

The Sun

Newsletter

Spring 2019

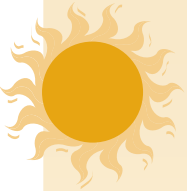
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Our mission

To help people and families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD)



Handling a component of autism can lessen emotional dysregulation

Many children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) display emotional and behavioral reactions to everyday situations. This reactivity is sometimes referred to as emotional dysregulation (or ED, for short) and can trigger emotional and behavioral responses. From mild to severe, these responses can range from anxiety and depression to explosive outbursts and aggressive and self-injurious behaviors.

Children with ED often experience chronic distress. If untreated, ED increases the risk for a variety of psychiatric disorders across the child's lifespan.

Additionally, ED can interfere with a child's ability to participate in treatments, develop positive relationships, and manage the demands of school. ED can also negatively impact the way a family functions and increase a parent's stress.

Although ED is not a core symptom of ASD, it is common in individuals with ASD. One reason may be that children with ASD have difficulty recognizing emotions, understanding another person's perspective, thinking flexibly, and shifting attention. Children with ASD may also find it difficult to navigate the demands of a busy day because of challenges to their ability to regulate sensory experiences and

manage unexpected changes. Children with ASD may not have the necessary tools to manage the situation and the emotions that arise.

By targeting a child's ASD symptoms, parents can help the child manage his or her ED. Various supports and accommodations can help. For example, if a child becomes emotionally dysregulated in response to an unexpected change in routine, a social story or visual schedule can improve predictability and, in turn, reduce the child's stress.

Additionally, if a child experiences frequent distress due to a sensory aversion (that is, a sensitivity to something that causes the child to try to avoid it), it may help to identify strategies to reduce the impact of the sensory stimulus. For example, a child with an aversion to loud noises might wear headphones in noisy situations.

Sun contributor Amy Keefer, PhD, ABPP, is a clinical psychologist at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders and assistant professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

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Autism Delaware™

Newark

924 Old Harmony Rd.
Suite 201, Newark DE 19713
Phone: 302.224.6020

Dover

c/o Dover Downs
1131 North Dupont Hwy., Dover DE 19901
Call for on-site appointment:
302.224.6020 or 302.644.3410

Lewes

17517 Nassau Commons Blvd.
Unit 1, Lewes DE 19958
Phone: 302.644.3410

Email

delautism@delautism.org

Website

AutismDelaware.org

Family services

Kent and Sussex Counties

(302) 644-3410

New Castle County

(302) 224-6020

Board officers

President

Brendan O’Neill
brendan.oneill@state.de.us

Vice president

Marie-Anne Aghazadian
elisa945@gmail.com

Secretary

John Fisher Gray
John.F.Gray@dupont.com

Treasurer

Jeff Flanders
jflanders@midcoastbankonline.com

The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware

Editorial committee:

Carla Koss	Heidi Mizell
Liz Carlisle	Jen Nardo
Annalisa Ekbladh	Virginia Sticinski
Cory Gilden	

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Emotional dysregulation and the rest of us

Every day is a transition. If you are like most neurotypical people, you expect a certain amount of routine. If it’s a workday, you move through your morning routine on autopilot—until you realize schools are closing and you need a plan for your kids. All of sudden, you are faced with an unplanned decision about your day: Stay at work, or if you can, leave work. What is the priority? As you think about the day’s dilemma, you’re on red alert about the what-ifs, and adrenaline pumps into your bloodstream. Your mind goes around and around: *Do I use sick or vacation leave? Do I call family or a friend...*

Or do you take a deep breath, realize you’re okay, and move on? The answer to this question is important. Your response will be with you for the rest of the day.

Now, consider the moment as if you are on the autism spectrum. Every transition can be a heightened experience. The ability to choose a response may be hampered by emotional dysregulation. Being unable to regulate your emotions can make an awkward situation even more awkward; in a stress-filled environment, emotional dysregulation can wreak havoc. To address this symptom in people

with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the cover story in this issue of *The Sun* begins by differentiating between emotional dysregulation and ASD’s core issues, such as impairments in social interaction and communication. The article also notes that handling a core issue often lessens the degree of emotional dysregulation.

