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ABCT Autism Spectrum & Developmental Disabilities (ASDD) SIG

November 2020 Newsletter

Hello ASDD SIG Members!

ABCT 2020 is right around the corner! We hope to see many of you next week during our virtual SIG Conference, scheduled for **Thursday, November 19th, 12pm-4pm EST**. We greatly appreciate the hard work of our Conference Planning Committee (Karina Silva (Chair), Cara Pugliese, Caitlin Conner, Laura Anthony, Lindsey Burrell, Hannah Rea, Rebecca Elias, and Hannah Morton) for all their efforts to make our time together as valuable and fun as possible! We are excited to have Eric Butter, PhD from Nationwide Children's as our Invited Speaker, who will be presenting, "*Accelerated and Transformational Advances in Telehealth Services for Autism Spectrum Disorder.*"

There is still time to register at: <http://bit.ly/ABCTASDDSIG2020preconREGISTRATION>. The full agenda is included in the registration link. Please pass this along to colleagues who may be interested in joining!

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ABCT ASDD SIG CONFERENCE

Time: Nov 19, 2020 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting ID: 937 8579 9504

We also would like to highlight additional ways to learn from our colleagues as well as opportunities to network:

1. When making your conference plans, please check out the stellar line-up of ASDD content below!
2. Catch up with old colleagues meet new ones at our Virtual Happy Hours on Thursday, November 19th (one at 5:30pm EST, a 2nd round at 9pm EST).
3. See the stellar submissions from our SIG members who have posters at the Friday night SIG Exposition (Friday, November 20th, from 6:30-8:30 pm).

ASDD SIG 5:30PM VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR

Time: Nov 19, 2020 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting ID: 928 5071 8292

ASDD SIG 9:00PM VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR

Nov 19, 2020 09:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting ID: 940 6523 7133

If you have any questions that we could answer about the upcoming conference, please don't hesitate to reach out (kbearss@uw.edu). Hope to see you November 19th!

Karen Bearss and Emily Kuschner

ASDD SIG Co-Chairs

Click [HERE](#) for a list of ASDD-SIG Relevant Presentations at ABCT 2020!

Keep up with the ASDD-SIG online!

Remember to follow our twitter account at [@ABCTautism](https://twitter.com/ABCTautism) to get updates on current research and resources, information about the SIG, and other news related to the ASDD field! We also want to highlight our SIG member's work and achievements, so please reach out if you want us to feature anything on the page!

In this newsletter, you will find information on...

1. Tips for attending a conference virtually
2. Updates on assessment approaches during COVID-19
3. How to avoid Zoom fatigue
4. Tips for interviewing via Zoom
5. Information about recent news and publications from SIG members

How to Get the Most Out of a Virtual ABCT Convention (and other virtual conferences!)

Angela Dahiya

As virtual events become the new normal, there are even more opportunities to attend conferences, network, and share your work. With ABCT going virtual for its 2020 programming, we will still be able to receive valuable information from research talks and workshops without the financial burden and time commitment. However, it will require some adjustment to get the most out of the conference as attendees and presenters.

Here are some tips to improve your virtual conference experience at the ABCT 2020 Convention (or other upcoming virtual events)!

1. **Testing the technology.** Learn how to use the specified videoconferencing platform ahead of time (such as Zoom or WebEx) and check in with the conference schedule to see if there are options to engage with speakers or other attendees (e.g., virtual happy hours, networking receptions, or other live events).
2. **Plan ahead.** Similar to when attending a conference in-person, we are dedicating our time to block off our schedule to watch the sessions that we are interested in. It's always helpful to review the programming book and schedule ahead of time to select the talks and events you want to attend. Google calendar alerts are your friend!
3. **Aim for a distraction free zone.** Too much technology can be overwhelming! Turn off notifications from your phones or other devices so you can solely focus on one type of technology at a time. Prepare your space with all the essentials you need to

