<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Suggested Audience*</th>
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| Comic Strip Conversations | Comic Strip Conversations are a popular strategy used with children, adolescents, and adults with autism, but it’s rare for them to be the focus of an entire presentation. A Comic Strip Conversation (CSC) is an illustrated interaction that supports communication with assumption-free questions and simple stick-figure drawings. Color plays a structured role, with every Comic Strip Conversation identifying the setting and what people say, do, and think. Materials are simple; all that is needed is a set of fine line markers or colored pencils and a drawing surface. Applicable for any parent or professional new to the approach or proficient, this presentation will cover the rationale and “mechanics” of how to conduct a Comic Strip Conversation with unprecedented detail. Participants will leave with a flexible new strategy - and the skill to use it - at home, school, clinic, or in the community. **Learner Objectives:** Participants will be able to:  
1. Describe the elements of a CSC  
2. Illustrate thought-based terms like “guess” and “decide” with visually-based text and accompanying drawings  
3. Explain the rules that govern the use of color in a CSC | Carol Gray began her career as a teacher for four children with autism at Jenison Public Schools, in Jenison, Michigan. Currently, she works as a consultant to children, adolescents, and adults with autism, providing support via workshops and presentations, information, referral, resources, and direct services for individuals with autism, their families, and professionals who work on their behalf. Carol is best known for the development of Social Stories, a well-respected evidence-based practice used worldwide with people with autism of all ages. She is an internationally sought-after keynote and seminar speaker and has completed over 1,200 presentations. Carol is also the founder of a very effective social philosophy that 1) ‘abandons all assumptions’, 2) regards both the typical and autism perspective as ‘equally valid’, and 3) recognizes the ‘social impairment in autism’ as shared (noting the well-intentioned but nonetheless misguided mistakes of parents and professionals). She has completed ground-breaking work on some of the toughest topics in autism by reviewing the research, outlining new theories, and developing practical instructional strategies, most notably Gray’s Guide to Bullying (2004) and Gray’s Guide to Loss, Learning, and Students with ASD (2003). Carol serves on many advisory boards, including the active and working Advisory Board on Disabilities for Delta Air Lines, where she represents passengers with autism. Carol has received many awards for her work, including Social Thinking’s Lifetime Achievement Award (San Francisco, 2015); Learning Spring School’s Spectrum Award for her global efforts in education and improving the lives of people with autism (New York City, 2012), the Autism | *Suggested for but not limited to:*  
- Families/Parents/Caregiver  
- Educators  
- Service Providers  
- Social Workers  
- Counselors  
- Psychologists |

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## BREAKOUT SESSION #2 — (choose 1)

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level: Basic</th>
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| 1   | 1. Value as foundations for joyful learning and creativity.  
2. Learn “In-Sync” activities at home, school, or clinic that will help children develop and enhance sensory-motor skills and social interactions.  
3. Stretch children’s play themes using sensory activities. |              |

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<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>ASK THE AUTISTIC WEREWOLF: Autism Insight (Repeat)</th>
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|     | My presentation will briefly introduce myself as a person living on the autism spectrum. I will share briefly all accomplishments have made me a successful autistic man.  
I have lived on the autism spectrum for the past 59 years. I have made many mistakes growing in autistic wisdom as a result. My presentation will allow audience members to ask any question they want. Audiences can access my autism wisdom in ways that enhance their professional, parental or other roles in the lives of autistic children, adolescents and adults.  
1. LEARN from unconventional Autistic Werewolf themed insights, experiences and life objectives of a successful man living on autism’s spectrum for 59 years.  
2. KNOW how to better understand, respond to and mitigate autistic meltdowns while using the triggers to teach more effective autism self-management skills. | Wolf F. Dunaway  
Today I am a very successful autistic man who started life 59 years ago as a troubled very antisocial autistic child (werewolf like). I made many mistakes on my unique path to success. I'm giving audiences the opportunity to ask me questions in hope, they will avoid the many painful pitfalls I encountered growing up autistic, angry, violent and alone. After 41 years in an autistic wilderness I climbed back into the civilized world of college, work, home ownership and more. Today I am an IT Specialist with the Federal Government earning a 6 figure income. I'm not bragging I share this in hopes autistic people don't limit their possibilities! |

