



2021 Navigating Autism Today Virtual Conference

March 19, 2021 | 9:00AM-3:45PM

Presented by



Autism Alliance of Michigan's annual Navigating Autism Today Conference is going virtual on:

Friday, March 19, 2021 | 9:00 AM – 3:45 PM

Presented by Children's Foundation, this conference brings local autism professionals in the fields of health, education, independent living and employment directly to caregivers and individuals with autism at no cost.

Our goal is simple:

That attendee's leave the conference feeling better equipped to navigate their loved one's autism journey.

Register today at aaomconference.org

ACADEMIA, AUTISM, & ADVOCACY

Recent Research on Accommodations

Contributed by Sofia Case, a graduate from the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations at Michigan State University.

Employees and applicants with hidden disabilities are often placed in the unique and difficult position of deciding how much to disclose about their disability in the workplace. Making a judgement call regarding what can be gained versus the risks associated, including stigmatized perceptions or retaliation, is as critical as it is challenging.

Ultimately, what can be gained is a more transparent workplace achieved by exercising your right, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to a reasonable accommodation. A large population of people with disabilities possess valuable skills yet still face high rates of unemployment or underemployment. Easily accessible accommodations are essential to tap into this underutilized workforce.

While employees with disabilities are entitled to a reasonable accommodation, the legislation language is vague about defining “reasonable” as well as when the burden shifts from employee to employer in the accommodation process. However, there is a consensus that employees are required to notify their employer of a disability and/or limitations to initiate the employer's involvement in the accommodation process. This becomes problematic when employers and courts require employees to reveal extensive medical records before they even begin to consider accommodations because it invites the opportunity for negative biases and assumptions based on a diagnosis.

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As a result, the focus is shifted to the employees limitations, though they may be easily accommodated. A potential partial solution would be to require only information necessary to specific accommodations be revealed, such as symptoms causing the limitation.

Another key component in encouraging requests for accommodations is to carefully select those who have access to personal employee information and to be very clear about who those people are. Line supervisors are important to the accommodation process given their knowledge of the work process and workers' abilities; however, those supervisors need not have access to the detailed medical information that supports the need for an accommodation and determines which accommodations are reasonable. The supervisor only needs to understand the extent of the employee's limitations.

By controlling the amount of information that must be revealed and who receives that information, the potential for negative consequences can be reduced. A suggested response to these barriers would be to have a physician in place as mediator between the employee and employer. This system allows information to be held by a trusted third party with knowledge on the employee and their limitations. Though the use of mediators in securing accommodations is rare, it has seen successes.

While it's true that employers need some level of information to engage with individual employees' accommodation requests, this information should be objective and only given as necessary. It should not invite or rely on stigma or stereotypes.

With limitations in place as to what information is received and by whom, the burden will no longer be placed on the employee to find a workplace where stereotypes and stigma do not exist. Perhaps then the decision to reveal one's disability will not feel as difficult or require the employee to endure without appropriate accommodation.

Click [here](#) for the full article, *Risking Stigmatization to Gain Accommodation* (University of Pennsylvania Law Journal, 2020)

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Important Figures in the Disability Rights Movement

Contributed by AAoM Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

As the American Disability Act celebrates 31 years the DEIC would like to pay homage to the founders and groundbreaking activists that made the Disability Rights Movement possible for us all. This list is not exhaustive of everyone, but just a couple of the trailblazers.

Judy Heumann

Judith "Judy" Ellen Heumann was a key leader in the Disability Rights Movement and is recognized internationally as a leader in the disability community to this day. She led the 504 Sit-In which led to the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which paved the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Justin Dart Jr.

Regarded as the "Godfather of the ADA" Justin Whitlock Dart Jr. was an American activist and advocate for people with disabilities. He helped to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and co-founded the American Association of People with Disabilities.

Johnnie Lacy

Johnnie Lacy was a community and civil rights advocate who helped found the Center for Independent Living in Berkley, CA. She was the Director of the [Community Resources for Independent Living \(CRIL\)](#) organization for over a decade. She was a beloved member of her community and was named Woman of the Year by the California State Senate in 1988.



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Donald Galloway

Donald Galloway was a civil rights advocate for minorities with disabilities who won a lawsuit against the D.C. government for the right of the blind to serve on juries. Pictured here with Ed Roberts (father of the Independent Living Movement), Galloway worked at the Independent Living center in Berkeley and advocated for the independent living movement to be more inclusive of people of color. He received a master's degree in social work and, in 1978, became the first blind person to serve as Jamaica's Peace Corps director.

Ed Roberts

Ed Roberts is often called the father of the Independent Living movement. He was the first student who used a wheelchair to attend the University of California, Berkley. In 1976, he became the Director of the California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation—the same agency that had once labelled him too severely disabled to work. He worked at the [Center for Independent Living](#) (CIL) and guided it's rapid growth during a decisive time for the emerging disability rights movement and that model has been duplicated in hundreds of Centers for Independent Living around the world.



To view our sources and learn more about these incredible pioneers of the Disability Rights Movement click [here](#).

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

| Date | Event |
|-------------|---|
| March 9 | Toilet Training Class for Caregivers of Children with Developmental Disabilities |
| March 10 | 14th Annual Inclusion Conference |
| March 10 | Sensory-Friendly Racing Program at The Henry Ford (@ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm EST) |
| March 10 | Conflict Management Presentation: Co-Parenting and Communication |
| March 15 | Sexual Health for Persons with Disabilities |
| March 16 | FREE Financial Empowerment Webinars through Community Housing Network! (Credit Repair and Maintenance) |
| March 16 | Virtual Special Needs St. Patty's Party |
| March 17 | FREE virtual homeownership education series through Community Housing Network! |
| March 18 | The After I'm Gone Program (Transition Planning and Turning 18) |
| March 19 | 2021 Navigating Autism Today Virtual Conference |
| March 23 | FREE Financial Empowerment Webinars through Community Housing Network! (Budgeting and Personal Finance) |
| March 24 | ABA Training for Parents of Adolescents and Teens |
| March 26-27 | The PLAY Project's Two-Day Livestream Intensive Workshop |
| March 31 | ABA Training for Parents of Adolescents and Teens |
| April 1 | The After I'm Gone Program (Department of Health and Human Services) |
| April 8 | Holding Hope: Working Women in Healthcare Group |
| April 9 | #StayHome & #Stay Creative – FREE Virtual Art Lesson |
| April 14 | ABA Training for Parents of Younger Children |
| April 15 | The After I'm Gone Program (Supporting People in Decision Making) |