

Connecting Wisconsin

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A Publication from the Autism Society of Wisconsin

Message from the President

Hello and thank you for reading the Autism Society of Wisconsin newsletter. This is my first letter to you as your new President, so I'd like to introduce myself and cover my goals for my term as your President.

I've been with the Autism Society of Wisconsin for almost eight years now as a member, serving on the Board of Directors as the Autism Society of Northeast Wisconsin (ASNEW) Affiliate representative for the last seven years and appointed as the ASW Treasurer and Financial Committee chairperson for the last three years. In 2007 shortly before moving to the Green Bay area, my son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3. Now at the age of 11, he is a mainstreamed 6th grader, who has several "best" friends and enjoys playing tackle football with the local chapter of Pop Warner. He was very successful utilizing ABA in-home therapy and a GFCF dietary restriction. These along with many hours of socialization at the YMCA camps and tons of hours explaining "why" as he grew up, he has turned into a fine young man that is an excellent role model for his little brother.



My professional background is that of a Computer Security Architect working for a California based company. I've worked in the Information Technology industry for over 30 years and have held many positions from Engineer to Director. I'm also a retired US Air Force veteran with over 20 years of service to our country working primarily in military intelligence and communications.

It is with great honor and enthusiasm that I begin my term as your President. The primary goal I want to achieve during my term as President will be to finish the great work that was started by Dale Prahl and continued by Michele Matz over the last two Presidential terms, which is to bring individuals onto our board with expertise in areas that will assist our organization to continue to grow and develop. Once completed, our organization will be able to attract and retain community leaders from around the state with influential contacts and relationships that will help drive our policies and programs both inside the State Capital and in our local communities.

Thank you again for this opportunity to give back to a wonderful organization that once was such a help to our newly diagnosed family and continues to support and provide education and services to a community that has so much to contribute to our society.

Respectfully,
Michael Riemer

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER CHANGES

Please note that beginning in January of 2016, the Autism Society of Wisconsin printed newsletter, *Connecting Wisconsin*, will be sent to Autism Society of Wisconsin members only. To continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter, please become a member by completing the member application on page 7. An electronic version of the newsletter will still be available to everyone. If you'd like to join our email list or if you're not sure if you're a member, contact Kelly at asw@asw4autism.org or 920-558-4602.

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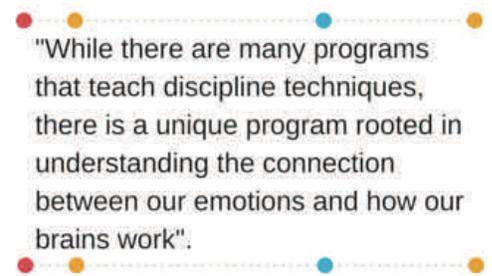
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What is Conscious Discipline?

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca McMorrow Parenting is hard work! In the thick of it, we may feel isolated and alone. We've all experienced crying kids in the grocery store, or the dreaded phone call home from school. While we can all relate to the challenges of parenting, there's another deeper connection we all share. It's remarkable to consider that even with all the variations that exist within families, we are united in one very common desire. It is a longing we share regardless of the vast and varied differences that exist. What is this connection? As parents, we want our children to grow into successful, helpful and happy adults. We want our children to strive with every inch of who they are and who they are becoming to grow into their potential and beyond. We want our children to grow into adults who have a solid sense that they belong and who will contribute in their own way to something beyond themselves. We hold this vision no matter what our child's talents, challenges, personality traits, or complexities may be. While what this actually looks like may be very different from one child to the next, the vision that we hold is the same.

With the recognition of this shared vision, we begin to ask ourselves, 'how can the way we parent help our child(ren) to achieve his or her potential?' We often find ourselves thrust into the experience of parenthood with the skills that have been handed down from our parents or families to guide us. We tend to parent the way we were parented. We use discipline strategies that our parents used. Some of those were helpful and some were not. Some were based on fear, some on love. It's important to understand this because how we discipline our children literally shapes the way their brain develops. Whether we realize it or not, how we were disciplined has shaped us as well.

While there are many programs that teach discipline techniques, there is a unique program rooted in understanding the connection between our emotions and how our brains work. *Conscious Discipline* is a comprehensive social emotional development program that is designed with this understanding as its foundation. Understanding and practicing the skills that are part of this program can have a lasting and profound impact on how our children view themselves and can ultimately shape the people who they become. This transformation happens for our children to the extent that we, as parents, are able to become aware of our reaction patterns, create a space for change to occur, and connect with our kids in the present moment. The principles of *Conscious Discipline* hold true for all children. Traditional discipline approaches are based on rewards and punishments with the end goal of obtaining obedience. *Conscious Discipline* is based on a very different approach. It is based on the understanding that when we are able to control ourselves, it has a profound impact on others. Another understanding is that connectedness governs behavior. Lastly, conflict is viewed as an opportunity to teach new or missing skills. Based on this premise, it becomes essential that we must change ourselves first. Only then can we model our expectations for our children in order to achieve the vision that we hold for them.



