



College Autism Network News and Notes

June 2026

Hello from Base Camp! We Can See the Summit From Here



**COLLEGE AUTISM
SUMMIT 2026** ∞
BALTIMORE, MD // NOV. 8-11

Our Call for Proposals has closed, and we received over 100 proposals, many from new potential attendees, institutions and organizations. Our reviewers are now hard at work selecting the proposals that, when tucked neatly into the schedule, will offer the most interesting, useful, diverse and forward-thinking Summit content. If you've never attended the Summit, this would be a great year to take us for a spin.

[Registration is open](#), and you'll want to [book a hotel room](#) early (everything happens at the beautiful Renaissance HarborPlace in Baltimore) because our room block will sell out.

Come for the content, stay for the networking. See you in Baltimore!

CAN Annual Award Nominees Sought

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CAN Annual Award Nominees Sought

Complex Conversations Begin on June 10

"College Shopping" Discussion Provides Helpful Tips

This Month's CANVAS Call Discusses Acceptance of Autistic Peers

Virtual Workshop: Trauma Informed Care for Autistic People

CAN's Consultants' Collective Available for Campus Support

Research Article Updates on Autistic College Students

PEERS Dating Online Social Skills Summer Program Offered





We love awards! Giving them, getting them, watching them on TV. We're pleased to announce that nominations for our annual CAN awards are now open. We ask you to nominate someone (including yourself--don't be shy!) for one or more of the following awards:

- Outstanding Autism Support Program
- Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative
- Bradley E. Cox Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education
- CAN Contributor of the Year

Criteria for selection and the nomination form can be found at our [website](#). The deadline for nominations is **June 15**. Award winners will be announced at the 2026 [College Autism Summit](#) in Baltimore, November 8-11.

Complex Conversations Series Begins on June 10



We're excited to launch a series of interesting webinars that we're calling "Complex Conversations."

These will explore nuanced issues that those who support autistic college students should know more about. Our first session, "Navigating the Digital Dating Landscape," is a discussion about online dating for neurodivergent adults and

is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10 at 3 pm ET.

We'll hear from two knowledgeable presenters: Lise Keeney, creator of [Introflirt University](#) and Stefanie Suppa, COO of [Uneepi](#).

This webinar is *free* for CAN members, and \$40 for nonmembers. To register, please visit our [website](#).

"College Shopping" Discussion Provides Helpful Tips



A group of CAN program leaders got together in May for a thoughtful conversation about a familiar topic: families of autistic students navigating the college search process. Finding the right fit goes far beyond academics; it's about support, culture, belonging, and the confidence that a program will deliver on its promises. Our discussion acknowledged both sides of this journey: the hopes and anxieties that families bring, and the care and creativity that program professionals invest every day in making college a success for their students.

What emerged from the conversation was a tale of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment. From building meaningful partnerships with admissions and disability professionals, to hosting monthly Zoom information sessions and transition workshops, our members are finding ways to meet families where they are — early, honestly, and with heart. The group affirmed the power of student voices, encouraging programs to feature current students in videos and outreach materials so that families can hear directly from those who have flourished within these programs.

- Partner early and often with admissions and advising staff: Regular check-ins with recruiters, advisors, and directors help align messaging, strengthen referrals, and keep the student's best interests at the center of every conversation.

- Reach families through structured outreach: Monthly information sessions, recorded webinars, transition workshops, and well-crafted template emails allow programs to share rich, consistent information without overwhelming staff.

- Let students tell the story: Authentic student testimonials and video snippets are among the tools that help families understand what real support looks like on your campus.

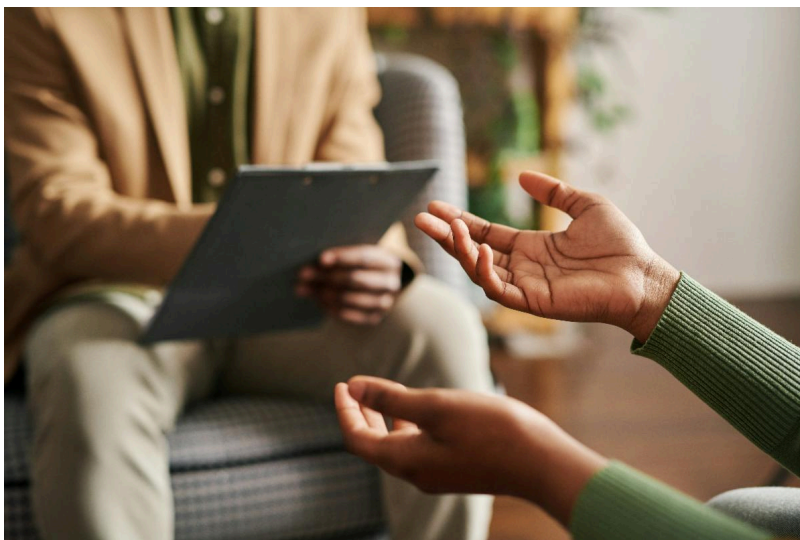
- Start the conversation early: "Know before you go" sessions, new student welcome day workshops, and practical tools such as daily living skills checklists help families and students prepare with confidence.

