenting Children/Teens with Anxiety & ASD

ON-LINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT: WWW.ASPENNJ.ORG

ASPEN Member? (as of date of conference)
Yes _____ Chapter ____________________________
No _____ If you would like to join, please enclose a SEPARATE check for annual dues (Families: $35; Professionals: $55) payable to ASPEN, along with a check for the member conference registration fee.

Kindly mail your completed form with your check or money order made payable to ASPEN to our new address:

ASPEN FALL CONFERENCE 2020
P.O. Box 109
Oceanport, NJ 07757

Please complete section below.
REGISTRATION FEES
ALL FEES ARE PER PERSON • JOIN TODAY AND SAVE

Take Advantage of Our Early-Bird Discount Pricing!

______ MEMBER (PARENT or GRANDPARENT)
$ 90.00 ($120.00 after 10/9/2020)

______ MEMBER (PROFESSIONAL)
$150.00 ($180.00 after 10/9/2020)

______ MEMBER (YOUNG ADULT INDIVIDUAL WITH ASD)
$ 60.00 ($90.00 after 10/9/2020)

______ NON-MEMBER (PARENT or FAMILY MEMBER)
$130.00 ($160.00 after 10/9/2020)

______ NON-MEMBER (PROFESSIONAL)
$190.00 ($220.00 after 10/9/2020)

______ NON-MEMBER (YOUNG ADULT INDIVIDUAL WITH ASD)
$ 85.00 ($115.00 after 10/9/2020)

For more information, please contact our office: (732) 321-0880 or aspenorg@aol.com
ASPEN provides information, support and advocacy to individuals and families whose lives are affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (formerly known as Asperger Syndrome, PDD-NOS, and High-Functioning Autism) and Nonverbal Learning Disabilities. Its numerous chapters meet monthly, alternating support meetings with scheduled speakers. Members receive an online newsletter; have access to a lending library of books and videos; are provided with online access to the ASPEN Resource Directory; and are entitled to free attendance at all monthly chapter meetings in addition to substantial discounts on conferences. A NJ Department of Education Professional Development Provider (#1619), ASPEN sponsors workshops and conferences featuring many of the most prominent names in the autism field. ASPEN is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

WWW.ASPENNJ.ORG