Although emotional dysregulation is prevalent in people with ASD, it is also observed in people with borderline personality disorder, bipolar disorder, and traumatic brain injury. But anyone who’s experienced trauma or depression and anxiety disorders could be vulnerable to emotional dysregulation as well. How many people can say they’ve never experienced trauma or anxiety?

Given the current climate in our country, I wonder how any of us are handling our emotions with any kind of regulation. There is so

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Brian Hall
Executive Director

A service of Autism Delaware



Katina Demetriou, director
katina.demetriou@delautism.org
Bus: 302.224.6020 Ext. 202 **Cell:** 302.824.2252

Melissa Martin, assistant director
melissa.martin@delautism.org
Bus: 302.644.3410 **Cell:** 302.824.9710

Kim Rosebaum, vocational administrative assistant
kim.rosebaum@delautism.org
Bus: 302.224.6020 Ext. 214

Handling a component of autism can lessen emotional dysregulation Continued from p. 1

Because a buildup of stress can increase emotional distress and produce disruptive behaviors, it's important to make accommodations for the child, such as providing frequent breaks. Regular opportunities to engage in calming activities throughout the day can also help decrease stress, so consider allowing the child to listen to music, lie under a weighted blanket, or take a walk.

Clinicians who specialize in treating children with ASD can help them learn strategies that also manage their ED, such as identifying their emotions and the situations that trigger them. Clinicians can instruct children in

- calming strategies and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation.
- attention shifting, such as focusing on a sensation in the body or thinking about a highly preferable interest.
- developing positive cognitions. Examples include "I can handle this," "I will feel good about myself if I can keep my cool," and "This situation will be over quickly."



Although these strategies typically involve some verbal communication, many can be modified for young children and children with language delay.

In summary, identifying and treating ED is important for children with ASD, and many strategies can help. I encourage any parent, who is struggling to address ED in a child with ASD, to consult with the child's treatment team to develop an intervention plan.

Emotional dysregulation and the rest of us Continued from p. 2

much fear-mongering and us-versus-them conflict going on that each of us is hard-pressed to maintain balance of thought, behavior, and expression.

I'm concerned about everyone who has a stake in the autism community because folks have been working long and hard to help people and families affected by ASD in Delaware, and I know how difficult and unending the effort has been. Every day, we struggle, and every day, we must develop a new plan. Many of us feel overwhelmed or burned out. Not overreacting is difficult enough in the best of circumstances.

In the autumn 2018 issue of *The Sun*, I recommended self-awareness and making use of resources to handle challenges and enhance the family's helping process. I believe the same strategy can apply to handling emotional dysregulation. But we need the capacity to be more insightful and responsive in difficult situations. Remember: Anger, aggression, or self-injurious or destructive behavior often necessitates modeling,

role-playing, and practicing new skills, patterns, and behaviors—whether you are neurotypical or have a disability. How do we allow ourselves the opportunity to be responsive? How do we know when we may need the professional-level support of a psychologist, psychiatrist, or behavior analyst for positive and lasting behavior change?

I cannot give the answer; however, I know we need the inner strength and focus to effectively benefit from available supports. For some, this inner strength begins with having time for ourselves. If a walk, bike trip, or workout is not doable, Autism Delaware's communications coordinator, Carla Koss, recommends meditative yoga. As for me, I am not that ambitious; watching a good sporting event or movie keeps me on an even path.

If you need something but are unsure what, consider reaching out to Autism Delaware, the Delaware Division of Developmental Services, or the Delaware 211 resource line. A resource could be waiting for you!

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Emotional dysregulation

Effective coping strategies in the workplace

Sun contributor Virginia Sticinski is a new member of the Autism Delaware™ newsletter committee as well as the parent of a child on the autism spectrum. Her previous work, written for the University of Delaware, includes *Factors Supporting Optimal Outcomes in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder* and *Defining Family to Inform Policy*.

