ASPEN’S VIRTUAL FALL CONFERENCE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2021
Autism Through the Lifespan

Keynote Presenter
Jonathan Kratchman
Autism Advocate, Consultant, Speaker
Neurodivergently Yours: How to Succeed in a Neurotypical World

Plenary Presenter
Robert L. Hendren, D.O.
Psychiatrist, Professor, Consultant, Speaker
Strengthening Resilience Throughout the Lives of Individuals with ASD

PLUS ALL 8 WORKSHOPS:
Take Care of Yourselves Too! Selfcare for Parents and Caregivers
Bridging the Gap: How Neurodiverse Young Adults Can Prepare for Employment and Dating
An Individualized Approach: Teaching College Students to Successfully Navigate Job Interviews
Empowering Parents/Guardians to Effectively Advocate for Their Students on the Spectrum
Understanding SSI and Medicaid: Why They are Important and Tips to Navigate the Process
Preparing Your Child for Adulthood: The DDD Application Process
Social Skills for Neurtotypicals: Promoting Equity and Inclusion for People on the Spectrum
The Importance of Pragmatics in Children with ASD: Progress Through Engagement
Virtual Pre-recorded Video Conference
May be viewed from the comfort of your home from

Sunday, October 24 2021, at 7:00 a.m. through
Sunday, November 21, 2021, at 10:00 p.m.

Registration includes the Keynote Presentation and Plenary Presentation
PLUS ALL Eight (8) Workshops!

Message from our President/Executive Director
Lori Shery

As we are still not quite back to “business as usual,” and due to the success of our past 2 virtual conferences which had international attendance, we have made the decision to also hold our fall 2021 as a virtual pre-recorded video conference. This will allow people to register for the conference and watch the keynote presentation, the plenary presentation and all 8 workshops, from the comfort of their homes, at their own pace. We will send links (mp4 and pdf files) to each registrant for the keynote and plenary sessions and the 8 workshops. The links will be active (and the videos will be available) beginning 7am Sunday, October 24, 2021 and ending at 10pm on Sunday, November 21, 2021. 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, your questions will be sent to the individual presenters for responses following the conference.

Stay well and be safe. We hope to connect with you at our 48th conference on October 24th!
Autism Through the Lifespan

ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION
Jonathan Kratchman

*Neurodivergently Yours: How to Succeed in a Neurotypical World*

This is the story of what you can do when you put your mind to something. From a non-verbal toddler to a 24 year-old man, Jonathan has not just overcome the obstacles he faced, but he has achieved much more than he ever imagined, and continues to strive for more. While the speaking circuit is not his full-time career, Jonathan’s message is clear, “When given the opportunities and tools to succeed, you can do much more than you assume.”

Jonathan’s presentation will include stories from his growing up years and the obstacles he has faced. He will also discuss his current employment situation, and how he is able to use everything he brings to the table in his professional endeavors. From the job application, to the interview, to the actual job, Jonathan will share his personal insights and conventional wisdom from his experience in the workplace and helpful strategies for others.

PLENARY PRESENTATION
Robert Hendren, D.O.

*Strengthening Resilience Throughout the Lives of Individuals with ASD*

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is increasingly understood as a “whole body disorder,” going from the genetic constitution of an individual (genotype), the way genes express themselves as influenced by the environment (epigenetic process or endophenotype) to an individual’s observable traits and characteristics (phenotype). To be most effective in understanding and treating ASD, this whole process should be considered along with the interacting parts of the body and the way these processes and body systems change during development.

This presentation will describe an integrated whole-body approach to enhancing neurodevelopmental resilience throughout the life cycle in individuals with ASD and their caretakers. This includes the medical (genetic, neurologic, GI, other medical symptoms); ancillary (speech, OT); behavioral; treatment of the associated symptoms (medical, pharmacologic interventions; biomedical (CAM, Integrative assessment and treatments) and most of all, building all-encompassing personal relationships and resilience.
WORKSHOPS

A) Take Care of Yourselves Too! Selfcare for Parents and Caregivers
presented by Adele Breen-Franklin, OTD, JD, OTR/L

Literature has shown that the caregiving demands of parents and/or caretakers of individuals with special needs are significant. Along with these demands come a decrease in well-being, an increase in stress and a decrease in occupational balance. This webinar will discuss strategies that may help parents and caretakers balance the importance of self-care routines in their life during this uncertain time. How can parents/caretakers care for individuals with special needs and still carve out important time for themselves? What can be done to ensure that their needs are also taken care of?