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Autistic Sensory Spectrum Life in an Overstimulating World</strong> (Repeat)</td>
<td><strong>Christa Holmans - The Neurodivergent Rebel</strong></td>
<td>For all audiences</td>
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|    | This presentation is about autistic sensory differences, stimming, and sensory regulation. Autistic sensory differences can vary greatly from one autistic individual to the next. What bothers one autistic person may be pleasurable to the next. In this presentation I share some of my own tips and tricks for navigating a world that isn’t always sensory friendly. **Learner Objectives:** Learn about sensory processing differences and regulation, including auditory processing differences from an autistic perspective.  
  - I Need to Move - Stimming and movement for sensory regulation – the importance of allowing natural autistic movement  
  - My Favorite Sensory Life Hacks - Tools and tips for managing & avoiding sensory overstimulation, from a sensory sensitive autistic adult  
  - Harmful Behaviors – re-directing destructive behaviors. Some stims and behaviors are bad for our health. How can we work to re-direct? | Neurodivergent Rebel - Rebelling against a culture that values assimilation over individuality. Christa Holmans enjoys pursuing her diverse passions. She has embodied many of these over the years. From aerial acrobatics & circus arts to dog training & business consulting, just to name a few. Founder of Neurodivergent Consulting and the internationally recognized Neurodivergent Rebel blog. She can be found advocating on Twitter as @NeuroRebel, destroying stigma & spreading positivity. Christa currently enjoys living in an RV full time with her best friend & partner in crime, David (along with 4 dogs), in a 40 foot long diesel pusher bus. |          |
| 14 | **Finding Your Place of Belonging (Part 2)**                               | **Daniel Wendler M.A.**                                                   | Suggested for but not limited to: |
|    | Social skills expert and autistic self-advocate Daniel Wendler shares his | Daniel Wendler M.A. never fit in, no matter how hard he tried. His quirky personality and awkward behavior meant |          |

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**Learner Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate how autistic individuals can effectively practice and develop social skills over time.
2. Apply effective strategies for making genuine friendships as a person with autism.
3. Understand the principles for having a fulfilling, healthy romantic relationship as a person on the spectrum.

**Disclosure:** I receive royalties for any purchases of my books or purchases of content from ImproveYourSocialSkills.com
**BREAKOUT SESSION #2 — (choose 1)**

| News programs in Buffalo, NY. He is the father of two amazing little girls. Vito, along with his wife Sarah are co-founders of Flowering Light Yoga, LLC, a Buffalo based company that uses yoga as a therapeutic tool both in individual and group sessions. They hope to make therapeutic yoga a mandated service on children’s individual education plans (IEPs) to improve access to this wonderful therapy. Vito and his wife Sarah are Lead Trainers for Radiant Child Yoga, teaching adults to teach yoga to children of all abilities and to improve their own lives in the process.  
Website: [www.floweringlightyoga.com](http://www.floweringlightyoga.com)  
Email: vgitante88@gmail.com  
Sarah Gigante a Doctor of pediatric Physical Therapy and a registered yoga alliance teacher. For 15 years she has worked with children and their families in the hospital setting, at home and in schools. She has been using yoga one on one and in group settings with children she treats and has seen wonderful progress with their motor control, self-calming and self-confidence. Dr. Gigante has provided pediatric Physical Therapy and yoga for hundreds of children over the course of her career. She also teaches continuing education workshops for therapists and special education teachers on pediatric yoga and mindfulness in the classroom for general education and special education teachers and self-care for caregivers for family members of those living with mental illness. She is the mother of two wonderful girls and human companion to two wonderful dogs. Dr. Gigante, along with her husband Vito, are co-founders of Flowering Light Yoga, LLC, a Buffalo, NY based company that uses yoga as a therapeutic tool both in individual and group sessions. They hope to make therapeutic yoga a mandated service on children’s individual education plans (IEPs) to improve access to this wonderful therapy. Sarah and her husband Vito are Lead Trainers for Radiant Child Yoga, teaching |

