

ABCT AUTISM

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

July 2026 Digest



The Co-Chair Connection

Welcome to our inaugural Autism SIG Monthly Digest! Here you'll find a summary of recent listserv activity, including new job openings and research and advocacy opportunities, along with our SIG Spotlight! Note: All **bolded** **underlined** text throughout the digest will link to more information.

This month we are looking ahead to the ABCT Annual Convention and are excited to share updates on our SIG's pre-conference planning, as well as details on SIG Expo Submissions. We also share some important legislative and policy updates with opportunities for advocacy.

We want to express our gratitude for this incredible community. Your collective efforts continue to inspire us. If you would like to have your information featured in the monthly digest or on Autism SIG socials, see below for more information. As always, this group thrives on your engagement, so please don't hesitate to reach out with feedback on this initiative. Thank you, and we hope you enjoy the read!

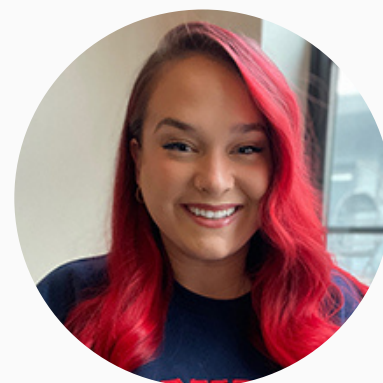
Warmly,



Katherine Pickard, PhD



Sadaf Khawar, PhD



Jordan Albright, PhD

Save the Date:

ABCT Autism SIG's 2026 Pre-Conference

Thursday, November 12, 2026
1:30-5:30 pm EST
Happy hour to follow

The Pre-Conference Event Will Be Held At:

*Center for Autism Services, Science,
and Innovation
Kennedy Krieger Institute
Baltimore, Maryland*

Call for ABCT SIG Expo Submissions

We are excited to announce our annual call for SIG Poster Expo submissions! The highest-scored submission will be invited to give an oral presentation at SIG Business Meeting at ABCT (time and date TBD)!

We encourage submissions that align with the mission of ABCT and our SIG. We have attached our scoring rubric below.

ONLY trainees (i.e., from undergraduate through postdoctoral fellows) can apply as the first (and presenting) author. Priority will be given to abstracts with completed data collection. Abstracts will be scored based on their significance, innovation, approach, commitment to underrepresented populations, and alignment with **the Autism SIG mission.**

Please submit your abstract **using this form** by **August 7, 2026, at 11:59 pm PST.**

What you need for submission:

- Title of presentation
- Authors* and institutional affiliation
- Conflicts of interest for authors (or N/A)
- Abstract (500 word maximum)
- Brief explanation on how your submission aligns with our **mission statement**
- Indicate whether your submission should be evaluated for consideration as a POSTER ONLY, ORAL ONLY, or POSTER and ORAL presentation.

Questions? Contact Conference Planning co-chairs Jessica Granieri (jgranieri@ebp-nyc.com) or Alexis Khuu (khuual73@rowan.edu).

SIG Spotlight

This section is dedicated to getting to know the incredible individuals who make up our SIG community. Each month, we will feature one or more SIG member(s), ranging from graduate students and early-career researchers to seasoned clinicians and advocates!

Our goal is to highlight the diverse paths, passions, and projects within our group, fostering deeper connections and potential collaborations across the ABCT autism community.

Diondra Straiton-Webster, PhD.



Dr. Straiton-Webster is a member of our Diversity and Communication and Outreach committees and is an incoming Assistant Professor in the child/family clinical psychology program at the University of Miami. She holds a PhD in clinical psychology from Michigan State University and completed her predoctoral internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Psychiatry. Her research focuses on improving the quality of autism interventions delivered in publicly funded behavioral health settings, with a focus on caregiver-mediated naturalistic developmental behavioral interventions (CM-NDBIs). Dr. Straiton-Webster has clinical expertise in working with neurodivergent and typically developing youth in publicly funded settings, including CM-NDBIs, cognitive-behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, and evidence-based practices in classroom settings. She will be launching the MOSAIC (Maximizing Opportunities to Scale Autism Interventions in Communities) Lab and will be recruiting doctoral students for this cycle.

CONGRATS Diondra!

Listserv Lowdown

In Case You Missed It (ICYMI) - Below are submissions to the listserv that you may have missed this month!

Research Recruitment Roundup

- **Invitation to Participate in Research Study on Acceptability of Pivotal Response Treatment**

Researchers at Stanford University are conducting a study to understand more about how a common early intervention for Autistic children is perceived by caregivers from diverse backgrounds. The study consists of watching some video clips about Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) and filling out an online survey. Some participants will be invited to participate in an optional follow-up interview via Zoom. You are eligible to participate if you are the caregiver/parent of an Autistic child under 10 years old. Participants will receive a gift card for participating.

- **BC Intersections Lab Research Study - Recruiting Clients and Therapists**

Researchers at Boston College are hoping to interview autistic adult clients living in Massachusetts, who are either currently in therapy, or have previously been in therapy, with non-autistic therapists, for at least three months. They are also recruiting non-autistic licensed psychotherapists across the US who currently work, or who have previously worked, with autistic adult clients, for at least three months. The study involves participants completing one study session either in-person at Boston College (Chestnut Hill, MA) or virtually (via Zoom). This involves completing a semi-structured interview and questionnaires, and will last up to 75-90 minutes. Eligible participants will receive a \$25 electronic gift card for their participation.