Being unable to control or regulate your emotions in a stressful environment can be particularly disruptive in the workplace. Called emotional dysregulation, this reaction is often seen in people on the autism spectrum.^a According to Lois Meszaros, PhD, the chief operating officer at Chimes Delaware, workplace stress can lead to emotional dysregulation, which can result in disruptive behavior that makes it difficult to get your work done.^b In extreme cases, the behavior associated with emotional dysregulation can even result in temporary removal from the job site.



Clip Art

Chimes's management, notes Meszaros, addresses and even prevents an employee's emotional dysregulation with a few effective coping strategies:

- Day program managers often assign employees to work in crews or clusters, so when one crew member needs a break, another can take over. In this strategy, consistency of information is key.^b
- In a case where emotional dysregulation compromises the employee's ability to do a job, the employee may be temporarily assigned to a prevocational program to identify what's causing the behavior. In this way, staff can work with the employee to develop personalized coping strategies that will help the employee return to work as soon as possible.^b
- Whenever possible, program managers train multiple staff members as the main job coach at the same time so that the staff members are familiar with each employee and can identify possible disruptive behaviors.^b This strategy can be most helpful because the staff can also acknowledge potential causes of anxiety and model the appropriate behavior as needed.^c

Frequent and open communication is important, too, especially during a change in routine.^b Holidays, vacations, and any change in the daily routine at home can cause anxiety that often spills over to the workplace.^d The employee with autism can maintain a home-to-work notebook that can help keep the lines of communication open at work and support a smooth, productive workday, suggests Meszaros. Other ideas include a visual calendar or some type of schedule that the employee, caregiver, and job coach can use for easy planning and preparation.^b

Although emotional dysregulation can be challenging, there are ways to reduce the anxiety that leads to disruptive behaviors. Communication, consistency, planning, and organization in the workplace can go a long way in supporting employees on the autism spectrum.

Sources

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- ^c Mazefsky, CA, and SW White. *Emotion Regulation: Concepts and Practices in Autism Spectrum Disorder*. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America* (2014): 15–24. Also found at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3830422/>.
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My favorite coping skills for dysregulated children

As a therapist, I am frequently working with children who are emotionally dysregulated. This means I see a lot of behavioral issues, difficulties containing behaviors, emotions, and reacting instead of responding to difficult situations.

My favorite example is when a parent makes a grilled cheese sandwich, when the child really wanted turkey, and the child throws a fit and ends up on the floor, crying, thrashing, and believing it is the worst day of [his or her] life. Yes, this is truly how they feel. They have little to no ability to cope with small (or big) stressors and, instead, they act out.

Children [with autism spectrum disorder] especially have a difficult time regulating their emotions and emotional responses (behaviors). In my experience, the following skills have been extremely beneficial and effective in helping a child reduce [his or her] dysregulation.

with you. Then, ask the child to describe to you what [he or she can] taste, hear, see, smell, and feel. Have [the child] use as much detail as possible.

Originally published by Marianne Riley, LCPC, DBTC, as a blog on *PsychCentral.com* (<https://psychcentral.com/blog/my-favorite-coping-skills-for-dysregulated-children>), this article is revised and printed here with Riley's authorization. Her private practice is Marianne Riley Psychotherapy, LLC, in Frederick, Md.



Art of Social Work—WordPress.com

Hot chocolate breathing

I went to a conference recently where the speaker, Tracy Turner-Bum-berry, LPC, RPT-S, CAS, explored with the audience a number of different skills aimed at emotional regulation. This particular skill really caught my attention. The purpose of this skill is aimed at regulating

breathing patterns. Children especially have a difficult time regulating their breathing and oftentimes, when upset, will breathe heavily and fast, causing them to get even more upset.