- Be honest about capacity: Transparent conversations about program limits protect both families and staff and reflect the integrity students deserve.

- Belonging is the goal: As one participant put it, families aren't just looking for accommodations, they are looking for a place where their student will feel genuinely welcomed. Everything from how quickly emails get answered to photos that appear on a website communicates whether a campus truly embraces neurodiverse students.

Thanks to everyone who shared their wisdom and experience in this conversation! Are you on our Program Leaders' list to receive invitations to these conversations? If not, please [email Lee](#).

Virtual Workshop on Trauma-Informed Care for Autistic People



Join CAN members Sam Brandsen and Tisha Shah, founders of TheraFriends for a free virtual workshop on Trauma-Informed Care for Autistic and Transgender People on June 23 from 7 pm-8:15 pm ET. To sign up, use this registration form:

The presentation will cover practical suggestions for accessibility in a therapeutic environment, intersectionality, the overlap between autism and gender expansiveness, common barriers faced by autistic and trans autistic people, and more.

CAN's Consultants' Collective



Each month we'll tell you a bit about our Collective of stellar consultants available for a variety of supports for your program or institution. When you engage one of our consultants, it's a win-win-win. You get excellent consultation, our consultant shares their knowledge and experience for a very reasonable fee (negotiated individually with the institution), and CAN receives a portion of the fee to help support our outreach to other groups and institutions. This month's featured consultant is Amy Rutherford.

Amy Rutherford celebrates neurodiversity by coaching students and professionals through transitions, academics, career exploration, and finding the right college fit, drawing on nearly two decades of experience in higher education. She loves to partner with universities and employers to create more neuroinclusive environments through specialized training and consultation. Her work focuses on building practical strategies that support both individual success and systemic change. As someone with lived experience, Amy brings a creative, informed perspective to every project. She especially enjoys helping organizations design new programs while strengthening and sustaining existing initiatives.

Interested in engaging Amy or one of the other members of our Consultants' Collective? Contact Matt Segall, event coordinator, or visit our [website](#).

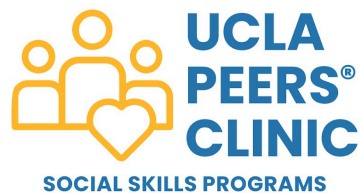
Research Article Updates on Autistic College Students



The Prevalence of Autistic College Students in the United States (Cox, Stockwell, & Francis) was published in *Autism in Adulthood*. You can access the article [here](#).

“Finding Other People Whose Minds Work Similarly to Mine:” Supporting Autistic College Student Success (Cox, Nachman, Taylor, Gelbar, Lynch, Raclaw, Isaacson, & Jiang) will be published in the *Review of Higher Education*. You can access the article [here](#).

PEERS Offers Summer Social Skills Classes and Professional Training Opportunity



The UCLA PEERS® Clinic is now enrolling adults worldwide and across the country for PEERS® for Dating Online Social Skills Classes—an evidence-based program designed to teach skills related to finding and maintaining romantic relationships. This 20-week program is held via Zoom for 90 minutes each week. It includes didactic lessons on social skills, role-play demonstrations to model strategies, interactive breakout room activities to practice skills in real-time. Simultaneous sessions will be held for dating coaches

(parents or mentors) to learn effective strategies to coach and support their adults in finding and maintaining romantic relationships. We are currently enrolling for groups beginning in the late summer of 2026 across multiple time zones!

For more information about PEERS for Dating Online Social Skills Classes, please contact Mateen Rosenblum at: Mrosenblum@mednet.ucla.edu or peersclinic@ucla.edu

Additionally, the upcoming training seminar we offer is the evidence-based PEERS® School-Based Training Program from June 10–12, 2026. There are still a few spots available in this training seminar! In addition to 24 hours of specialized training, completion of this teleconference includes: Accreditation as a PEERS® Certified Telehealth Provider, Important resources needed to successfully implement your own PEERS® groups, including our treatment manual and training materials, Live-to-tape observation of our PEERS® Telehealth Groups and Inclusion on the PEERS® Certified Providers directory.

If you are interested in registering for this training or for more information, please feel free to fill out the registration form attached and send it to the UCLA PEERS Clinic: peersclinic@ucla.edu.

CAN's newsletter is published monthly by the [College Autism Network](#), an independent 501(c)3 organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Post a job opportunity in autism support services? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 3000 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.

Was someone nice enough to forward this newsletter to you? We're happy to add you to our mailing list to receive it directly. [Send us a note](#).

If you appreciate our work, please consider [joining CAN](#) to receive additional information and discounts on some of our resources and to support our work. Individual and organizational memberships are available.

The [College Autism Network](#) is supported by the [Frist Center for Autism and Innovation](#) at Vanderbilt University.

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