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4. **Don't forget to take breaks.** Zoom/video call fatigue is very real! In order to fully absorb all the information from the convention, schedule in breaks for snack/coffee breaks, mealtimes, and time to stretch or walk around for a bit.
5. **Participation and engagement.** When possible, interact in sessions by keeping your video on and asking questions. Alternatively, try to attend sessions with friends or colleagues and regroup during breaks to network or have your own conference happy hour event!
6. **Lights, Camera, Present!** If presenting at a workshop or symposium, take some time to test out your camera for lighting and angles, as well as other presentation essentials (e.g., slides, audio, background). If presenting a poster, test out your microphone and device settings when making your audio recording so it is clear and easy to hear.
7. **Practice Makes Perfect.** Presenting in the digital world is something everyone is getting used to, so it is important to practice before going live! Make your poster or slide interactive and easy to follow. Resources such as [Canva](#) or [SlidesCarnival](#) offer quality designs and unique templates. For speakers, try to use infographics and engaging activities while presenting (such as a Q&A session or relevant videos). Overall, be animated and present professionally when on video (virtual backgrounds are also fun)!
8. **Networking is Key!** More professionals are now utilizing Twitter or other social media platforms to interact and network with current and potential colleagues in their field. Share photos, videos, or other information of any activities you are attending. Whether it's about an interesting talk or cool poster you saw or your work/conference from home set-up, anything goes!
9. **Connect with the #ASDD SIG.** We want to hear from you! Reach out to us at [@ABCTAutism](#) on Twitter or use the [#ASDD](#) hashtag to discuss your work and research interests, connect with others in the field, share relevant talks, posters, or papers, and learn about how you can attend our virtual pre-conference on Thursday, November 19th!

ASD Assessment Approaches during COVID-19: Updates

Hannah Rea

recommendations for adapted protocols for telemedicine-based diagnostic evaluations for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Below are some updates on the use of these telemedicine-based tools.

Proof of Concept and Clinician Experiences with Telehealth Assessments:

- **Nationwide Children's Hospital:** about 8-14% of telehealth evaluations had in-person follow-ups. Clinicians find telehealth evaluations to be surprisingly similar to clinic ones.
- **Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC):** VUMC had over 2,000 attendees at their webinars about the TELE-ASD-PEDS and have received data from 7 sites. Clinicians who are familiar with the ADOS-2 express comfort with administration and demonstrate high levels of accuracy (e.g., disagreements on 2 cases out of 44). 28% of children required follow-up in person testing.
- **University of Washington Center on Human Development and Disability:** From their waitlist of 700-800 children under the age of 3 whose families did not need an interpreter, about 175 families responded and still needed services. Of those families, 81 scheduled a telehealth assessment. After intake, 7 families were asked to wait for in-person visit due to medical/diagnostic complexity or technological problems (8%). Out of the 56 who have completed evaluations thus far, only 1 child required follow-up in person testing. Additionally, they worked through so much of their waitlist that families they have been contacting recently said the referral was too recent and they were not yet ready for an evaluation.

Family Experiences:

- All sites reported that families seem to enjoy having evaluations conducted in a natural, comfortable setting. This comfort enhances rapport. Further, seeing the family in a natural context aids in assessment and recommendations.
- Caregivers report enjoying being active parts of the assessment. This seems to give them a new perspective on their child, ways to interact with their child, and helps them show the examiners the behaviors they were concerned about.
- Dr. Laura Corona recently published VUMC's data on parent perceptions: Corona, L. L., Weitlauf, A. S., Hine, J., Berman, A., Miceli, A., Nicholson, A., ... & Vehorn, A. (2020). Parent Perceptions of Caregiver-Mediated Telemedicine Tools for Assessing Autism Risk in Toddlers. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 1-11

Challenges:

technology literacy. UW also noted billing concerns when families believe they have the technological capabilities for telehealth but discover during the appointment that the connection is inadequate and need to shift to phone. Some solutions include:

- Nationwide formed a tech triage team made up of employees whose normal duties were interrupted. This team provides additional reminder calls, answers technical questions, and makes sure families have downloaded the proper apps in advance.
- UW has gotten creative with limited resources. For example, they found that placing a phone in a shoe makes for a great phone holder.
- Another challenge occurs with cognitive testing. Many of the telehealth options are limited for younger children, so Nationwide has had to follow-up with in-person testing for better cognitive assessments.
- It can be difficult to coach caregivers in the script, particularly with busier caregivers who had less time to set-up and/or more behaviors to manage and with interpreters. Some solutions include:
 - VUMC is considering providing vignettes about the assessment and/or a more coherent set of materials to prime families.
 - UW has used some earlier calls to talk to parents about what to expect, provide written instructions, and coach parents in activities and toys to have prepared. UW also sometimes has families follow-up with home videos.
- Feedback can be challenging for families who are not prepared for the diagnosis. It is difficult to comfort families via telehealth, particularly when connection problems are also at play.