Hot chocolate breathing is when a child picks a picture of hot chocolate—Print out a few—and focuses on inhaling (smelling the drink) and exhaling (blowing on the drink to cool it down). Practice this breathing for 5–10 breaths. Kids love it!

“Take me there” pictures

Another skill I learned from the conference is what I have titled “Take me there” pictures. This skill is aimed at engaging the five senses and observing and describing what is around you. Print out a few pictures of landscapes—Make them all very different—and ask your child to “jump into the picture”

Grounding

This is my all-time favorite skill. Grounding means to engage the five senses. I recommend making a sensory kit that holds two to three objects representing each of the five senses. For instance, a picture of your dog, PlayDoh, essential oil, natural hard candy, and ear buds for music.

Draw “my feelings”

When [children are] in the middle of a meltdown, chances are they are unable to express their feelings effectively. Hand them an index card (the smaller, the better) and a pen or marker, and ask them to fill the page. Try not to give too many details for this exercise. Allow [the children] to take the lead and create whatever they want. Use this as a facilitator to have a conversation about what they are experiencing.

Play-Doh creations

The easiest, most accessible, and portable activity! Carry small-size Play-Doh jars in your purse. Whenever you are witnessing a meltdown start, hand the child the Play-Doh and allow [him or her] to create whatever they'd like. Again, use this as a facilitator for conversation. Not only is this one great for allowing [children] to express themselves, but also... as a sensory activity.



Clip Art

PARENT PARENT

Written by parents
for parents



Direct support professional Nina Tressler guides Autism Delaware™ POW&R participant Robert Matusheski at his job. POW&R is short for Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation.

Finding the perfect fit

As the parent of a child with autism, particularly a non-verbal child, I've spent 20-plus years learning to look for and read my son's facial expressions, body language, and stimming behaviors. I've also worked at reading Robert's mannerisms and idiosyncrasies to better understand his individualistic feelings and needs.

What have I learned? When Robert wakes up irritable, he shows it by making little noises and being easily annoyed by just about everything. Some days, he's quiet but stiffens and pulls away if anyone touches him or tries to hug him. Of course, it's not difficult to tell when he's in a full-blown meltdown. He makes loud noises, hits his chin, clenches his teeth, and occasionally throws things.

Fortunately, meltdowns like this don't happen very often, but when they first started showing up, Robert was about nine years old, and the meltdowns were frightening, disturbing, and left me and my family struggling for answers. We tried several different remedies, including telling him to sit on the bottom stair by himself, which just seemed to make him angrier. We tried having him stand in a corner, which gave him a perfect opportunity to bang his head against the wall, so that wasn't a solution.

One thing that finally worked was exercise. Because the major meltdowns almost always occur in the late afternoon or early evening, Robert and my husband Bob began exercising on a NordicTrack® and a stationary bike every evening before dinner. The exercise allows Robert to get rid of his excess energy. We don't wait for a meltdown to start and then try to cure it with exercise—By then, it's too late. Instead, we made a routine of exercising every

day at about 4:30 PM, and Robert is almost always calm and content afterwards.

In addition to medicating Robert for aggressive behavior, we've developed a couple of other ways for handling his excess energy. When the weather's nice, we send him to our fenced-in backyard with his MP3 player. We've learned that music is one of his favorite things, and he loves to be outside.

One day, while trying to think of an inside strategy for days when the weather is bad or it's too dark outside, we told Robert to go upstairs to his room, thinking he might stay there and calm down. But he came right back down. So, we sent him back up. And he came right back down! Eventually, going up and down the stairs to his room, Robert tired himself out and lost the energy to sustain a meltdown. This process has become a game now, which usually ends with Robert laughing.

When Robert became a participant in Autism Delaware's adult employment program, I worried about how his direct support professional (DSP), Nina Tressler, would know his needs and mannerisms as well as how she would handle a meltdown. I explained Robert to her as much as I could, but she needed to spend one-on-one time with him. Now that Robert and Nina have been working together for almost two years, she knows him very well. She once told me "Once you get to know him, you can tell by his face and body language how he's feeling."