"While there are many programs that teach discipline techniques, there is a unique program rooted in understanding the connection between our emotions and how our brains work".

When we view conflict as an opportunity to teach, we stop trying to control children and their behavior. We start to see conflict as an opportunity for children to learn to become responsible for themselves. In order for this to happen, it's important to understand the how the brain works. When conflict arises, we experience stress and the lower center of brain takes over. This region of the brain is important, but has limited skills. It's not capable of problem solving, only defending or surrendering. A great skill to start practicing when conflict arises is to Smile, Take a Deep breath, And Relax. Become a S.T.A.R.! While this may sound too simple to be effective, without this brief pause, we tend to react to the conflict instead of being able to access our own brilliance.

By practicing active calming you have access to the higher centers of your brain, where problem solving occurs. By modeling active calming for your child(ren), you are teaching the strategy to them as well. Parents of children with autism experience higher levels of stress than other parents. Children with autism also experience higher levels of stress and anxiety. Practicing being a S.T.A.R. during real life situations gives you the chance to create a space where you can respond with thoughtfulness from the higher center of the brain instead of react to the conflict from the lower center of the brain. While this is only one skill of many skills on the *Conscious Discipline* journey, it is an important one and takes lots of practice. Be kind to yourself as you begin and enjoy what you discover along the way.

If interested in learning more please visit consciousdiscipline.com.

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www.asw4autism.org

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Spring 2015

Welcome to the Awesome of Being Different. Together.

Autism Society of Wisconsin Fall Conference
Presented by Jennifer O'Toole
October 1, 2015
Waukesha County Technical College

Early Bird Registration: July 6-31
Member: \$100
Non-Member: \$125

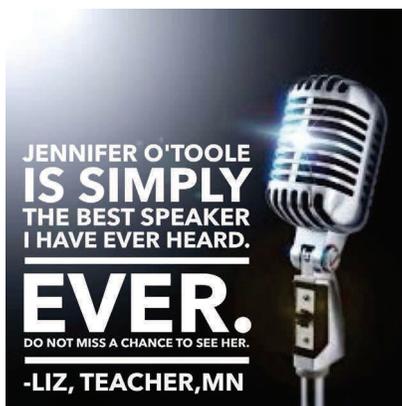
General Registration: August 1- September 21
Member: \$125
Non-Member: \$150

An Aspie, mother of three Asperkids, bestselling author of the Asperkids series, teacher, and social worker, whatever your connection to the spectrum might be....it's one she shares. And understands. With her trademark wit, cheek, and "well, now, that makes sense" explanations everyone can understand, Jennifer speaks from the heart.



Jennifer's opening talk, "Relentless Possibility (and a Little Bit of Caffeine)" is foundational. Smart ideas spoken plainly in ways that challenge veteran professionals and give real hope to families just beginning their spectrum journeys. It's "the need to know" everyone needs to really understand: the "evil nemesis" that is anxiety. The real effects of sensory stuff. The secret power of special interests. "Obstacle illusions," learning detours, kindness, and – in "all-caps," RESPECT.

Next, Jennifer shows us how to shake up our parenting, our teaching, and our plans with NON-LAME FUN - spectrum style! Teach flexible thinking by dissolving eggshells. Teach perspective by making mosaics, optical illusions, chemical density experiments or smart phone scavenger hunts. This talk is bursting with go-to ideas for creative, concrete solutions that audiences can use the very next day. It's play. With purpose. And tattooed bananas.



Register for the Fall Conference!

Early Bird Registrations are now being accepted.

Register online or complete the fillable form at
http://www.asw4autism.org/conferences_workshops.html
(Discounted Early Bird Rates expire on July 31st!)

Exhibitor Registration

Information tables only

http://www.asw4autism.org/pdf/2015_Fall_Exhibitor_Application.pdf

Questions regarding the conference may be directed to Melissa Vande Velden at mvandevelden@asw4autism.org or (920) 973-6636.

Winning Essay Contest Entry

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, the Autism Society of Wisconsin sponsors an essay contest to recognize positive friendships between students with autism and their peers. We're sharing a winning essay. from this year.

Hello my name is Isabella; I am 12 years old in the 6th grade at Van Brunt Elementary School in Horicon, WI. I am the ONLY girl with autism in grades 4-6. It's hard being the only girl. I was diagnosed with autism when I was 6, at first I didn't understand why I was different nor did I care. I didn't want to play with anyone. When the kids would play with me, I didn't like what they were play and would walk away. I would never look at anyone when they talked to me.



