

# Autistics Present: A Symposium On Autistic Culture, Identity, and Transitions

(High School, College, & Career) **Saturday, October 22 at Bellevue College**

9:15-9:45 a.m.	Check-In N201
10 a.m.	Welcome N201
10:15-11a.m.	Opening Keynote Speaker: Ari Ne'eman N201
11:15-12:15	Breakout Workshops – see below
12:30-2 p.m.	Lunch pick up N201
2-3 p.m.	Breakout Workshops – see below
3:15-4 p.m.	Closing Keynote Speaker: Morénike Giwa Onaiwu N201

## WORKSHOPS

### IDENTITY & CULTURE TRACK

2-3 pm

#### ***CREATING SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR AUTISTIC WOMEN***

AUTISM WOMEN'S NETWORK; LEI WILEY-MYDSKE, JENNIFER MUZQUIZ, MORÉNIKE GIWA ONAIWU

This workshop will discuss how Autism Women's Network utilizes various social media platforms to form a supportive community by and for Autistic women with a focus on self-advocacy, social justice, activism, disability rights and pride which honors the many intersectional experiences of all Autistic women. Participants will learn ways to create safe and supportive spaces that promote self-determination for Autistic women and will learn the value of autistic mentorship, leadership, empowerment, self-advocacy, and centering actually autistic voices to create effective social change.

11:15-12:15

#### ***FORGED IN FIRE: TRAUMA AS A FOUNDATION OF AUTISTIC IDENTITY AND CULTURE***

SHAIN NEUMEIER\*

Autistic people learn that we are different from our peers and even our family members through what are often harsh and traumatic experiences, ranging from pervasive bullying to coercive "normalizing" therapies to outright abuse by some parents and caregivers. This has shaped not only the autistic community's political advocacy, but also everything from in-jokes to the ways in which we support each other. This workshop will discuss some of the common problems autistic people face that many often don't realize are common, and how our community responds to them both within and outside of our own circle.

11:15-12:15

#### ***HISTORY OF US EUGENICS MOVEMENT***

IVANOVA SMITH

This presentation will focus on the ways that the U.S. Eugenics movement targeted people with developmental, intellectual and psychiatric disabilities as well as people of color and the poor. Ivanova Smith will discuss the history of the eugenics movement and how negative attitudes about disability impact the autistic community and the autistic and disability rights movements.

Register by October 14: [www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/conference-registration/](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/conference-registration/)

2-3 pm

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***SMASH THE PATHOLOGY PARADIGM! DISABILITY JUSTICE IN LIBERATION WORK***

LYDIA BROWN\*

Our bodies are sick, disabled, mad, wobbly, flappy; we are everywhere, working, loving, playing, laboring for liberation, yearning for community. We must critically examine how ableism intersects with every system of oppression and centers the bodies and minds of those who are more or less considered “normal,” “healthy,” “desirable,” and “ideal,” while others are treated as “deviant,” “sick,” “defective,” and “undesirable.” Disability justice calls for us to move beyond commodification and superficial inclusion – and toward social justice movements where disabled people are integral, valued parts of our communities and radical access and space for every body's complexities are the norm.

2-3 pm

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***THE RIGHT TO BE AUTISTIC: RE-FRAMING AUTISM AS NEURODIVERSITY***

HARRISON SCOTT AND EMMA VANDERKLIFT

Harrison and Emma will draw on their unique and respective experiences both in the school system and as activists. Harrison will present his letter to educators, “Dear Teacher: A Letter from Harrison”. As a young person with a diagnosis, Harrison suggests how educators (and others) can best support him. As an older person, undiagnosed as a child, Emma will offer her perspective on what supports might have been helpful. Workshop participants will experience the various ways that individuals can develop a sense of Autistic identity and pride.

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**TRANSITIONS TRACK**

2-3 pm

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***AUTISM AT COLLEGE: AUTISTIC BELLEVUE COLLEGE STUDENTS PANEL DISCUSSION***

BELLEVUE COLLEGE STUDENTS, FACILITATOR SARA SANDERS GARDNER\*

Hear from autistic Bellevue College students who are using a variety of programs, supports, and services. Panel members include students using the Autism Spectrum Navigators (ASN) program, students pursuing a degree in Occupational Life Skills (OLS), students using accommodations through Bellevue College’s Disability Resource Center (DRC), and students assembling their supports from other services and groups on campus. You’ll find that there are many ways to succeed at college!

11:15-  
12:15

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***AUTISM AT WORK: MICROSOFT AUTISM INCLUSIVE HIRING PANEL DISCUSSION***

MICROSOFT EMPLOYEES, MODERATOR: DEAN BETZ, PANEL: JOEY CHEMIS, KATHERINE HART, MAX GOLDSTEIN

Hear from several autistic Microsoft employees who know first-hand what it’s like to work at a large tech company! You’ll also learn about Microsoft’s Autism Hiring Program and other inclusive hiring initiatives at Microsoft.

11:15-  
12:15

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***COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY IN THE AUTISM COMMUNITY: AN INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL CHANGE***

PARENTING AUTISTIC CHILDREN WITH LOVE & ACCEPTANCE (PACLA); KASSIANE SIBLEY, JENNIFER MUZQUIZ, LEI WILEY-MYDSKE

In order to successfully transition from one learning environment to the next, autistic individuals must feel safe to do so. Those who attend this workshop will be better able to understand ways to create a safer and more just world for Autistic people. Presenters will list effective strategies that honor diverse processing and communication styles and foster a relationship of trust, discuss and share examples of collaborative advocacy projects created through the use of social media platforms and which amplify the voices of Autistic adults, explain the positive impact of the online relationships in building community and in supporting Autistic people in self-determining roles that impact public policy and opinion.

11:15-  
12:15

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***FOLLOWING YOUR HEART: HOW TO NAVIGATE THE ROUGH STUFF & BUILD A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE TAILOR-MADE JUST FOR YOU***

AMY ALWARD\*

There are many ways to navigate life; transitions and change are always hard for everyone, but especially so for those on the spectrum. Participants will learn how to make transitions easier to navigate - with great self-care. Regardless of what others or the rules say, getting in touch with your emotional center will always put you on the right path to a better quality life. This workshop will support autistic people (or those who love and work with them) in building a strong, individual base from which to weather life's storms.

2-3 pm

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***LEVERAGING INTERESTS, HOBBIES, AND STRENGTHS INTO CAREERS***

EVE ESCHENBACHER\*

Move beyond the dismal employment statistics towards positive change in this workshop that takes a look at interests and strengths through the lifespan as a way to find meaningful and lasting employment. This eye-opening workshop will stir your imagination! (You'll also learn how Eve leveraged her own interest in Japanese culture into an amazing career in video games – without becoming a programmer!)

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