Nina developed her own ways of helping Robert when he's frustrated or on the verge of a meltdown. Sometimes, she changes his environment by taking him for a walk or getting a snack. Other times, she simply talks calmly to him and tells him "Robert, we're not going to do that. We're not going to act that way." And this strategy usually works for her. It doesn't work at home—a clear case of Robert behaving better with others than with his parents.

We're very lucky to have Nina as Robert's support person because she's calm and soft-spoken, which he definitely needs. Plus, she has sons of her own, so she's used to boys. Nina is a perfect fit for Robert.

—Melanie Matusheski

Written by parents
for parents

PARENT 2 PARENT

Applied behavior analysis: home vs. clinical setting

My 10-year-old son Zach has been receiving applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy for the last four years across a variety of settings, including school, home, and at a clinic. My husband and I considered the benefits and disadvantages of these different locations before determining where Zach ought to receive services.

Zach receives an ABA-based curriculum through the Delaware Autism Program (DAP), the statewide public school program for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Zach also receives ABA therapy outside of the school environment. Most agencies require several hours of therapy each week, so this schedule often leads to an extremely long day for Zach. We believe the extended schedule is worth it because it reduces some of the negative behaviors Zach can display and promotes more positive ones.

Initially, Zach attended two-hour sessions twice a week at a clinic to work on speech and communication skills. The clinical setting was a positive experience for us: The therapists were well prepared and kept us informed of goals, action plans, and outcomes. Plus, the clinic we attended had a playroom with a gigantic swing in the center of the room, a trampoline, and gymnastics mats. Playing on these often served as a reward for Zach after his sessions.

The commute was tough. Since the sessions were after school and two hours in length, we had to commute more than 20 minutes to the clinic during rush hour. (Although, I did get a lot of shopping done while Zach was at his sessions.)

Zach currently receives ABA therapy in our home twice a week. This schedule has also been a positive experience (except I always seem to be cleaning my house). The therapists help prepare goals with input from both me and my husband. Zach's younger brother is also able to participate in these sessions, so our entire household is able to be part of the goal-setting process.

Zach's existing goals include recognizing household chemicals (whether they are safe or toxic), sitting for an extended period of time (to play a board game), and responding in a positive manner to situations that upset or anger him. At home, we use verbal reinforcements and an occasional ice cream sandwich



ABA therapists Mashanda James (far left) and Star Cooper (at right) play a board game with Zach in his home.

since we do not have a swing in our basement.

When deciding what environment would be more beneficial for your child, I'd suggest also considering what works best for your family:

- What is your family's schedule? For example, are you able to be home for two hours of therapy?
- Is the environment casual or structured?
- Is the therapy designed for a group or an individual?
- Is the location convenient?
- What is the available space, and are there distractions?
- Does the therapist apply rewards or reinforcement?
- Does your health insurance cover the ABA, and what services are currently available? Some agencies have waiting lists, so you would benefit from getting on a list as soon as possible.

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a practice that seeks to understand the link between learning and behavior. It most commonly focuses on the objective evaluation and measurement of observable behavior.

—*Applied Behavior Analysis Programs Guide*

(<https://www.appliedbehavioranalysisprograms.com/lists/5-reasons-study-applied-behavior-analysis>)

Regardless of the environment, Zach has benefited from ABA therapy, but in-home services currently work best for him. He looks forwards to each session, and we see progress on a daily basis.

—Colleen Tontarski

INSIDE Autism Delaware

Meet the 2019 Walk for Autism grand marshals

A Milford first grader and a Middletown kindergartner serve as grand marshals for this year's Walk for Autism. Responsibilities for both include opening announcements and cutting the ribbon to kick off the statewide event.



Adrian Creed

The Lewes grand marshal is Kent County Community School student Adrian Creed. The seven year old is enthusiastic about socializing with his family and schoolmates, but he absolutely loves the ocean, spelling, numbers, animals, music, riding his bike, swimming, drawing, and airplanes. His favorite places to visit include Aruba, an aquarium, and Disney World.

