



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (I/DD) EDUCATION SERIES

Diversity in Neurodivergence: Girls & Women with Autism

January 27, 2025 - via Live Webinar

Introduction to PDA Profile in Autism

February 3, 2025 - via Live Webinar

Co-Occurring Disorders: I/DD & Mental Health

March 6, 2025 - via Live Webinar

About the Series

Do you want to learn more about intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) or explore recent advances in I/DD? We have grouped three virtual workshops to help you do just that. Learn more about girls and women with autism, discover what a PDA profile is and learn neurodiversity-affirming intervention strategies, or figure out which mental health conditions co-occur with IDD and learn positive support strategies. We will even give you a discount for attending all three!

Attend all three workshops for a discount. See details in the Registration section.

Target Audience

- Early Intervention professionals
- Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors
- Psychologists
- Developmental Disabilities professionals
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Psychiatric nurses
- Case managers
- Psychotherapists
- Counselors
- Social Workers
- All interested behavioral health professionals

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Diversity in Neurodivergence: Girls & Women with Autism

January 27, 2025

About the Workshop

This workshop introduces autism from a feminist, strengths-based, neurodiversity perspective and explores historical points of view on autism and gender. An in-depth look into the Female Autism Phenotype theory explains why girls and women with autism often go unrecognized and the consequences of under-diagnosis. Common overviews of autism state that the neurodevelopmental disability occurs four times more often in boys; however, this is based on incomplete research evidence that does not consider different ways that girls can display autism symptoms. In-depth research across the lifespan considers historical diagnostic bias towards boys, which informed current autism criteria and behavioral manifestations. This newer knowledge reveals that girls and women are often diagnosed later in life than their male counterparts. Together, participants will discuss successes and challenges in their fields and collaborate on methods to improve gender-competent care for individuals with autism.

Objectives

- **Describe** characteristics of the “female autism phenotype”
- **Examine** biases and microaggressions experienced by autistic women
- **Demonstrate** the importance of timely diagnosis and appropriate interventions for quality of life of autistic girls and women
- **Implement** culturally competent care related to gender within one’s profession

Agenda

- 8:45 a.m. Log-In
- 9:00 a.m. Overview of Neurodiversity Paradigm and Identity-First Language
- 9:20 a.m. Background of Gender and Autism
- 9:40 a.m. Introduction to the Female Autism Phenotype
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m. Masking Autism Traits
- 10:35 a.m.
 - Introduction to LGBTQ+ Diversity on the Autism Spectrum
 - Consequences of Late Diagnosis and the Importance of Gender-Competent Care
- 11:05 a.m. Wrap Up/Questions
- 11:15 a.m. Adjournment

Faculty

Caroline M. Garrett, MSW, is a graduate of the UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work and earned bachelor’s degrees in Social Work and Psychology from Meredith College. Caroline also completed the year-long Leadership in Neurodevelopmental Disorders (LEND) Traineeship in 2020. Caroline is an autistic self-advocate and weaves personal experiences into their research, advocacy work, and direct practice with people who have disabilities. Caroline has worked with individuals with autism and developmental disabilities across the lifespan for five years and operates from lenses of neurodiversity, intersectionality, social justice, and anti-oppression. Caroline is specifically interested in the intersection of autism, mental health, and gender and plans to pursue clinical licensure to focus on holistic, person-centered mental healthcare with neurodivergent individuals.

Introduction to PDA Profile in Autism

February 3, 2025

About the Workshop

This workshop will provide information about a lesser known, but highly important autistic/ADHD or otherwise neurodivergent identity called PDA – known as Pathological Demand Avoidance in the United Kingdom, but often referred to as Pervasive Drive for Autonomy by those in the neurodivergent community. Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is a term used to describe a profile within the autism spectrum characterized by an extreme avoidance of everyday demands and requests. Not officially recognized as a separate diagnosis in the DSM-5-TR or ICD-10, but it's often discussed within the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). PDA is a controversial concept and not universally accepted by all professionals in the field. Some argue that the behaviors associated with PDA can be explained by existing diagnostic criteria for ASD, while others believe that PDA represents a distinct profile within the spectrum that requires different approaches to support and intervention. This profile is rarely, if ever, addressed in academic or clinical training programs or settings for behavioral health practitioners. Thus, many practitioners are unaware they are likely encountering clients struggling to live in the world with PDA. A general overview of PDA, as well as information about differential diagnoses will be presented. Identifying characteristics of PDA and selected neurodiversity-affirming interventions that will benefit those with PDA and low support needs will be reviewed.

