FREE ALL DAY VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
March 18, 2022
Continuing Education Units Available

The Intersection of Autism Spectrum Disorders & Anxiety

About the Conference: This conference is sponsored by The Summit Center and the Western New York Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) for parents, teachers, therapists, and other helping professionals. Mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and depression may occur in children with ASD. The co-occurrence can complicate how professionals and families understand the individual's behaviors, evaluate interventions, prescribe medications, and provide strategies for supporting them. This conference will begin with a presentation by Dr. Daniel Mruzek who will describe different types of anxiety disorders that may occur. Drs. Holly Brown and Deborah Napolitano will present their work on how to work with professionals to evaluate the effects of medications. Finally, Dr. David Meichenbaum will present innovative strategies for helping children to think positively.

MORNING KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Learners with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities Who Have Anxiety: Key Considerations and Best Practices

Presented by Dr. Daniel Mruzek, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, The Summit Center and the University of Rochester



Until recently joining the team at the Summit Center, Dr. Mruzek was a long-time faculty member of the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC), Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. While at URMC, he was a longtime instructor in the Applied Behavior Analysis program in the University of Rochester Warner School of Education, and he continues as an adjunct faculty member of the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences. He received his doctoral training in Psychology at the Ohio State University. Dr. Mruzek has been a researcher on several externally funded intervention studies, most focused on innovative interventions for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, and he was an investigator on the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center (IDDRC) grant. Dr. Mruzek has authored and co-authored many peer-reviewed articles and other publications, including chapters in the popular text, *Making Inclusion Work for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Evidence-Based Guide* and the APA *Parent Training for Autism Spectrum Disorder*. He is a coauthor of two instruments published by Pro-Ed Publishers, Inc., the *Developmental Assessment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities* and the *Adaptive Behavior Diagnostic Scale*.

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Mruzek will receive a small stipend thanks to a grant provided by NYSRCASD and has no nonfinancial disclosures.

ABSTRACT: Those who serve persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities regularly encounter clients who have been diagnosed with one or more anxiety disorders, and this circumstance requires specialized consideration of best professional practices. In presentation, Dr. Mruzek will: (1) review anxiety

as it manifests in learners with ASD and other developmental disabilities; (2) link our knowledge of anxiety with useful intervention, supports, and modifications (e.g., self-advocacy, development of specific coping skills, visual supports, and systematic relaxation strategies); (3) consider how to integrate efforts with other professionals in a productive, collaborative manner; and (4) identify common barriers to success in supporting the learner with anxiety.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will demonstrate knowledge of different types of anxiety diagnoses, discuss case conceptualization, and link to behavior in the classroom and other instructional settings.
2. Participants will describe a model for understanding "anxiety-related" behavior and relate this to intervention, supports, and modifications.
3. Participants will identify key classroom supports for learners with anxiety, including those that incorporate positive reinforcement of self-advocacy, development of specific coping skills, visual supports, and systematic relaxation strategies.
4. Participants will demonstrate a working knowledge of how to integrate their professional service efforts with the practice of other helping professionals (e.g., healthcare professionals), in supporting a learner with maladaptive levels of anxiety.
5. Participants will recognize the most common barriers to treatment of challenging behaviors related to anxiety, as well as strategies that aid in overcoming these barriers.

Afternoon Sessions

Session 1: Strategies for managing anxiety disorders in youth with ASD: It's all about interprofessional collaboration

Presented by Holly E. Brown DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC, Associate Professor, Wegmans School of Nursing/Associate Director Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing, St. John Fisher College and **Deborah Napolitano Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA,** Associate Professor, *Applied Behavior Analysis Department*, Daemen College; Consultant and Adjunct Professor, Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing, St. John Fisher College



As a member of the Wegmans School of Nursing faculty, Holly Brown DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC, PMHCS serves as an Associate Professor and is the Associate Director of the Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing. Dr. Brown teaches in the Psychiatric NP and DNP programs. Dr. Brown and her GIDDN team are developing and deploying curriculum in the undergraduate and graduate programs at SJFC, including the procurement of clinical experiences to enable students to gain skills and confidence working with the population. Dr. Brown is also the primary investigator for a grant funded project by Special Olympics International to develop a Nurse Practitioner Residency curriculum in the care of individuals diagnosed with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Dr. Brown holds board certification as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and is a Child and Adolescent Clinical Specialist. She completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Rochester.