B) Bridging the Gap: How Neurodiverse Young Adults Can Prepare for Employment and Dating
presented by Benjamin Meyer, LCSW

The challenges that neurodiverse young adults face meeting employment demands and finding success in dating are well-documented, with approximately 58 percent of those in their twenties being employed (Singh, 2015), and many reporting social isolation and few romantic prospects. Some are classified as “failure to launch,” despite having multiple gifts and assets to offer a company. On top of these concerns, the world of dating can be fast paced and filled with rejection, causing some to forgo romantic relationships altogether. However, there are concrete strategies for using one’s strengths to thrive at work and in meeting the right person. Developing these skills can result not only in greater professional and social success, but also in increased self-esteem and confidence when overcoming adversity.

Many neurodiverse young adults have unique assets such as memory, innovation, and dependability, to name a few. By studying a workplace culture, the young adult can think of out-of-the-box ways to apply his or her strengths. For example, someone with an aptitude for technology may create an online organizational system, while another may offer presentations. The key is to find what your strengths are and how they can compensate for your weaknesses. In dating, similar techniques can be used that involve meeting others at venues that play to one’s natural abilities and interests, and setting oneself up to exhibit the many positive relationship qualities that neurodiverse young adults can have, such as loyalty, empathy and passion. However, sometimes recognizing one’s strengths takes time, despite the many challenges that have been faced. This is where a combination of psychotherapy and coaching can be a wonderful asset.

C) An Individualized Approach: Teaching College Students to Successfully Navigate Job Interviews
presented by Courtney Butler, MS, BCBA

Adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience challenges securing employment, which may lead to overall underemployment or unemployment. One of the first steps to obtaining employment is participating in a job interview. However, social communication deficits may interfere with the person’s ability to participate in a job interview. The current study evaluated the use of behavioral skills training delivered via remote instruction to teach interview skills to four college students diagnosed with ASD. Results showed
overall improvement during interviews as well as post-training generalization probes with a career development expert. These data suggest that an individualized approach to training may be an effective strategy to help adults with ASD successfully navigate job interviews. We will discuss implications for future research as well as the practical utility of these skills for college students with ASD.

D) Empowering Parents/Guardians to Effectively Advocate for Their Students on the Spectrum

presented by Denise Rekem, Esq. and Judith Weinstock, Esq.

This presentation will provide an overview of special education laws that parents and guardians should understand when advocating for their student’s right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). We will discuss practical strategies for collaborating with your school district to develop a meaningful and appropriate IEP and the strategies for using your knowledge of the law to advocate effectively. We will review the importance of understanding your student’s individual needs through evaluations and other evidence, as well as how to create a record or paper trail of these needs, such as effective email communications with your school district. We will also review legal options you can consider if your school district fails to respond to your concerns or is in disagreement with you regarding your student’s needs.

E) Understanding SSI and Medicaid: Why They are Important and Tips to Navigate the Process

presented by Celine Fortin, MSW, LCSW

This presentation will discuss the importance of SSI and Medicaid for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and how it is the gateway to the adult disability service system. Topics will include preparing to apply for SSI, navigating the application process, how to respond to disability-related questions and filing appeals. The presenter will discuss tips and techniques to use, as well as some "lessons learned" from her years of assisting families, as well as those learned from assisting her own family member.

F) Preparing Your Child for Adulthood: The DDD Application Process

presented by Andrew Meltzer, Esq.

This presentation will provide an overview of the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the state agency which coordinates a continuum of services for adults with special needs age 21 and older. Mr. Meltzer will present a step-by-step guide to assist families in the DDD application process. He will also touch briefly on the types of services DDD provides including, but not limited to: The Community Care Waiver, Residential Services, Funding for Family Caregivers, and Supported Employment Services. This presentation is a must for any family that has a loved one with a developmental disability that may negatively impact his or her ability to live independently as an adult.
G) Social Skills for Neurotypicals: Promoting Equity and Inclusion for People on the Spectrum
presented by Edward Brodkin, MD

An older, more traditional view of the autism spectrum is that autistic individuals need help for “deficits” in their social communication. A newer view is that there is a bi-directional miscommunication between autistic individuals and neurotypicals (the “bidirectional misattunement hypothesis”), and that in order to improve communication, both autistic and neurotypical people need to work on communication skills. In this talk, Dr. Brodkin will focus on ways that neurotypical individuals can communicate more effectively with people on the spectrum. He will focus on the concept of “attunement,” the ability to be aware of one’s own state of mind and body while also tuning in and connecting to another person, and how developing this ability can help all of us, including neurotypicals. Dr. Brodkin will review a framework for understanding attunement that is outlined in his book entitled Missing Each Other that he recently co-authored with Ashley Pallathra. He will review the 4 major elements of attunement – relaxed awareness, listening, understanding, and mutual responsiveness – as well as simple exercises for developing these elements. He will then describe how using an attunement-based approach can help neurotypicals more effectively understand and communicate with people on the spectrum. Finally, Dr. Brodkin will look at how this approach can ultimately contribute to greater equity and inclusion for people on the spectrum.