Objectives

- **Define** PDA and identify at least four PDA characteristics
- **Describe** differential diagnoses for PDA and other mental health diagnosis that may be mistaken for PDA
- **Analyze** how specific issues such as shame and Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) can impact those with PDA
- **Name** neurodiversity-affirming intervention strategies that can be helpful

Agenda

- 8:45 a.m. Log-In
- 9:00 a.m.
 - Overview of PDA Profile and Characteristics
 - Impact on Family Dynamics
 - PDA and Differential Diagnoses
 - Selective Mutism, Shame, and RSD
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m.
 - Neurodiversity-Affirming Intervention Strategies
 - How to Support Individuals with a PDA Profile (Low Support Needs)
- 11:05 a.m. Wrap Up/Questions
- 11:15 a.m. Adjournment

Faculty

Lydia Stellwag, MSW, LCSWA, is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill's Master of Social Work program. She is currently a psychotherapist in private practice providing autistic and ADHD individuals with neurodiversity-affirming care. Lydia's practice is informed by somatic and memory reconsolidation work that is trauma informed. Lydia is TF-CBT and EMDR trained. As a self-autistic and ADHD advocate, Lydia also leans on lived experience and the voices of the neurodivergent community to inform her clinical practice.

Co-Occurring Disorders: I/DD & Mental Health

March 6, 2025

About the Workshop

This workshop will describe the common mental health conditions that co-occur in the I/DD population and how the components of executive functioning can be impacted. Biopsychosocial vulnerabilities can exacerbate behaviors and the expression of psychiatric symptoms. Positive support strategies will be presented to manage and evade crisis situations.

Objectives

- **Define** I/DD and the components of executive functioning that can be impacted
- **Describe** at least three (3) common mental health conditions that co-occur in the I/DD population
- **List** positive support strategies for those with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions

Agenda

- 8:45 a.m. Log-In
- 9:00 a.m. Understanding I/DD and mental health vulnerabilities
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m.
 - Common Mental Health Conditions and Positive Supports
 - Break Out Activity
- 11:05 a.m. Wrap Up/Questions
- 11:15 a.m. Adjournment

Faculty

Suzy Mayberry, MSW, LCSW, is a MSW graduate from East Carolina University and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She has been working with neurodevelopmental individuals for ten years in various capacities. She is currently the NC START East Clinical Director. Suzy is also a training adjunct with the National Center for START Services and supports the training of START Coordinators nationwide.

Handouts & Evaluations

Handouts will be available online only. One week prior to the program, registrants will receive an event reminder email with instructions to access handouts along with other program information.

Evaluations will be emailed after the program. Once the evaluation has been completed, your certificate will be available.

Credit

Category A-NC Psychology Credit

Each program will provide 2 contact hours of (Category A) continuing education for North Carolina psychologists.

No partial credit will be given.

Contact Hours

Certificates reflecting 2 contact hours of education will be awarded at the completion of each program.

National Board for Certified Counselors Credit (NBCC)

Eastern AHEC has been approved by NBCC as an approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 5645. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Eastern AHEC is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.



Registration Information

Registration is online only at www.easternahec.net and requires a current MyAHEC account. Registration will close at the start of each program.

Registration Fee: **40.00 for each workshop**
Attend all 3: \$108.00

The registration fee includes program materials and credit.

Webinar Information

A link and information regarding joining via webinar will be included in your event reminder email(s).

Click here for technical requirements and privacy information.

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You may not record, reproduce, publish, distribute, modify, create derivative works, or transmit any program content and/or material presented during continuing professional development (CPD) activities. Continuing professional credit will not be given for unauthorized copied and transmitted recordings of any CPD programs and other activities. Prior registration and attendance are required to receive continuing professional credit.

Eastern AHEC Cancellation Policy

- Cancellations must be in writing (easternahec@ecu.edu).
- Registrants canceling between two weeks and two full business days prior to the first day of the event are refunded at 70% of the registration fee subject to a minimum \$25 cancellation fee.
- No refunds or credits will be given for cancellations received less than two full business days prior to the event.
- Cancellations greater than two weeks prior to the event will receive 100% refund.
- No vouchers will be issued in lieu of a refund.
- Transfers/substitute(s) welcome (notify in advance of the program).

Americans with Disabilities Act



Individuals requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), should contact the ECU Department of Disability Support Services at (252) 737-1016 (V/TTY) at least five business days prior to the program.

If you would like more information on these programs, please contact Kim Truesdell at truesdellk22@ecu.edu.