- **Deaf Autistic Adults: Share your mental health therapy experiences and help improve mental health access!**

Doctoral candidate Kristin Walker at Stony Brook University is currently looking for participants for her dissertation study examining deaf autistic adults' mental health therapy experiences. Earn a \$50 Amazon gift card! **American Sign Language (ASL) version** of the flyer (4-minute video)

Want to learn more? (**watch an in-depth introduction to this research**; 12-minute video)

Listserv Lowdown

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Career Corner

- **Job posting for Clinical Research Coordinator @ UMass Chan Medical School**

Dr. Sarabeth Broder-Fingert is Executive Director of the Shriver Center. As the director of the LEAD Lab, Dr. Broder-Fingert studies innovations in early autism diagnosis and treatment. Recent/current studies include novel treatments for very young children with high likelihood for autism, health equity initiatives in improving access to services, and studies assessing novel technology for use in autism diagnosis. The CRC-II will work on multiple projects within the LEAD Lab, under the direction of Dr. Sarabeth Broder-Fingert and in collaboration with other faculty within the Shriver Center (e.g., Drs. Marisa Petruccelli, Kyle Frost).

Workshops & Webinars

- **Applying Implementation Science in Autism Research** webinar hosted by the Autism Research Consortium in Behavioral Health, Systems of Care, and Communication on **July 21st** via Zoom
 - Review implementation science and how it applies to autism research
 - Discuss how to leverage organizational-level implementation strategies to support use of autism-focused evidence-based interventions in community settings

Call for Donations for Student Travel Awards



It's the time of year where we make a call for donations that support travel awards for students to attend the ABCT convention. Please consider making donations! Last year, we were able to provide four travel awards, two of which went to autistic trainees. Supporters will be thanked with virtual plaques at our Business Meeting to acknowledge their generous support that increases accessibility for autistic people and trainees. You will also receive an email receipt from our platform.

Advocacy in Action

Explore this month's top advocacy updates, policy changes, and immediate opportunities for you to drive meaningful change.

- **Threat to Community Integration and Civil Rights**

A recent Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) memorandum (issued June 18th) declared that federal agencies lack the authority to enforce the ADA's "integration mandate." For over twenty years, this mandate has legally required states to provide services to neurodivergent individuals and those with disabilities in the most integrated, community-based settings possible rather than isolating them in institutions. While Olmstead precedent remains the law, disability advocacy groups warn that the federal government's sudden decision to halt enforcement gives states a green light to strip funding from vital Home- and Community-Based Services, risking a tragic return to institutional segregation.

To read more, check out the [**Autistic Self Advocacy Network \(ASAN\)**](#) or [**The Arc**](#).

- **Department of Education Outsourcing Special Education and Civil Rights**

On June 16th the U.S. Department of Education announced they were transferring the management of federal special education programs, including administration of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to the Department of Health and Human Services, while shifting key civil rights investigation duties to the Department of Justice. Although the legal protections of IDEA and the right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) remain unchanged on paper, advocates argue that this dismantling fragments vital K-12 coordination, forces an outdated "medical model", and creates a chaotic, siloed system that heavily compromises federal oversight and school accountability.

To read more, check out [**The Arc**](#) and [**ASAN**](#) statements.

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- **Protect Financial Autonomy for Autistic Individuals - Support the ENABLE Act**

Economic security is a cornerstone of community living. Autism Speaks has launched a grassroots campaign calling on Congress to pass the ENABLE Act and a package of supporting ABLE bills. These bipartisan pieces of legislation seek to permanently protect tax-free savings incentives, enabling autistic individuals to work, save, and thrive without risking their Medicaid or SSI eligibility.

If you would like to write to your representatives to support financial independence across the lifespan, you can use the quick-action form here: [**Autism Speaks ABLE Bills Campaign**](#).

- **Protect Federal Investments in Psychological Science and Behavioral Health Services**

The American Psychological Association (APA) has launched an campaign to oppose a sweeping new rule proposed by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that threatens to restrict federal grant-making for behavioral health and identity-specific research. For our Autism SIG, this proposal directly endangers the pipeline of evidence-based psychological science and services that support neurodivergent individuals.

Please take a moment to protect scientific funding and essential support systems by sending a message to your representatives through the [**APA Services Advocacy Action Center**](#).

Resource Hub



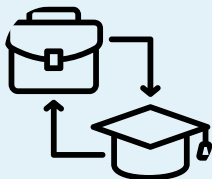
Autism Resource Library

List of autism-related resources, organized by target audience (e.g., clinicians, young adults) and topics (e.g., gender and sexuality, perspectives from non-speakers).



Autism Research Faculty

Our Training & Development committee recently updated and expanded our database of universities and faculty offering doctoral-level training related to autism and developmental disabilities. Check it out if you are applying to doctoral programs!



Clinical Internship Programs

For doctoral students applying to clinical internship, we also have a database of APA-accredited clinical internship programs with autism-related activities and tracks.



Joining the Autism SIG

We are excited to welcome new SIG members who are also members of ABCT! Non-members can still join our listserv to receive email updates and event notifications. Click or scan to learn more about SIG membership benefits.



Autism SIG's LinkTree

Please find helpful links on our linktree page, including our LinkedIn page!

Monthly Digest Committee



How to contribute to the monthly digest

If you want to be featured or share information to be included in the monthly digest, please use **this form** by July 20th!



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Co-Chair
Brown University



Britney Jeyanayagam
Co-Chair
St. John's University



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University of Miami



Angela Constantine
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Kristin Walker
Stony Brook University



Nina Menon
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Augusta University



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