Benefits:

- Telehealth interviews are sometimes easier to provide with translators. There seems to be less awkward gaze shifting and smoother transitions.
- Nationwide also reports success providing assessments to older children who have longer attention spans, better participation, better options for cognitive assessments, and often have previous records for review.
- UW has found that the flexibility in scheduling and working from home sometimes means that both parents can join, and parents can better demonstrate their concerns in the moment in a naturalistic way.
- Some families in Seattle seem to have an easier time accessing interventions because wait time for telehealth intervention is shorter.

Future Directions:

on clinician confidence. They are also actively refining their assessment for 6 to 10-year-olds with average cognitive ability to include both play and conversation.

- They are piloting the Rapid Intervention and Treatment Integration to provide 1 to 3 intervention-oriented sessions that may include behavior consultation, psychoeducation, and/or care coordination. These interventions provide some relief while parents wait for interventions and also help get buy-in from caregivers who previously expressed hesitation or stress related
- **Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC):** Now that they have demonstrated proof of concept, VKC TRIAD hopes to study the psychometrics of the TELE-ASD-PEDS, including optimal cut points and interrater reliability. They also want to continue to ensure that they are addressing a disparity and not creating a new one because they recognize that telehealth still places burdens on providers and families.
- **University of Washington Center on Human Development and Disability:** They are piloting assessments with kids with phrase speech. To do this, they are adding in more conversational prompts and opportunities for make believe play. They are also beginning assessments with families who require interpreters. They are compiling their diagnostic statistics and recently received funding for center wide research on clinician and family perspectives of telehealth acceptability in intervention and assessment.

Anecdotal Takeaways

Drs. Kryszak and Albright at Nationwide: The new formats feel tiring and energizing in new ways. While Dr. Kryszak noted that it can be tiring to stare at a screen all day and that these assessments require a different form of active involvement and attention, she also feels enthusiastic about the increased flexibility, creativity, and ability to reach families who may have had difficulty obtaining assessments otherwise. Dr. Albright reminded us to not be afraid to try or to fail a little. He said clinicians and families are more able and ready to do these evaluations via telehealth than they often expect.

Dr. Corona at VKC TRIAD: “I believe that our experience with tele-assessment demonstrated that we can successfully evaluate young children at risk for ASD via telemedicine, and that doing so can be convenient and comfortable for families, especially families who face barriers to accessing in-person appointments. I also know that we still have a lot to learn in terms of who we are reaching (and not reaching) via telemedicine, what factors contribute to a high quality, successful telemedicine visit, and for whom tele-assessment works best. It's an exciting place to

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Dr. Gerdtts at UW: Our center is really glad and grateful that there's an option for an empirically supported tool [the TELE-ASD-PEDS] that we can use to help us in diagnosis. The TELE-ASD-PEDS has provided valuable clinical clarification in situations where parent report alone is unclear. There have been very few challenging interactions and anecdotally parents seem to feel well-served.

ZOOM Fatigue

Grace Lee Simmons

A cursory google search of “Zoom Fatigue,” a concept that essentially did not exist 8 months ago, now pulls 521,000 results. There are pedantic articles from [the BBC](#) and [WSJ](#); quippy advice columns from [Forbes](#) and [Harvard Business Review](#), spirited [TED talks](#); even [National Geographic](#) did a recent spotlight on this idea of tiredness and burnout associated with overuse of virtual communication platforms (e.g., ZOOM, Google Suite; see [Lee, 2020](#) for a comprehensive and referenced overview). In short, as we approach Month Eight of a global pandemic, we are all undeniably, desperately weary of video conferencing.