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Brown will receive a small stipend thanks to a grant provided by NYSRCASD and has no nonfinancial disclosures.



Dr. Deborah Napolitano is an Associate Professor in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Department at Daemen College and is an Adjunct Faculty and Consultant at the Golisano Institute for Developmental Disabilities Nursing at St. John Fisher College. Debbi obtained her Ph.D. in Developmental and Child Psychology/Behavior Analysis from the University of Kansas in 2000. Debbi is widely published in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and behavior analysis, with peer reviewed research publications in some of the field's premier journals such as the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis and the American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Debbi also serves on the board of editors for *Behavior and Social Issues* and for the *Journal of Mental Health Research in Developmental Disabilities*. Debbi's research and clinical interests are in the areas of assessment and treatment of rigid and repetitive behavior, assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior, drug and behavior interactions, applications of behavior analysis in child welfare, interprofessional collaboration, and advocacy.

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. Napolitano will receive a small stipend thanks to a grant provided by NYSRCASD and has no nonfinancial disclosures.

ABSTRACT: Individuals whom we serve, particularly those with Autism, can display co-occurring anxiety-based symptoms and associated behaviors that interfere with daily activities such as learning that can impact their overall quality of life. A treatment plan for anxiety disorders often includes prescribed psychotropic medications aimed at treating those symptoms and associated impairing behaviors. The difficulty for our colleagues, particularly behavior analysts, is often the lack of understanding of the benefits and risks of behavior modifying medications and a lack of experience working with professionals outside of typical treatment teams (e.g., psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners). Likewise, the healthcare professional may not have a full appreciation for the complement of supports a Behavior Analyst can offer in monitoring and managing a medication plan. Additionally, it can be unclear whether the medication prescribed is precisely targeting the important behaviors because the prescriber's means for assessment is limited, particularly when important collaborative relationships are absent, such as one with a treating behavior analyst. This presentation will discuss the key opportunities and benefits of interprofessional collaboration in the treatment of individuals who are prescribed behavior modifying agents for the treatment of anxiety disorders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Attendees will be able to identify the benefits of interprofessional collaboration when working with individuals with autism and anxiety disorders and other brain health concerns
2. Attendees will be able to describe tools for effective collaboration in decision making as part of an interprofessional team when working with individuals with autism and anxiety disorders and other brain health concerns.
3. Attendees will be able to identify potential medications, the effects, and side effects of those medications to treat anxiety disorders in individuals with autism and anxiety disorders.
4. Attendees will be able to identify potential effects of drug and behavior interactions when working with individuals with autism and anxiety disorders.

Session 2: Building Positive Thinkers: Ways to Reduce Anxiety within Individuals with ASD

Presented by Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D., The Summit Center & the WNY Regional Center for ASD
and **Stephen R. Anderson**, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA of The Summit Center



Dr. David Meichenbaum is a NYS-licensed clinical psychologist specializing in the diagnostic evaluation and treatment of developmental and mental health disorders. He is both the Clinical Director of the Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic and the Director of Community Consulting and Clinical Services at The Summit Center in Amherst, NY. Dr. Meichenbaum is a highly sought-after consultant for school districts, offering practical cognitive-behavioral strategies that focus on the social, emotional, adaptive, and behavioral development of students with autism spectrum and disruptive behavior disorders. Dr. Meichenbaum graduated with his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Speaker Disclosure: Dr. David Meichenbaum is compensated in part by the NYSRCASD and has no nonfinancial disclosures.