In addition to raising autism awareness as the captain of Team Adrian, Creed is a member of the Special Olympics Young Athletes, an innovative sports program for children (aged 2–7) that is designed to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities, their peers, and their families to the world of Special Olympics.

Team Adrian and Team Pickle join 117 teams across the state in the hope of raising awareness and \$215,000 to benefit Autism Delaware's programs and services.

When six-year-old Dylan Sparks isn't serving as grand marshal for the Wilmington leg of the walk, he attends kindergarten at McVey Elementary School in Newark. An active boy who is happiest in the water, Sparks has swum with Special Olympics and surfed an autism event last summer. He also likes to climb and do puzzles, but he finds the most enjoyment in eating French fries and anything having to do with Mickey Mouse.



Dylan Sparks

Known by his nickname, Pickle, Sparks joins his mother, father, and older brothers at the walk for the fifth year in a row now. Team Pickle also helps raise funds and awareness by making and selling bracelets.

On the development side



Louise Doe

Autism Delaware
Volunteer Coordinator
(302) 224-6020,
ext. 215
Louise.Doe@
delautism.org

New staff members on the development side of Autism Delaware include Louise Doe. The British native became the full-time volunteer coordinator in January. Doe is responsible for managing and expanding volunteer coverage across the state. Her efforts extend to family services and programs, such as support for social recreation and information tables at third-party events, as well as support for Autism Delaware fundraisers, such as the Walk for Autism, the Drive for Autism, and the Track Walk at the Monster Mile and Autism Awareness Day at the Races.

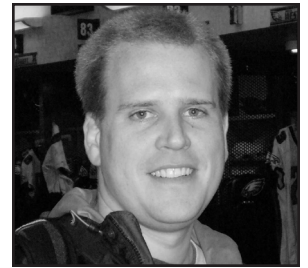
Brett Gershman joined the Autism Delaware staff as the southern Delaware development assistant. Based in the Lewes office, Gershman assists with volunteer needs and fundraising events in Kent and Sussex Counties. He also supports the agency's overall strategic plan for development. Gershman can be reached at (302) 644-3410 or at Brett.Gershman@delautism.org.

What do we do?

Because Autism Delaware is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, our employees rely on volunteers throughout the year. While the development team raises the funds needed to support our statewide programs and services, our family support team strives to maintain and expand these programs and services.

Board ins and outs

Wilmington resident Dave Maloney joined the Autism Delaware Board of Directors this winter. As a father of a child on the autism spectrum, Maloney wants to give back to the community: "Autism Delaware helped my family and continues to have a positive impact in our community. I've been focused on supporting my own son the past few years, and feel it's time to give back and help with the big picture. I'm excited to join the team and do my part to help other families. I've been working as an educator for the past 20 years, and hopefully, I bring qualities that will be helpful to Autism Delaware."



Dave Maloney



Heartfelt thanks go out to two members of the Autism Delaware Board of Directors who have recently rotated off the board.

Thank you, Rob Gilsdorf, for your long-time member participation. You added to your member participation by writing a column for *The Sun* as a former president of the board. For three years, you shared your experience as the parent of a son on the autism spectrum, from Andrew's childhood to his transition into Autism Delaware's adult employment program. In the process, you assured other parents not only that

Autism Delaware's programs and services can help meet their needs but also that a sense of accomplishment and well-being can come from volunteering.

"For me," wrote Gilsdorf in the January–March 2012 issue of *The Sun*, "having an outlet in which to contribute made all the difference over the years.... Autism Delaware allowed me to redirect the energy associated with despair and frustration into positive outcomes for my family and community.... After 'family,' consider 'service' as your next priority."

Thank you, also, Danielle Sullivan. Your fundraising and development expertise made you as invaluable to the board as your enjoyment with the process: "I had a wonderful board experience and chaired the development committee. The board is made up of exceptional, caring individuals supporting a terrific organization that works hard every day to improve the lives of families living with autism. It was an honor to serve with this group."