H) The Importance of Pragmatics in Children with ASD: Progress Through Engagement
presented by Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

It is well-established that individuals with Autism Level One (formerly Asperger Syndrome, PDD-NOS) have difficulty with social communication. This workshop will share the experience of social communication development in a group of four teens (ages 15 to 17 years) with Autism Level One. The weekly virtual group was run by one to two graduate student clinicians under the supervision of licensed speech-language pathologists in a university clinic setting. The principles of engagement through a Floortime approach (Greenspan & Weider, 2007) was used. The majority of skills were built through engaging students in the game UNO™. Significant progress in interaction between group members was noted over a twelve-month period. This workshop will present listeners with the background on the group development, the structure of the group format, an outline of each participant’s goals and progress, and challenges and benefits of the virtual social interaction. After background on the group is provided, focus will be on how caregivers and young adults with ASD can use the group’s principles to strengthen pragmatic development, with a focus on individual strengths and needs.
ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jonathan Kratchman is a Policy Analyst at Healthcare Inc. and a graduate of Rutgers University and the Eagleton Institute of Politics Undergraduate Associates Program. He serves on the Public Policy Committee for Autism Society of America and other Disability Advocacy groups as a self-advocate.

PLENARY SPEAKER

Dr. Robert L. Hendren, D.O., did his residency in general psychiatry at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine, and his child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the Yale Child Study Center. He is board certified in General as well as Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He has been on the faculty at the George Washington University School of Medicine, the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (now Rutgers University) - Robert Wood Johnson and New Jersey Medical Schools. From 2001-2009, he was Professor of Psychiatry and Executive Director and Tsakopoulos-Vismara Chair at the University of California, Davis M.I.N.D. Institute (Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders). His current areas of research and publication interests are translational interventional research including clinical pharmacology, nutraceutical and nutritional trials using biomarkers (MRI, measures of inflammation, oxidative stress, immune function and pharmacogenomics) to enhance resilience in neurodevelopmental disorders. He is currently applying this targeted-outcomes research focus in a collaborative project with the Oak Hill School for youth with severe autism and neurodevelopmental spectrum disorders in San Anselmo, CA.

Dr. Hendren is also past president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2007-2009). He has published over 100 scientific papers and 5 books and has been listed in “The Best Doctors in America” each year, since it was first published in 1996.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Adele Breen-Franklin, OTD, JD, OTR/L is the Program Director of the Entry Level Doctoral Program and an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of the Sciences. Her scholarship interests are in family and client centered care and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Benjamin Meyer, LCSW-R specializes in helping English and Spanish speaking individuals and couples with learning differences to manage workplace challenges, relationships and friendships. He was selected as a social ambassador for the NVLD project in New York City and has published multiple articles, presented at university campuses, and co-presented with Sheri Perlman, OTR LCSW, for the Learning Disability Association of New Jersey. He has been interviewed for podcasts on autism, social media use, and dating, and on adapting to the workplace with NVLD. He writes regularly for a blog on his website, benjaminmeyercsw.com, and has also co-published in a peer-reviewed journal, The Educational Therapist. He maintains a private practice and is licensed to see clients in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Mr. Meyer has earned a certificate in psychodynamic psychotherapy from the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy, as well as completed the Foundations in Family Therapy and Live Clinical Supervision course at the Ackerman Institute for the Family. He also offers workshops on developing dating and professional skills for neurodiverse young adults.

Courtney Butler, MS, BCBA is the Program Coordinator of the College Support Program (CSP) for Students on the Autism Spectrum at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Courtney is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and earned
Denise Dimson Rekem, Esq., a partner at Parles Rekem, LLP, focuses her practice on the representation of individuals with special needs and their families in the areas of early intervention, special education, transition and adult services, residential placements, guardianships, bullying and discipline. Ms. Rekem is a Board Member of JESPY House in South Orange, NJ, an organization serving adults with disabilities to enable them to live successfully in the community, and has volunteered for organizations in the disabilities community throughout the years. She is also a frequent lecturer in the community. Ms. Rekem received her JD from New York University School of Law where she was a member of the Review of Law and Social Change journal. She received her BA with distinction from the University of Michigan. A passionate, persistent advocate, Ms. Rekem is committed to ensuring that the rights and protections of families and their loved ones with disabilities are not denied.