Experts suggest ZOOM Fatigue derives, in part, from the atypical social dynamics of videoconferencing. Screen-based conversations [limit and alter our shared nonverbal cues](#) (eye contact is forced, body language is largely hidden, etc.) and these interactions therefore require more cognitive effort and make it difficult to relax. Additionally, as each person is joining the conversation from a different ‘room,’ distractions (pets, children, etc.) are a near inevitability, which can be frustrating and exhausting. Working, teaching, and learning through videoconference also tasks the already-tenuous work-life balance that many of us delicately navigated pre-COVID. When ‘work’ and ‘home’ are effectively synonymous, it can be difficult to disengage, stretching the workday and associated stress into an evening otherwise dedicated to connecting with family, socializing, and/or self-care.

As we face a winter of continued distance learning and remote work, small changes in videoconferencing habits might lessen the mental strain and physical fatigue. From the included resources, and others, we've distilled down a few tips we hope might help to manage the onslaught of meetings, classes, and webinars that have come to define 2020:

1. [Hide your own video](#); watching your own face in a conversation is rather unnatural, can lead to feelings of self-consciousness, and may also distract you from the

2. **Avoid the ‘[Gallery View](#)’**; the arrangement of tiny animated faces filling your desktop can be overwhelming and pull your attention away from the speaker. Instead, consider the ‘Speaker View’ to minimize the temptation to scrutinize a colleague’s remote workspace.
 3. **Follow the [20-20-20 Law](#)**; to lessen eye strain associated with hours of videoconferencing, take a 20-second break from looking at a screen every 20 minutes and focus on an object 20 feet away.
 4. **Set boundaries**; schedule time (10 minute breaks, for example) after videoconferencing to breathe and transition to your next task.
 5. **Explore other options**; videoconferencing has become default communication for many of us. Harken back to pre-COVID and consider phone calls or emails as an alternative to ZOOM meetings.
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Tips for Virtual Interviews

Megan Braconnier

Interviews for many graduate school, internship, and post-doctoral programs have been moved to online videoconferencing platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help you put your best foot forward in this new interview format, we have compiled a list of tips for virtual interviews:

1. **Practice using the platform.** If you've never used Zoom, WebEx, or Teams prior to your interview, make sure you download and practice using the software ahead of the interview.
2. **Choosing the right location.** When choosing a room to interview from, make sure your location is quiet, private, and well-lit. Check how much of your background is visible on camera and make sure there are no distracting objects in view. In addition, make sure you have a strong internet connection. If your home internet connection is unreliable, it may make sense to plan to interview from an office or campus building when possible.
3. **Make sure your device is ready to go.** In addition to downloading the software ahead of time, make sure to charge your laptop fully, have access to your power cord, and check for any necessary updates to your computer prior to the interview.
4. **During the interview:** Wear professional attire (not just from the waist up - better safe than sorry). Make "eye-contact" by looking into the camera instead of at your

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notifications to avoid distractions or interruptions, especially if your texts and calls go through to your computer automatically.

5. **Be confident!** Everyone is adjusting to this new format for meetings together and understands that there will inevitably be some issues. Stay calm and do your best!

News and Updates from SIG Members

We received great responses from everyone about recent updates, projects, and publications!

Graduate Programs & Postdoc Announcements

PhD Program in Clinical Psychology at Montclair State University

The PhD Program in Clinical Psychology at Montclair State University is currently recruiting students for its next cohort to begin in Fall 2021. Montclair State is a public doctoral research university located 30 minutes outside New York City. The program adheres to the scientist-practitioner training model, features a focus on working with children, adolescents, and families, and offers opportunities for full funding. More information about the program can be found on our [website](#). **We are particularly looking for applicants who have an interest in *developmental disabilities*.** My colleagues and I study cognitive, neural, and family processes in developmental disorders, including how language and cognition, neural plasticity, as well as parenting and family functioning, may be affected in children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Down Syndrome, Specific Language Impairment, and Williams Syndrome, among other disorders. In addition, we use these insights to inform refinement of evidence-based interventions for these populations. We work with students who have interests in these and other related areas as well.