Autism Delaware welcomes new associate executive director

Janet Berry has joined Autism Delaware's leadership team. As associate executive director (AED), Berry assumes the role formerly held by Brian Hall, who was promoted to executive director (ED) of the agency in December.

Berry manages the administrative side of Autism Delaware's business, regulatory, and financial affairs. She also directs strategic communications and fundraising initiatives.

A graduate of Wilmington University with a master's degree in human services administration, Berry has an extensive background in providing leadership to human

services agencies: She has served as interim ED at People's Place II, a multiservice nonprofit in Milford; ED at BlindSight Delaware (previously known as the Delaware Association for the Blind); and vice president of membership, program and properties, and volunteerism at the Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay Council.

She also knows how to help build a healthy and high-achieving office environment through her managerial experience with employees.

Altogether, Berry has garnered a wealth of knowledge around the issues that impact nonprofits, such as Autism Delaware.



Janet Berry

Autism Delaware
Associate Executive Director
(302) 224-6020,
ext. 203

Janet.Berry@
delautism.org

New intake coordinator takes care coordination approach



Melanie Matusheski

Autism Delaware
Intake
Coordinator
(302) 224-6020,
ext. 219

When Autism Delaware decided to add a care coordination approach to the family services team, the first person the team thought of was Melanie Matusheski. As Autism Delaware’s part-time volunteer coordinator for the last nine years, Matusheski recently handed off the now full-time position. (Meet the new volunteer coordinator in “On the development side” on page 8.) In turn, Matusheski accepted a newly created position that gives her more opportunity to help the parents of individuals on the autism spectrum while maintaining her part-time schedule.

As the parent of a son on the autism spectrum, Matusheski knows firsthand the difficulties that many families face and can empathize with the parents and caregivers who call for help. As Autism Delaware’s new intake coordinator, she manages the interview process when a call comes in asking for help. With a little information, Matusheski can direct the caller to the appropriate resources. She can also schedule an appointment with a member of Autism Delaware’s family support staff, who can guide the family through Delaware’s system of programs and services. This connection offers an ongoing relationship in the community that supports the family.

The ever-expanding family support staff

In addition to adding care coordination to Autism Delaware’s programs and services (as noted in the article above), the statewide agency hired five new family support providers (FSPs) and a new family navigator. Introductions start at right and continue on page 11.

“All are the parents of children with autism,” notes Autism Delaware policy and family services director Annalisa Ekbladh, “so they have firsthand knowledge of Delaware’s system of programs and services.”

As a result, the new team members complement the effort of Autism Delaware’s long-time, dedicated staff:

- Heidi Mizell
Resource coordinator for New Castle Co.
- Dafne Carnright
Family service coordinator for Kent and Sussex Co.
- Ivanka Carbajal
New Castle County family navigator for both English- and Spanish-speaking families

For more about Autism Delaware’s programs and services, visit AutismDelaware.org.

What does Autism Delaware family support offer?

- One-on-one family navigation
- Parent education
- Support groups
- Respite opportunities
- Social recreation



Clip Art

Introducing the new staff members



One of the new family support providers (FSPs) is Jennifer (“Jenn”) Aaron. Her focus is on the supports needed by families living in New Castle County. Aaron and her family have also been active in autism advocacy. Her daughter, a student at the Old State Elementary School, won the 2018 Autism Delaware Rising Star for Advocacy award.

