

## 2010 Spring Conference Speakers and Workshops

8:15am Registration

Keynote Speaker, John Elder Robison

Diagnosed around the time his son was diagnosed, Mr. Robison, author of *Look Me in the Eye: My Journey with Autism*, will talk about the challenges he faced growing up and venturing out on his own without family and social support. He will describe his travels through the music world, including his time working for Pink Floyd's sound company and touring with KISS, and his first forays into traditional employment as an engineer at toy maker Milton Bradley.

Adults Diagnosed Later in Life: A Panel Presentation

Each of our panel members received their diagnosis well out of childhood: late teens, 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond. What resources were available to them? What impact did the diagnosis have? How did the diagnosis affect their relationships, work, family, issues with their children? Did it open a social world for them? How are they doing now?

11:30am -12:45pm – Workshop Period A

A1- Keep Safe! Issues with Law Enforcement and the Legal System  
Carolyn Wolfe, Esq. and Jim Holohan, CFE, CPP

How to avoid unnecessary encounters with law enforcement, maximize your personal safety, preserve your rights, and to effectively deal with legal situations. This workshop will include the dangers of sexting, risky internet activity, and tips and insights about your legal rights.

A2-The Impact of Bullying

Laurie Better Perlis, PsyD, Nicole Elliott, EdM and Shana Nichols, PhD

Adolescents and youth with ASDs are particularly vulnerable to bullying and yet there is limited research and information focused on the immediate and long-term effects. Due to social deficits, patterns of thinking and difficulties

with emotion regulation, bullying often affects self-esteem and overall mental health. This workshop will increase awareness of the prevalence and effects of bullying and illustrate how chronic bullying may result in symptoms of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Coping strategies will be discussed.

A3-Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered  
Lynda Geller, PhD and Renee Soufer, MEd

Individuals with ASD have widely divergent abilities, specifically in organization, self-monitoring, and other related skill sets. These are commonly referred to as the executive functions. It is critical for family, educators, and especially the individuals themselves, to fully understand executive functions and how they affect success in daily life including: accomplishing work, managing time and space, regulating emotions, and social interaction.

A4-Job Sampling and Work Experience  
Nicole Weidenbaum, MS, Ed, SAS

Although used primarily in the transition process for teens in High School this method is valuable for anyone seeking to find the area that they fit in or enjoy working at. During these tough economic times, internships, volunteer opportunities, and other resume builders need to be given special consideration. This workshop will help you learn more about what skills are needed in all jobs and how to go about finding your way in the world of work.

12:45p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch

***Artwork of talented people on the spectrum will be shown throughout lunch.***

1:45pm – 3:00pm - Workshop Period B

B5-Socially Speaking: Improving Successful Interactions  
Rhea Hooper, SLP

This presentation will explore the integral skills needed to create and maintain successful adult relationships. Social cognition, flexibility, perspective taking and comprehending the "hidden rules" will be explored as key components to achieving successful interactions. It is never too late to acquire social savvy!

B6-Life After High School: Decisions! Decisions! Decisions!  
Deborah Gerard, MS

Post-secondary planning requires honest appraisal of academic and organizational abilities, as well as assessment of level of maturity and emotional stability. Success in college may depend more on non-academic factors than on high school grades and standardized test scores. This presentation will discuss the many decisions as well as choices parents and young people will face while considering life after high school.

B7-Strategies for Success in the Workplace  
Nicholas Weatherly, PhD, BCBA and Virginia Isaacs Cover, MSW, MBA

Individuals with ASD can be successfully employed but are stymied by workplace issues that are often not task related. Identifying potential challenges as well as planning and implementing behavioral strategies along with the supervisor, client and client's family is the key to job success in the workplace.

B8-Treating Mood Disorders  
Joseph Gartner, MD

Adolescents and adults with ASDs, particularly those who function at a high level, are subject to significantly increased risk of acute and chronic mood disorders. Depression and mood dysregulation can be particularly severe for those leaving school and entering the adult world of college, work, independent living and serious relationships. This session will cover the presentation and diagnosis of mood disorders and outline treatment strategies including an overview of pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, and other options.

3:15pm – 4:30pm – Workshop Period C

## C9-Managing Your Physical and Mental Health

Zosia Zaks, MS

Maintaining physical and mental health is a challenge for those with ASDs. Sensory issues, poor body awareness, and concrete thinking make it difficult to monitor and independently take care of personal health. This workshop will show strategies that can be used to promote personal care, communicate effectively with health professionals, and make positive health decisions.

## C10-What's the POINT (Pursuing Our Independence Together)

Ellen Forrest, Esq., Marion Morgenthal, Elise Hahn Felix, LCSW, Steven Yellen, LMSW and POINT Program Participants

This presentation will share the history, program design, and funding of the Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS)/Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA) POINT Program, a unique and replicable program that supports adults with special needs to live independently and within a network of peers. Partnership and collaboration among agencies and parents will be highlighted.

## C11-Navigating Adult Services

Halley Ceglia, LMSW and Gloria Wagner, CLTC, LUTCF

This workshop will introduce and explain the variety of services available and what steps to take to receive assistance. Discussion will include: the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD); Social Security entitlements; Medicaid; transition plans from school to after school living; Vocational and Educational Services for the Independence of the Disabled (VESID); financial planning options; legal planning; future living; and health care services.

## C12-“Will Attend College” Is Not A Transition Plan

Nick Villani, MS and Lynda Geller, PhD

Too often students on the autism spectrum are academically successful but do not develop all the skills necessary for college and employment success. The

Upward Options staff works cooperatively with school districts to address executive function, social skills, self advocacy skills, and career planning through specific instruction, work experiences, college course sampling, portfolio building, and community experiences.