Applications for the Fall 2021 class must be submitted to [The Graduate School](#) by **December 1, 2020**. Prospective students with interests in research and clinical work with children with developmental disabilities are encouraged to apply and may contact Dr. Laura Lakusta (lakustal@montclair.edu), Dr. Jennifer Yang (yangyi@montclair.edu), Dr. Peter Vietze (vietzep@montclair.edu), or Dr. Erin Kang (kange@montclair.edu) with any questions.

PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of Arkansas

The Family and Community Intervention (FCI) Lab at the University of Arkansas is focused

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evidence-based interventions for youth with disruptive behavior disorders (e.g. PCIT, MST) and targets research on the adaptation of evidence-based treatments for use with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Dr. Quetsch is recruiting a Clinical Psychology PhD student for Fall 2021 -- students interested in ASD, child disruptive behaviors, and family-mediated interventions are encouraged to apply! Deadline is 12/1/20

For more information, visit:

- Dr. Quetsch's faculty page: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/psychological-science/people/index/uid/quetsch/name/Lauren+B.+Quetsch/>
- FCI Lab page: <https://fci.uark.edu/research/>
- University of Arkansas Clinical
PhD: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/psychological-science/graduate-programs/clinical-psychology/index.php>

Children's Mercy Kansas City Postdoctoral Fellowships

CMKC seeks applicants for multiple psychology fellowship openings, including candidates specifically interested in autism and developmental disabilities. For position and application details, see our [APPIC website](#); for additional information, please visit our [clinical program](#) website or email [Cy Nadler](#).

Faculty Positions

Children's Mercy Kansas City Faculty Positions

CMKC will soon seek qualified applicants for multiple clinical faculty openings (start dates flexible, likely next summer), including positions with a focus on general clinical child psychology areas as well as developmental disabilities specifically. Some approved positions are not yet posted publicly, and we anticipate more to follow in the coming months. Visit our [Developmental and Behavioral Health](#) division website and [autism program website](#) [clinical program](#) website for information about the department, and email [Cy Nadler](#) with informal inquiries.

Recent Papers

Simmons, G.L., Ioannou, S., Smith, J.V., Corbett, B.A., Lerner, M.D. and White, S.W. (2020), Utility of an Observational Social Skill Assessment as a Measure of Social Cognition in Autism. *Autism Research*.
doi:10.1002/aur.2404

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Dr. Lindsey Burrell and Dr. Lawrence Scahill will be conducting a virtual webinar on “Treatment of Children with Feeding Problems and Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Evidence-Based Treatment” on Friday, December 11, 2020 from 11:00-2:00pm through the Applied Behavior Analysis Center (ABAC), LLC. Continuing education credits are offered for psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and BCBA’s. Cost is \$135 to attend. If you are interested, you can receive more information at: <https://abacnj.com/product/treatment-of-children-with-feeding-problems-and-autism-spectrum-disorder-an-evidence-based-treatment/>

The UCLA PEERS® Clinic is conducting virtual PEERS groups for teens and young adults across the country and world! It is out of pocket, since licensure and insurance from state to state is a bit different, but participating families get access to free boot camp materials and all of the PEERS sessions and topics are covered in classes! PEERS Boot Camps are designed to teach evidence-based social skills to anyone interested in learning more, including teens, adults, families, practitioners, and educators. Attendees are presented with targeted skills through didactic instruction, role-play demonstrations, and have the opportunity to practice the newly-learned skills through behavioral rehearsal exercises. During these behavioral rehearsals, attendees are divided into small breakout groups to practice with direct coaching from the treatment team. To enroll, please contact peersclinic@ucla.edu or call (310)267-3377. For more information, visit www.semel.ucla.edu/peers

**We’d like to give a big THANK YOU to the hard work of the
ASDD-SIG Communications Committee:**

Megan Braconnier (Committee Co-Chair)

Laura Corona (Committee Co-Chair)

Lindsey Burrell

Angela Dahiya

Grace Lee Simmons

Hannah Rea

And our SIG leaders:

Karen Bearss

Emily Kuschner

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