When I was in the 2nd grade I met this girl named Valyssa. She would play with me when she saw me all by myself. I would play with her for a few minutes then go off by myself. As I went through the grades 3-5 she and I would remain friends. In 5th grade we had a few sleep overs. My Grandma (whom I live with) explained to her that I had autism and what some of my symptoms are. Val was someone I could talk to. Kids used to pick on me really bad and she would tell me it's okay when she would see me crying or help me in class when I got frustrated. She understood that I was different and liked me for who I was, even though at times I would kick and hit her. Or she would be at my house and I would go off alone. She understood that I don't like loud noises and my ears hurt from it. She didn't understand my love of Pokémon cards (I have loved them since the 1st grade) but she would still play with me. She was the ONLY reason I wanted to go to school, knowing that I would see her made it

worthwhile to me. She was like my guardian angel.

It was in the 5th grade that our teacher made us do 6 book reports for the year. We would have to present them to the class and they could ask questions. We would pick any topic we wanted as long as we made it 15 minutes or longer. I ALWAYS chose topics about autism- one time doing a book report on Temple Grandin (she is a famous woman with autism whom I admire). I wanted the kids to understand that I couldn't help that I was different. I wanted them to understand why I didn't like playing with them or why I couldn't take their jokes. Or why I could care less about their feelings, why I couldn't talk to them and why I had a special teacher in class by me and why I would have a meltdown when my schedule would change. I wanted them to know that they didn't need to be AFRAID of me. A few of them asked me questions about my autism. My friend Val was by my side the whole time encouraging me, believing in me.

This year Val has gone on to play with make-up and "girly" stuff but that's okay because I am playing with this boy, Sam. He is kind to me, helps me in class when I get frustrated- he is AWESOME! He loves Pokémon as much as I do. He comes over on the weekends and we both play our DS systems. WE play for hours and hours. We are just friends; I have no desire to have a "boyfriend" like Val does. Val and I still sit together at lunch time like we have since 2nd grade and share stories about each other's day (we are in separate classes). She makes me things like friendship bracelets so that I know she is always with me. Same sometimes sits with us too. Sam sits by me in class; we can talk for hours about Pokémon. He looks out for me and understands my autism. He has gotten in trouble a few times for putting his arm around me when he sees me crying from the kids picking on me. I felt bad for him. I too am learning to understand other people's feelings. While I don't really like going to school, having those 2 friends makes it manageable for me.

I don't know what 7th grade is going to be like but I know that having those 2 friends by my side I am sure I will get through it. I know as I get older I am learning to understand myself and how autism affects me as well as how I can manage it to have a full life.

Thank you,
Isabella Benzel

Mark Your Calendars!

The 2016 Annual Conference will be held on April 7-9 at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells.

Information on the Call for Proposals, Early Bird Registration and more will be coming later this year.

A big thank you to all the conference attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, presenters and volunteers. Thank you for making the 2015 Conference so memorable!

We look forward to another successful conference in 2016!



Webinar Series

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Partnering with Your Doctor
August 13, 12:00-1:00 pm
Presented by: Kara Van Vooren

ASD Unplugged: Parenting in the Internet Age
October 26, 12:00-1:00 pm
Presented by: Madeline Barger

All webinars in our Webinar Series are archived and are free to view. Webinars available at:

<http://www.asw4autism.org/webinars.html>



AUTISM SOCIETY

AFFILIATES

FOR UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT YOUR AFFILIATE'S WEBSITE

AUTISM SOCIETY OF CENTRAL WI

autismsocietycw@gmail.com
715-370-0987

AUTISM SOCIETY OF CHIPPEWA VALLEY

www.cuasw.org
info@cuas.org
715-450-3158

AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE FOX VALLEY

www.autismfoxvalley.org
asfu4kids@gmail.com
920-968-6829

AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE LAKESHORE

www.autismlakeshore.org
autismlakeshore@att.net
920-652-0964

AUTISM SOCIETY OF NORTHEAST WI

www.asnew.org
administrator@asnew.org
920-264-8067

AUTISM SOCIETY OF SOUTH CENTRAL WI

www.autismsouthcentral.org
autismsouthcentral@gmail.com
608-630-9147

AUTISM SOCIETY OF SOUTHEASTERN WI

www.assew.org
info@assew.org
414-988-1260

Autism Spectrum Disorder Treatment Services Coverage Update

The following information was taken directly from the Department of Human Service's website: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts/waiver/autism/updates.htm>.

In July of 2014, the federal government issued guidance requiring states to provide coverage of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) treatment services as a regular statewide Medicaid benefit through BadgerCare Plus; Medicaid for the Elderly, Blind or Disabled; and the Katie Beckett Program. This means that in the future, coverage of ASD treatment services will be provided through one of these programs instead of through the Children's Long-Term Support Waivers (CLTS Waivers). Wisconsin's changes will increase the availability and comprehensiveness of ASD treatment services available through Medicaid. **Note:** The CLTS Waivers will continue to provide support services to meet children's assessed needs.

The Department's Commitment to ASD Treatment

The Department is committed to continuing to support families of children with ASD, county waiver agencies, and providers to ensure high-quality, individualized treatment services are available to children with ASD.

Wisconsin's ASD treatment goals include:

- Providing evidence-based treatment that meets the need of the child by teaching new skills while decreasing challenging behaviors seen in some children with ASD, and
- Reducing the child's future long-term needs by making significant gains toward typical development, including increased social, behavioral and communication skills.

When will the changes be made?

Details about these changes, including what they mean for counties, parents, children receiving ASD treatment, and providers, are still being worked on by the Department. The tentative start date for coverage of ASD treatment services being provided through BadgerCare Plus; Medicaid for the Elderly, Blind or Disabled; or the Katie Beckett Program instead of through the CLTS Waivers is January 1, 2016. However, the start date depends on approval from the federal government.

How can I learn more about the changes?

Sign up to receive email updates about the changes to coverage of ASD treatment services. The Department will notify you when additional details about the changes are available.

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDHS/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDHS_82

Giving Opportunities

Invest in the future of the Autism Society of Wisconsin!

Explore all the ways to give:

- **Employee/Matching Gifts** – Many employers encourage employees to give by matching employee gifts dollar-for-dollar. Check with your human resource department to find out more.
- **Honorary** – Celebrate a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion with a gift honoring a spouse, friend, family member or other loved one.
- **Memorial** – Memorial gifts made to the Autism Society of Wisconsin are to celebrate and honor the life of a loved one.
- **Planned Giving** – Receive tax and other financial benefits while giving to the Autism Society. Plan a gift for the future by working with a financial advisor to set up an IRA Charitable Rollover, trust or bequest, or beneficiary designation on a life insurance policy.
- **Unrestricted Giving** – Give a cash donation that allows us to fund programs which need it most. Donations can be mailed to the ASW office or can be made online through our Network for Good site, accessed from our home page: www.asw4autism.org.

Autism Society of Wisconsin
1477 Kenwood Dr.
Menasha, WI 54952

Please call our office for more information on any of these giving opportunities.

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Spring 2015

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Email _____ ASW is going green! To receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please check here

The Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) shares membership with the local Autism Society affiliates listed below. By checking a local affiliate, you will join both the state and local affiliate and receive member benefits from both. To become a member of only the state chapter, leave this section blank. To become a member of the Autism Society of America, the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin and/or the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin and to find out more about their membership benefits, please contact them separately.

Autism Society of the Fox Valley (ASFV)
 Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Fond du Lac and Waupaca Counties

Autism Society of Central Wisconsin (ASCW)
 Clark, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Price, Taylor and Wood Counties.

Autism Society of the Lakeshore (ASL)
 Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Calumet, Kewaunee and Door Counties

Autism Society of Chippewa Valley (CVAS)
 Sawyer, Polk, Barron, Rusk, St. Croix, Dunn, Chippewa, Pierce, Pepin, Eau Claire, Buffalo, Trempealeau and Jackson Counties.

Autism Society of Northeast Wisconsin (ASNEW)
 Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Florence, Menomonie and Marinette Counties.

Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin,
autismsouthcentral.org or autismsouthcentral@gmail.com
 Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin, www.asew.org or
 (414) 988-1260.
 Autism Society of America, www.autism-society.org or
 1-800-3-autism.

Membership Categories : Individual (\$12) _____ Family (\$15) _____ New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

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Additional contribution (tax deductible).

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$ (Other)

Please send your completed membership form and payment to:

Autism Society of Wisconsin
1477 Kenwood Drive
Menasha, WI 54952
Fax (920) 558-4611

If you have questions, email ASW at asw@asw4autism.org or call 888-428-8476.

Autism Society of Wisconsin
1-888-4-AUTISM (WI only)
1477 Kenwood Drive
Menasha, WI 54952

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Help us fulfill our mission!

Support the Autism Society of Wisconsin by making a tax deductible gift! All donations are appreciated.

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Donations may be sent to:
Autism Society of Wisconsin
1477 Kenwood Drive
Menasha, WI 54952

We also accept donations online . Click the Donate Now button on our
homepage: www.asw4autism.org

Thank you for your support!

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ASW Board Meeting
July 18, 2015