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| 16 | **Tips and Tricks for Dealing with Anxiety** | **Tana Hope, Ph.D.** is the Director of Clinical Services at the Aliceanna location for the Child and Family Therapy Clinic in the Behavioral Psychology Department of the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Additionally, she holds a faculty appointment as an Instructor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University’s Behavioral Biology Division; and, is an adjunct professor in the Counseling and Human Services program at the Johns Hopkins University’s School of Education. As a clinical psychologist, Dr. Hope utilizes empirically-supported treatments including Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical-Behavior Therapy (DBT), both within the context of the family system; and Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT). Her primary clinical interests include assisting individuals diagnosed with anxiety, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, high functioning autism spectrum disorder, Tourette Syndrome; and, working with individuals who have experienced a traumatic event, have a school-based learning disorder, have challenges navigating social interactions; and, working with families to improve communication and functioning. Dr. Hope also has a specific interest in public awareness of mental health issues. She actively participates in the Behavioral Psychology Department’s Community Outreach Program providing seminars and educational lectures to schools, and special area interest groups. 

*Disclosure: Dr. Hope is a psychologist and conducts clinical services at an outpatient clinic, the Child and Family Therapy Clinic, at the Kennedy Krieger Institute.*

**Learner Objectives:**

1. To have a basic understanding of the biological underpinnings of anxiety.
2. To learn preventive strategies to reduce the likelihood or severity of anxiety.

**Suggested for but not limited to:**
- Educators
- Families/Parents/Caregiver
- Related Service Providers (Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists...)
- Social Workers, Counselors, Psychologists
- School Administrators
- Self-Advocates

*My presentation addresses learners who require minimal supports.*

**Level:** Intermediate

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<td>3. To better match the selection of skills to develop and coping strategies to try to your child's or teen's level of functioning.</td>
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<td>4. To gain knowledge of a wide range of skills and coping strategies that can assist an individual who struggles with anxiety.</td>
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**Using Virtual Reality Technology in the Everyday Teaching and Learning of Children with Autism**

Today's classrooms, homes, and communities are becoming more technology-rich, but many regard virtual reality (VR) as being costly or time consuming to learn and use. However, no special skills are needed to access today's VR - educators, families, and service providers who can access a smartphone application now have access to these tools! Many VR technologies have quickly become more portable, simpler, and accessible at little to no cost. Many educators are not using these technologies with their students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, but the research tells us that they should be. Growing empirical evidence indicates that VR technologies can support individuals with ASD in developing social skills by providing experiences that may be otherwise impossible in the natural environment. In this hands-on session we will explore practical VR applications that can be used in the classroom, home, or community-based setting to support the teaching and learning of individuals with ASD. While demonstrations of the technology will be available, participants

**Andrea Parrish** is an Assistant Professor and the Graduate Program Director in the Department of Special Education at Towson University. Dr. Parrish holds degrees in special education; a certificate in educational administration; and a doctoral degree in instructional technology. Prior to joining TU, Dr. Parrish served as a special educator and central office administrator in the K-12 school system. Dr. Parrish recently completed and published a national research study on competencies needed to teach effectively in one-to-one learning environments. She regularly presents at local, national, and international conferences and conducts research on technology integration; assistive technology; and innovative teaching approaches that support diverse groups of learners.

**Suggested for but not limited to:**
- Educators
- Families/Parents/Caregiver
- Related Service Providers (Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists...)
- Social Workers, Counselors, Psychologists

**Childhood**
**Adolescence/Teen**
**Transition**

**Level:** Intermediate

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are encouraged to bring a smartphone or tablet of their choice.

**Learner Objectives:**
1. Define virtual reality (VR) technology and its affordances in the teaching and learning of individuals with ASD.
2. Discuss and utilize VR applications that can be utilized in the classroom, home, and community.
3. Analyze how various VR applications can be integrated to support the learning and generalization of individuals with ASD.

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