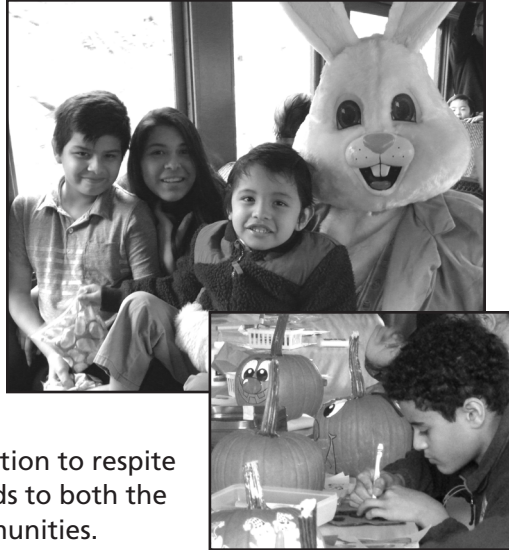


FSP Nakia Gayle works with families living in New Castle County. Her effort also extends to Autism Delaware’s fundraising efforts: She chairs the committee for the Drive for Autism. Gayle’s son, who has autism, goes to school in the Appoquinimink School District.

Continued at bottom of p. 11

What types of programs and services do we provide?

Autism Delaware’s family services team works at addressing the range of programs and services needed by individuals on the autism spectrum over their lifespans as well as by their families wherever they live in Delaware. (For an overview, see the list on page 10.) This effort includes children with a medical diagnosis or educational classification of autism; it ranges from the very young to adults and considers each family’s needs, from coffee hours and parent education to respite opportunities. And the effort extends to both the English- and Spanish-speaking communities.



The social recreation programs currently being offered include sensory friendly bowling, roller skating, and bouncing; junior golf; train rides; an annual beach picnic and holiday parties; and Blue Rocks games. Plus, the family services team provides opportunities for children on the spectrum to enjoy some time away from home while learning new skills and making new friends. Summer day camp and social groups also grant some respite time for mom and dad.

How can you help?

Autism Delaware volunteers are a crucial element of the agency’s success in providing programs and services to our community across the state. Thanks to their much-appreciated efforts, volunteers help Autism Delaware reach more families in need.



If you would like to help, send an email of interest to Autism Delaware’s volunteer coordinator, Louise Doe, at Louise.Doe@delautism.org.

Introducing the new staff members Continued from p. 10

Karen Mackie supports families as an FSP in Kent County. Mackie’s 17-year-old son, who has autism, is currently working on pre-vocational skills through Autism Delaware’s adult employment program, Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation (or POW&R, for short). A dedicated volunteer and supporter of Autism Delaware for years, Mackie has been a contributor to *The Sun* as well as worked on many family support initiatives.



New Castle County FSP Rebecca Rothweiler is a graduate of Partners in Policymaking and has worked with Autism Delaware to develop parent training on the sensory needs of children with autism. She has a daughter with autism spectrum disorder in the Appoquinimink School District.



As a family navigator in the Lewes office, Tomara Williams oversees the FSPs in Kent and Sussex Counties and puts new Autism Delaware initiatives into effect. You may recognize Williams from her extensive volunteer work. Plus, her son is a new participant in Autism Delaware’s POW&R program.



Anna Trivits has a son in the Milford School District, who was recently diagnosed with autism. As a “new parent” and Autism Delaware’s new Sussex County FSP, Trivits is eager to help other new families with their journeys.





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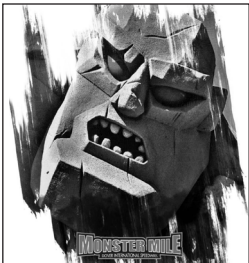
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Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

2019 race weekend for autism at Dover International Speedway

- **Friday, May 3** Spring Gander Outdoors NASCAR Truck Series Race
- **Saturday, May 4** Spring NASCAR Xfinity Series Race



The 2nd Annual Track Walk at the Monster Mile

Immediately following the race, walk the high-banked track with your friends, family, and NASCAR personalities and drivers.

- Advanced registration:** \$25 for adults
\$10 for children (12 and under)
- Day-of registration:** \$30

**For race tickets, ADAR tickets,
and track walk registration**

<https://autismdelaware.akaraisin.com/2019TrackWalk>

**Discounts are available for
military and educators. For
details, call (302) 224-6020.**

- **Sunday, May 5**
Autism Delaware at the Races (ADAR) special event: Spring Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Race

AutismDelaware.org