



SESSION III

Autism and Mental Health

Presenters: Ed-Dee Williams (Boston College), Lauren Bishop (University of Wisconsin), Scott Allen* (Lifestance Health)

Thursday, July 14 at 8:00am ET

Course Materials

The purpose of these materials is to help provide an introduction to the INSAR Institute session on understanding autistic people's research priorities. The materials were designed to prepare students and trainees who are unfamiliar with this research with the general background to receive the most educational benefit from the session. Toward this objective, we have prepared the following: (1) learning objectives for this session, (2) key terms and concepts, (3) a selection of recommended resources. These materials are considered supplemental to the presentation.

In collaboration with Ed-Dee Williams, Lauren Bishop, and Scott Allen these materials were developed by Sowmyashree Mayur Kaku (Post Doctoral Research Associate at St. John's Medical College Hospital, India; sowmeey@gmail.com), Ellie Taylor (Doctoral Candidate in Occupational Science program at University of Southern California, USA; taylor.elinor9@gmail.com), Dr. Nick Fears (Postdoctoral Research Fellow at University of Michigan and incoming Assistant Professor at Louisiana State University, USA; nfears@lsu.edu), Desiree (Desi) Jones (Doctoral Student in developmental psychology at the University of Texas

at Dallas, USA; desi.jones@utdallas.edu), Rachel Mukwezwa Tapera (Doctoral Candidate in Māori and Pacific Health at Te Kupenga Hauora Māori at the University of Auckland, New Zealand; rmukwezwa@gmail.com); Mallory Stevens (Doctoral candidate in the school psychology program at University of Missouri, USA; mashx5@umsystem.edu) and Molly McCabe (Masters student in Child Development at University College London, UK). Feel free to contact us with questions/comments. Register for this webinar and other sessions in this series at: <https://www.autism-insar.org/page/Institute2022>.

Learning Objectives

The INSAR Institute for Autism Research was established in direct response to requests from students and trainees for multidisciplinary training opportunities. The INSAR Institute team is also working to engage stakeholders. The INSAR Institute priorities are to provide a (1) freely available, (2) multidisciplinary training platform for young scientists and others from various backgrounds that (3) allows for international participation. The overarching goal of the INSAR Institute is to expose junior scientists to topics they are not currently engaged in, with the hope that basic scientists and clinical scientists may learn from each other to ultimately advance the understanding of autism.

The current session, Autism and Mental Health is presented by Ed-Dee Williams (incoming Assistant Professor of Social Work), Lauren Bishop (Associate Professor of Social Work), and Scott Allen (autistic adult and mental health professional). A team of trainees worked in tandem to prepare this handout and the web presentation. At the conclusion of this session, participants will:

1. **Understand** the impact of mental health conditions on autistic people's lives through references to current research and lived experience.
2. **Identify** co-occurring mental health conditions and the social and environmental factors that impact how they affect autistic people's lives.
3. **Learn** about autistic perspectives in approaches to treatment of mental health conditions, including approaching treatment from holistic perspectives.

Key Terms with References:

Comorbidity: Comorbidity is defined as the co-occurrence of more than one disorder in the same individual.

([Comorbidity - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics](#))

Mental Health and Well Being: Mental health is the foundation for the well-being and effective functioning of individuals where an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community. It is more than the absence of a mental disorder; it is the ability to think, learn, and understand one's emotions and the reactions of others. Mental health is a state of balance, both within and with the environment. Physical, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and other interrelated factors participate in producing this balance.

(World Health Organization. (2022, June 17) Mental health: Strengthening our response. Retrieved July 13, 2022, from <https://www.who.int/tools/whoqol>)

Quality of Life: The World Health Organization defines Quality of Life as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.

(World Health Organization. (2012) Programme on Mental Health WHOQL User Manual. Retrieved July 13, 2022, from <https://www.who.int/tools/whoqol>)

Perceived Stress: Perceived stress is the feelings or thoughts that an individual has about how much stress they are under at a given point in time or over a given time period.

(Phillips, A.C. (2013). Perceived Stress. In: Gellman, M.D., Turner, J.R. (Eds.) Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_479)

Social Camouflaging: An autistic person's efforts to adapt or "camouflage" their autistic behavior to conform with or blend in with neurotypical expectations (Mandy, 2019).

(Mandy, W. (2019). Social camouflaging in autism: Is it time to lose the mask? *Autism*, 23(8), 1879-1881. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362361319878559>)

Recommended Readings & Resources

Ahmedani, B. K., & Hock, R. M. (2012). Health care access and treatment for children with co-morbid autism and psychiatric conditions. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 47(11), 1807-1814. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-012-0482-0>

Angell, A. M., Deavenport-Saman, A., Yin, L., Zou, B., Bai, C., Varma, D., & Solomon, O. (2021). Sex differences in co-occurring conditions among autistic children and youth in Florida: A retrospective cohort study (2012-2019). *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51(10), 3759–3765. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04841-5>

Benevides, T. W., Shore, S. M., Palmer, K., Duncan, P., Plank, A., Andresen, M. L., ... & Coughlin, S. S. (2020). Listening to the autistic voice: Mental health priorities to guide research and practice in autism from a stakeholder-driven project. *Autism*, 24(4), 822-833. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362361320908410>

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., & Rubenstein, E. (2019). The physical and mental health of middle aged and older adults on the autism spectrum and the impact of intellectual disability. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 63, 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2019.01.001>

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Minshew, N. J., Mazefsky, C. A., & Eack, S. M. (2017). Perception of life as stressful, not biological response to stress, is associated with greater social disability in adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2910-6>

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Mazefsky, C. A., Minshew, N. J., & Eack, S. M. (2015). The relationship between stress and social functioning in adults with autism spectrum disorder and without intellectual disability. *Autism Research*, 8(2), 164-173. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1433>

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Mazefsky, C. A., & Eack, S. M. (2017). The combined impact of social support and perceived stress on quality of life in adults with autism spectrum disorder and without intellectual disability. *Autism*, 22(6), 703-711. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362361317703090>

Hall, J. P., Batza, K., Streed, C. G., Boyd, B. A., & Kurth, N. K. (2020). Health disparities among sexual and gender minorities with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50(8), 3071–3077. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04399-2>

Lai, M. C., Kassee, C., Besney, R., Bonato, S., Hull, L., Mandy, W., ... & Ameis, S. H. (2019). Prevalence of co-occurring mental health diagnoses in the autism population: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(10), 819-829. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(19\)30289-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30289-5)

Mandy, W. (2019). Social camouflaging in autism: Is it time to lose the mask?. *Autism*, 23(8), 1879-1881. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362361319878559>

Williams, E. D. G., Smith, M. J., Sherwood, K., Lovelace, T. S., & Bishop, L. (2021). Brief report: Initial evidence of depressive symptom disparities among Black and White transition age autistic youth. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05242-y>