ABSTRACT: Feelings of anxiety are often preceded by worrisome thoughts and can result in a high degree of personal distress and avoidance. There is a large body of evidence, however, indicating that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can be highly effective in reducing anxiety and its associated challenges. This presentation focuses on the adaptation of cognitive-behavioral strategies for children/adolescents with autism who have thinking tendencies that can be negative, rigid and/or concrete. Case examples with solutions will be presented, along with key considerations for supporting the generalization of positive thinking across different settings (e.g., home, school, community).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to describe the limitation(s) of traditional calming and/or behavioral strategies to reduce anxiety/worry in individuals with autism.
2. Participants will be able to identify common thinking errors that influence negative feelings and behaviors.
3. Participants will be able to describe at least 3 tools that can be utilized to help cognitively restructure the negative thoughts of individuals with autism.
4. Participants will be able to identify key considerations for increasing the generalization of positive thinking across settings.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

8:30 – 8:40 Dr. Stephen Anderson, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA
Opening Comments

8 :40 – 11 :30 Dr. Daniel Mruzek, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA
Learners with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities Who Have Anxiety: Key Considerations and Best Practices

11:30 – 12:15 Lunch

12:15 – 1:45 Dr. Holly Brown and Dr. Deborah Napolitano

Strategies for managing anxiety disorders in youth with ASD: It's all about interprofessional collaboration

1:45 – 1:55 Break

2:00 – 3:15 Dr. David Meichenbaum, Ph.D. and Stephen R. Anderson, Ph.D.
Building Positive Thinkers: Ways to Reduce Anxiety within Individuals with ASD

ASHA, BCBA, CTLE, OT/OTA, PT/PTA CEUs are available for a fee of $15.00.

These courses are made possible by a grant from NYSRCASD. Requests for accommodations/special needs may be sent to wnyrcasd@thesummitcenter.org or by calling 716-629-3417.

Cancellation Policy: All courses are free of charge to attend. If cancellation received 24-hours before the start of the conference, the cost of CEUs will be fully refunded. **There is a separate CEU charge for each conference and each CEU type.**

Course Completion Requirements: In order to obtain ASHA CEUs, participants must log in/out using their unique webinar link and complete learning assessment survey. Registrants will receive a certificate of completion, via email when the course has been successfully completed. If participants wish to earn ASHA CEUs, participants are required to complete ASHA CEU Participant Form and submit at the end of the workshop via email. No partial credit will be provided. Each course is offered for .55 ASHA CEU (Intermediate Level; Professional Area).

Participants who attend all 3 courses receive 5.5 NYS Continuing Competency Units for OTs/OTAs and 6.7 NYS PT Contact Hours for PTs/PTAs. In order to obtain CEUs, participants must log in/out using their unique webinar link and complete a required learning assessment survey and posttest. Registrants will receive a certificate of completion, via email when the course has been successfully completed. Associated Physical & Occupational Therapists is recognized by the New York State Education Department Office of the Professions as an approved sponsor of continuing education for Occupational Therapists, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physical Therapists, and Physical Therapist Assistants. Associated Physical & Occupational Therapists, PLLC can be reached at apotcontinuinged@gmail.com or (716)874-6175. Each organization/entity uses its own calculation to determine the number of CEUs based on contact hours. As with all continuing education, the attendee should always verify CEU requirements by his/her professional organization and/or state licensure board.

The Authorized Continuing Education (ACE) program exists to make a wide array of continuing education (CE) events available to Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) certificants. ACE providers have been authorized by the BACB to provide Learning CE events for BCBA and BCaBA certificants. 6 Learning: ACE event CEUs will be provided.

Each organization/entity uses its own calculation to determine the number of CEUs based on contact hours. As with all continuing education, the attendee should always verify CEU requirements by his/her professional organization and/or state licensure board.

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About

The Summit Center is a private-not-for-profit human service agency that serves children and adults with emotional, intellectual, and developmental concerns. Its range of programs includes a school for children with autism spectrum disorders as well as programs for adults with ASD and related disabilities. www.thesummitcenter.org

The WNY Regional Center for ASD is a collaborative program of The Summit Center, University at Albany and The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. The Center is committed to providing information and practical strategies that are supported by scientific research – commonly referred to as evidence-based practice. The Center's activities consist of workshops and resource materials that provide practical guidance to professionals and parents. Workshops are offered at various locations throughout WNY. www.thesummitcenter.org/what-we-do/wny-regional-center-for-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd