



MONDAYS WITH D^R MARK & D^R MICHAEL

Monday, May 5, 2025 | 1:00 – 2:00PM

TOPIC #43
Neurodiversity in the Workplace



Guest speakers:



Eric Hollander, MD

Director of Spectrum Neuroscience
Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
*Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Psychiatric
Research Institute of Montefiore Einstein*



Casara Jean Ferretti, PhD, MS

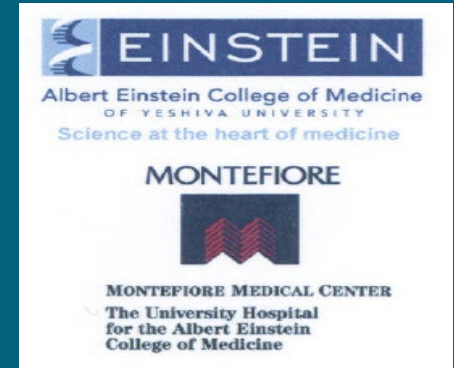
Project Director, Autism and Obsessive-
Compulsive Spectrum Program
*Psychiatry Research Institute of Montefiore-
Einstein (PRIME)*

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Eric Hollander, M.D.
Casara Ferretti, PhD

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Director -Autism and OCD Spectrum Program
Psychiatric Research Institute of Montefiore Einstein (PRIME)

Director-Spectrum Neuroscience and Treatment Institute

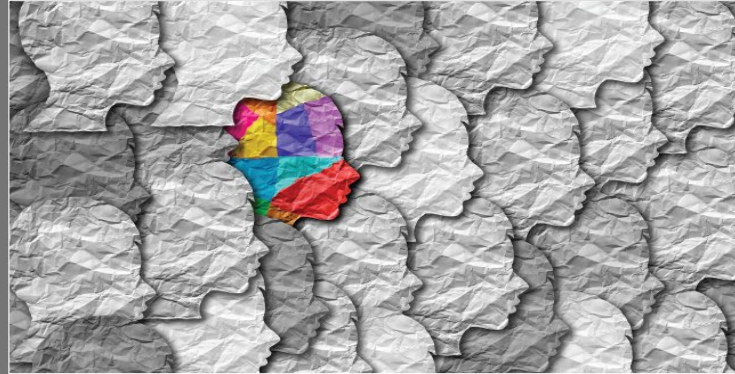


Second
Edition

TEXTBOOK OF

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Second Edition



TEXTBOOK OF
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Hollander
Hagerman
Ferretti



EDITED BY

Eric Hollander, M.D.
Randi J. Hagerman, M.D.
Casara Jean Ferretti, M.S., M.A.

More than 40 years after the official recognition of infantile autism in DSM-III, advances continue to be made in our understanding of the possible causes, assessment and evaluation, and treatment of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). With contributions by dozens of experts in the field, this second edition of the *Textbook of Autism Spectrum Disorders* has been updated to reflect the latest research in ASD.

Unrivalled in its thoroughness, this volume discusses issues of assessment and evaluation; examines the etiology of ASD and its recognized associations with other medical conditions; analyzes standard and experimental treatments; and delves into social policy issues pertinent to individuals with ASD and those who treat them.

Offering summary points in each chapter and copious lists of recommended readings, this is an indispensable resource for psychiatrists, psychologists, neurologists, social workers, speech therapists, educators, and all others in the continuum of care.

About the Editors

Eric Hollander, M.D., is the Director of the Autism and Obsessive Compulsive Spectrum Program at the Psychiatric Research Institute of Montefiore Einstein and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in Bronx, New York.

Randi Hagerman, M.D., is the Endowed Chair in Fragile X Research for the Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders (MIND) Institute and Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of California, Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, California.

Casara Ferretti, M.S., M.A., is a Predoctoral Research Associate in the Autism and Obsessive Compulsive Spectrum Program at the Psychiatric Research Institute of Montefiore Einstein and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in Bronx, New York. She is a PhD candidate in the Clinical Psychology PhD program with Health Emphasis at Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University.

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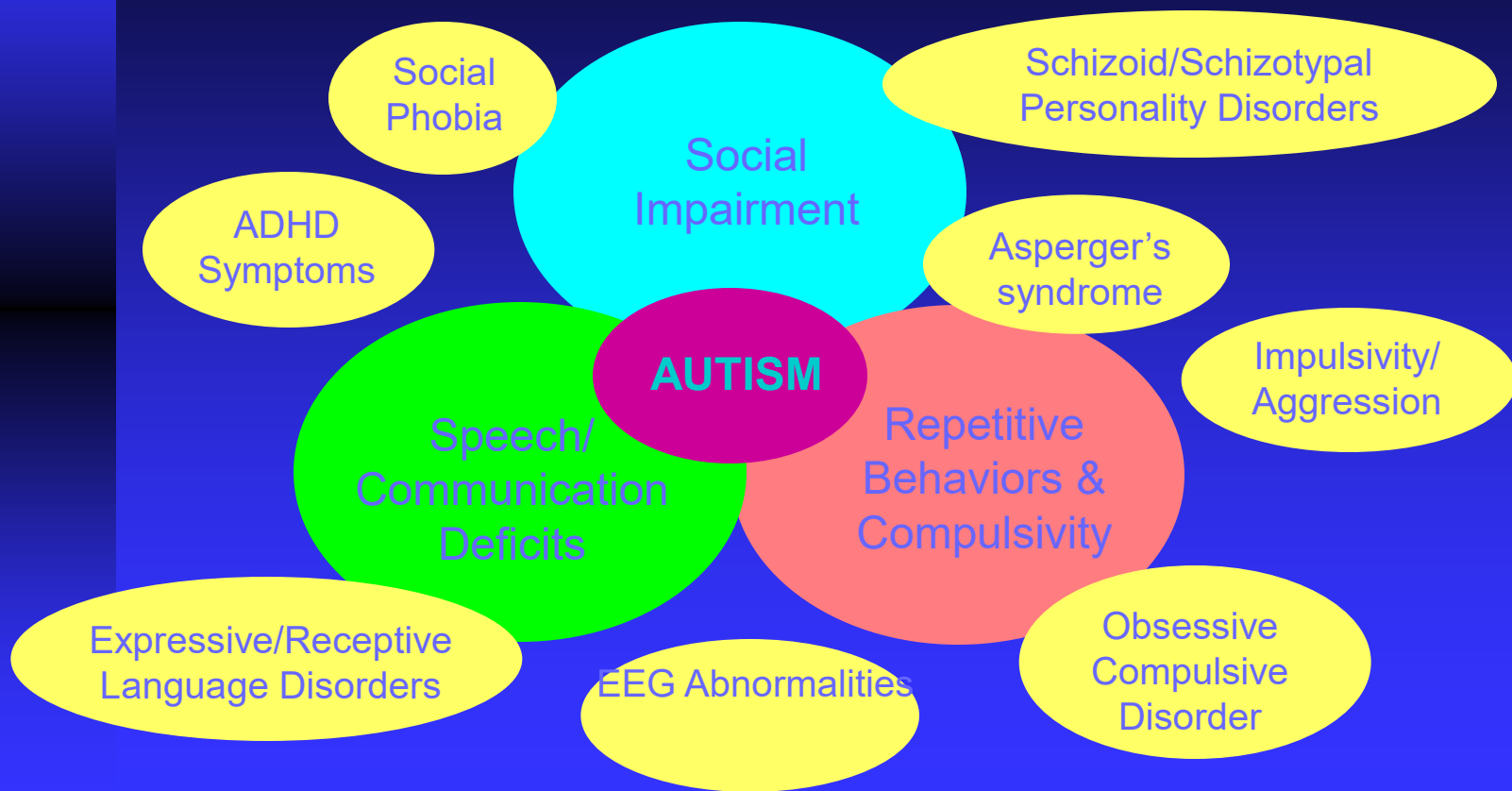


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Core Symptom Domains and Associated Features



Neurodiversity and the workplace

- **Neurodivergence** - someone whose brain processes information in a way that is not typical of most individuals; clumsiness; hard to cope with crowds, bright lights, loud, sudden noises, or social situations; difficulty focusing or keeping still; no smiling or social responsiveness.
- **Neurodiverse DEI** — practices to support people with varying ways of thinking and to give them the resources to thrive in the workplace
- **Skills and deficits** – neurocognitive functions
- Pattern recognition, puzzle solving, systemizer vs empathizer, math, coding, creative, non-linear, prefers routine
- Match restricted interests and skills to job opportunities

Why should employers/HR care about autism?

- ASD impacts schools, universities, relationships, and the workplace
- Different ways of thinking – neurodivergence, special skills
- Neurodiversity is a part of DEI; workplace accommodations
- Low to High Functioning ASD – a very broad spectrum
- Sexual and gender issues
 - LBGTQ, trans, gender dysphoria, inappropriate sexual behaviors
- Mental health comorbidity drives negative outcomes –,
 - comorbid OCD, ADHD, SAD, GAD, Panic, Bipolar, IED, axis II misdiagnosis, substance use
 - hospitalization, suicide

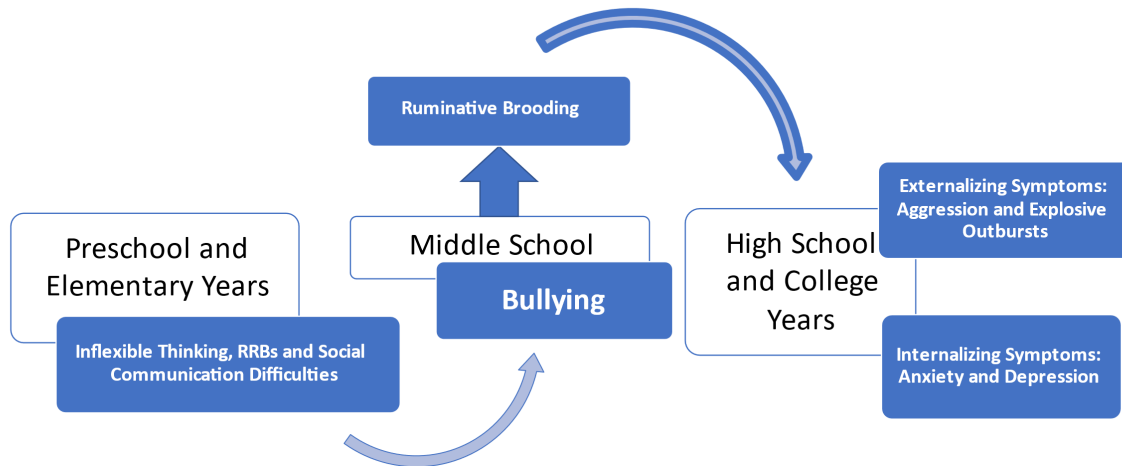
Neurodiversity Across the Lifespan

- 1. Early Identification and Intervention:**
- 2. Adult Diagnosis and Support:**
- 3. Employment Opportunities and Unique Challenges:**
- 4. Transition Services:**
- 5. Advocacy and Acceptance:**

Presenting Symptoms - Lifespan

- Language delay
- Disruptive behaviors, self injury, aggression, temper
- Hyperactivity
- Joint attention, response to name
- Social communication deficits – peers
- Rigidity, repetitive behaviors, self-stim behaviors
- Social anxiety, depression
- Relationship issues
- Impulsive control problems, Internet addiction
- Workplace issues

Longitudinal Effects of Inflexible Thinking



Autism prevalence increasing 1/350 to 1/31 (10-fold) -20 years

- Changing diagnostic concepts
- Milder cases, misnaming ID, OCPD, SAD, OCD
- Comorbidity
- Location – urban/rural
- Services availability
- Environmental Factors –
 - ie, maternal diabetes, obesity, infection, medications
- True new cases

Autism- many faces - neurodivergence

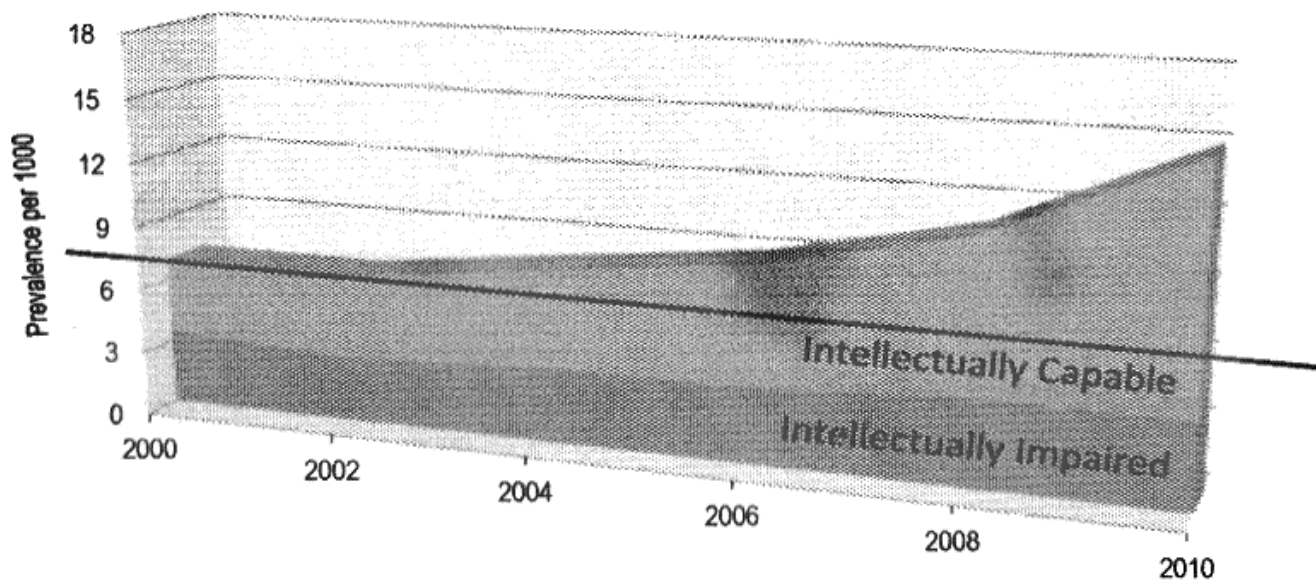
Elon Musk, Sam Bankman-Fried (SBF), Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michael Burry - skills



Autism presentation- severe behaviors - ER



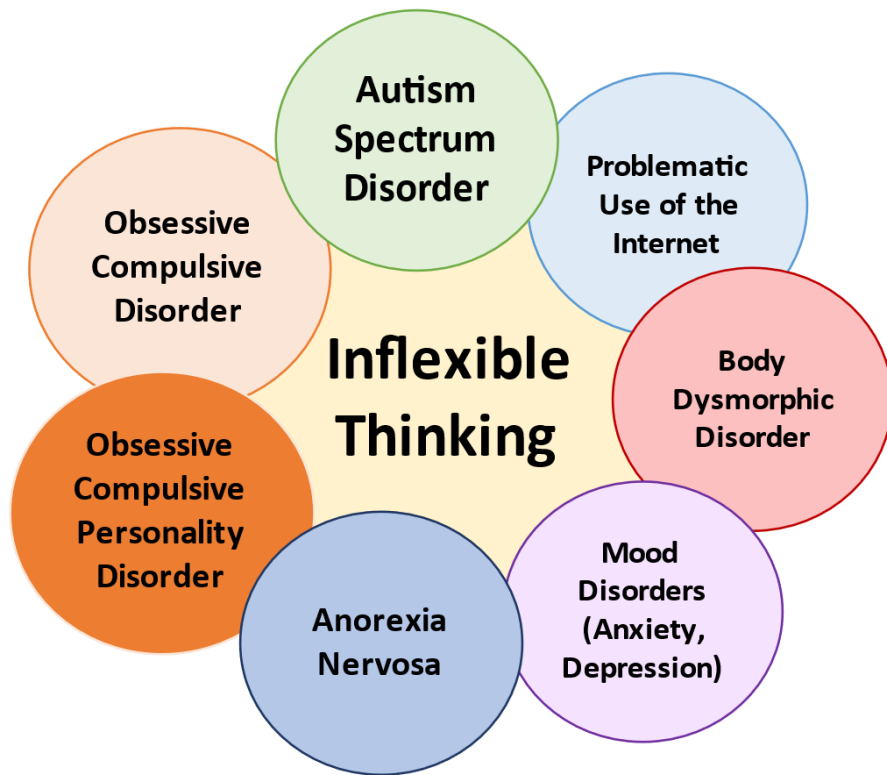
Prevalence of ASD



**Substantial rise in the prevalence of AUTISM
in intellectually capable populations**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Surveys: ADDM Network Surveys 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010

Inflexible Thinking is a Transdiagnostic Trait



HR and Neurodiversity

1. Recruitment Bias

Formal interviews disadvantage candidates who struggle with communication or anxiety in interview.

2. Workplace Accommodations

Flexible work conditions — quiet spaces, assistive technologies, written rather than verbal instructions, flexible deadlines, remote work options.

3. Disclosure and Privacy

Stigma of disclosure; disclose if they want, but respect privacy if they choose not to.

4. Training and Awareness

HR must educate leadership and coworkers to avoid misunderstandings, discrimination, or unintentional exclusion.

5. Performance Management

Standard performance metrics may not always fairly measure the contributions of neurodivergent staff.

Neurodiversity, LBGTQ, transgender, gender dysphoria, BDD issues

1. **Increased Prevalence:** differences in social cognition, self-awareness, and identity development.
2. **Challenges with Social Norms:** understanding unwritten rules of gender expression and sexual orientation.
3. **Unique Experiences:** express gender and sexuality in ways that differ from neurotypical individuals, self-discovery and identity formation influenced by neurodivergent traits.
4. **Support Needs:** Neurodivergent, transgender, LGBTQ+ community - specific support needs related to both their neurodivergence and their gender or sexual identity; knowledgeable healthcare providers, support groups, and resources tailored to their intersecting identities.
5. **Acceptance and Inclusion:** inclusive and accepting spaces for individuals both neurodivergent and LGBTQ; respecting the diversity of experiences and identities.

Disability vs Ability

- Politics - disability vs ability issues
 - High functioning – “Autistic people” , Aspy’s
 - Low functioning – “People with autism”
 - “Camouflaging” in higher functioning adults and women

Overarching Approach of Treatment

- Target core and associated symptom domains
- Combine psychosocial and medication approaches
- Enhance structure and routine
- Address inflexible thinking
- Treat psychiatric and medical comorbidity
- Understand unique issues at various developmental stages
- Match skills to employment opportunities
- Manage workplace issues and optimize workplace design

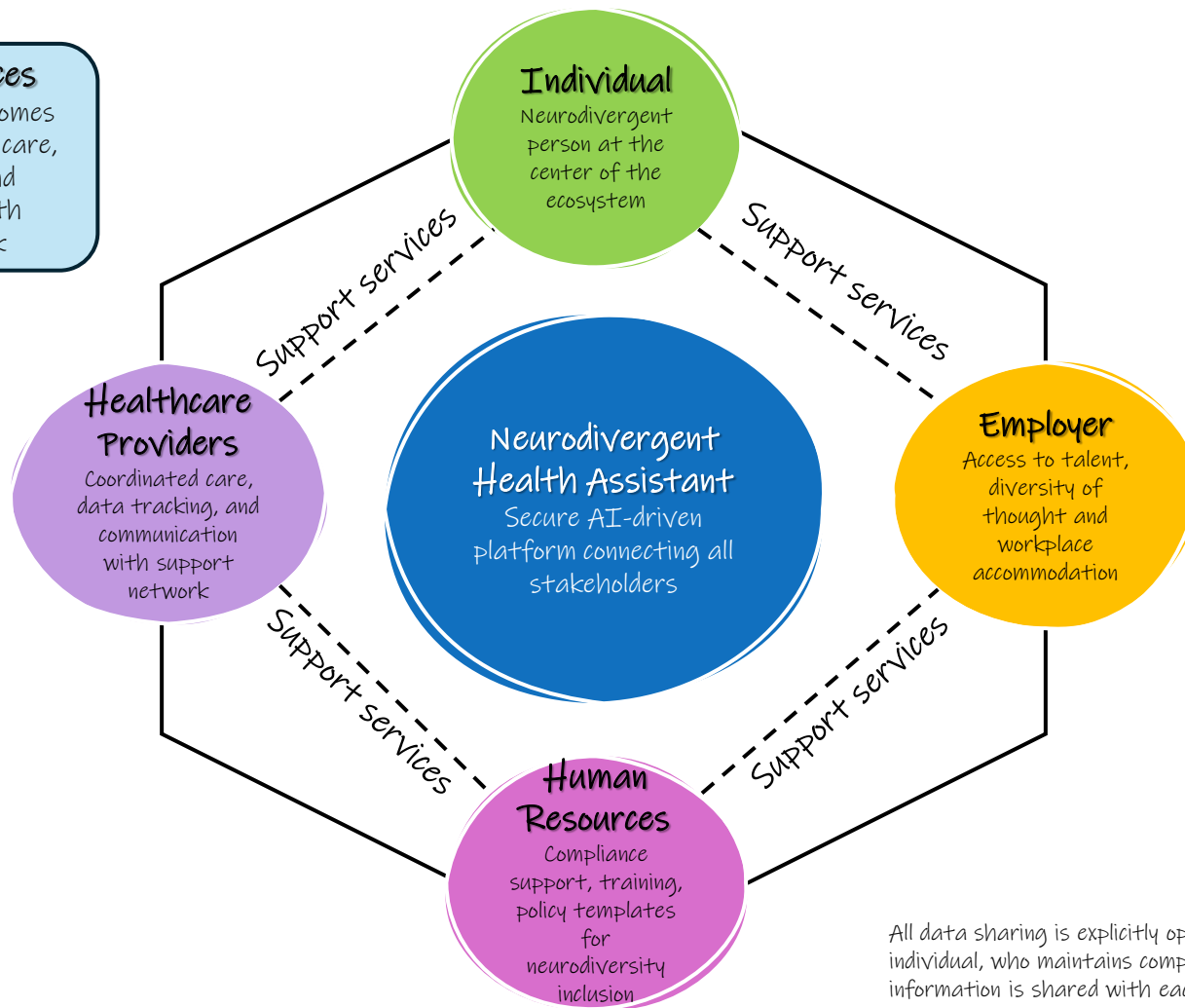
The Neurodiversity Assistant App

(Spectrum Neuroscience and Nvidia)

- Video AI interview to elicit skills, interests, challenges, and goals of individuals
- AI assisted CV and video resume preparation and mock interviews
- Personalized matches of job opportunities from employers with talent having highly developed and specialized skills
- Grants permissions/opens links to employers and HR
- Grants permissions/opens links to providers and caregivers

Support Services

Better patient outcomes through coordinated care, data tracking, and communication with support network



All data sharing is explicitly opted-in by the neurodivergent individual, who maintains complete control over what information is shared with each stakeholder.

Questions

Upcoming NEBGH events:

- **May 8** – First 100 Days of the Trump Administration: Implications for Employer
- **May 13** – AI in HR and Benefits: What's Smart, What's Risky, and What's Next
- **May 19** – Mondays with Dr. Mark & Dr. Michael
- **June 5** – 14th Annual Health & Wellness Benefits Conference
- **September 18** – 2025 Pharmacy Benefits Conference