Judith Weinstock, Esq., Of Counsel at Parles Rekem, LLP, has successfully advocated on behalf of individuals with special needs to receive the services, special instruction and accommodations they are entitled to under the law. An experienced attorney, Ms. Weinstock initially practiced environmental law for seven years after graduating Rutgers School of Law-Camden with High Honors, and clerking for the Honorable John J. Hughes (Ret.), Magistrate Judge, United States District Court, District of New Jersey, and the Honorable Gary S. Stein (Ret.), New Jersey Supreme Court. After taking time off to raise her son, Ms. Weinstock resumed her legal career four years ago with great enthusiasm and passion to represent individuals with special needs and their families in the areas of special education, early intervention, transition and adult services, residential placements, and guardianships.

Celine Fortin, MSW, LCSW is a licensed social worker with an MSW from Rutgers University. She has worked in a variety of direct care and administrative positions in both the mental health and developmental disability fields for 37 years. She has been with The Arc of New Jersey since 1990, serving as the Associate Executive Director since 2006. In her role at The Arc, Céline supervises The Arc Family Institute, the NJ Self-Advocacy Project, Planning for Adult Life, and the Criminal Justice Advocacy Program, as well as the organization’s development and marketing initiatives. She also oversees The Arc’s advocacy and support services for children with I/DD and their families.

Andrew Meltzer, Esq., a former classified student who conquered his learning differences and became a special education attorney, helps special needs students attain the success in school and life they are capable of. Mr. Meltzer knows on a deeply personal level the challenges families of children with special needs encounter. His unique personal and professional experiences in special education law makes him a natural and effective advocate for his clients.

Edward S. Brodkin, MD, is the founder and Director of the Adult Autism Spectrum Program at Penn Medicine. Dr. Brodkin is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, and has been recognized as a Top Doctor by both Philadelphia Magazine and by Castle Connelly Medical for over a decade. He is co-author of the recently published book, Missing Each Other: How to Cultivate Meaningful Connections.

Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a practicing speech-language pathologist, Board Certified Fluency Specialist, and Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at Monmouth University. She has been a practicing clinician for 28 years in hospital, school, and private practice settings. Her research interests are largely in language and fluency patterns in children with autism, as well as clinician training and treatment effectiveness. Dr. Scaler Scott has spoken nationally and internationally on the topics of fluency and social pragmatic disorders. She is the author of the book Fluency Plus: Managing Fluency Disorders in Individuals with Multiple Diagnoses (SLACK, Inc.).

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 up to 8 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 10/14/21.
- Additional copies of this form may be downloaded from our website at www.aspennj.org.

CUT AND RETURN THIS PORTION

REGISTRATION FORM:
VIRTUAL FALL CONFERENCE
Begins Sunday, October 24, 2021
(Presentations can be viewed online until Nov. 21, 2021.)

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

Registration Discount Deadline 10/7/21

Please Print:
Name(s) __________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
_________________________________________________
Phone (_______) __________________________________
Email address of each registrant (required) ____________

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

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

WORKSHOPS:
A) Take Care of Yourselves Too! Selfcare for Parents/Caregivers
B) Preparing Neurodiverse Young Adults for Employment and Dating
C) Teaching College Students to Successfully Navigate Job Interviews
D) Empowering Parents to Effectively Advocate for Their Students
E) Understanding SSI/Medicaid: Tips to Navigate the Process
F) Preparing Your Child for Adulthood: DDD Application Process
G) Social Skills for Neurotypicals: Promoting Equity & Inclusion
H) The Importance of Pragmatics in Children with ASD

ASPEN Member? (as of the date of the 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 2021
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) $  95.00 ($125.00 after 10/7/21)
MEMBER (PROFESSIONAL) $155.00 ($185.00 after 10/7/21)
MEMBER (YOUNG ADULT INDIVIDUAL WITH ASD) $  65.00 ($95.00 after 10/7/21)
NON-MEMBER (PARENT or FAMILY MEMBER) $135.00 ($165.00 after 10/7/21)
NON-MEMBER (PROFESSIONAL) $195.00 ($225.00 after 10/7/21)
NON-MEMBER (YOUNG ADULT INDIVIDUAL WITH ASD) $  90.00 ($120.00 after 10/7/21)
ABOUT ASPEN®

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