

AEP Virtual Gathering

Autism & Drama: Lessons from Integrated Residencies Celebrating Neurodiversity

Presenters

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- Dr. David Neufeld, Inclusion Coach & Consultant [david@drdavidneufeld.com]

Session Description

In this session, StageWrite presents our ADAPTS (Autism & Drama with Artists, Parents, Teachers & Students) program, which uses theatre to connect artists with students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their typically developing peer partners in shared creative experiences with the goal of fostering inclusivity and celebrating neurodiversity. We will explore how integrated drama residencies support the social-emotional development of children with ASD and their typically developing peers. We will discuss how integrated drama experiences empower neurotypical students to be advocates for their classmates with ASD and the ways this method of school-wide change can ensure equitable access to the arts for students with disabilities and create a positive impact on the entire community.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the need for inclusive/integrative programming.
- Understand, honor and celebrate neurodiversity and inclusion.
- Gain inclusive strategies and Universal Design Learning techniques for working with neurodiverse groups.

Session Outline and Summary

History of StageWrite and ADAPTS - A brief background on the creation of ADAPTS, the grant that originally funded the program and the two different ADAPTS program models StageWrite implemented in the process of identifying best practices.

Research - Autism 101 and shared research about the benefits of using drama with children on the autism spectrum as well as the value of inclusive/integrative program models.

Neurodiversity - The idea that all brains naturally evolve differently and that there is no such thing as one “normal” or “right” type of brain or style of neurocognitive functioning. The concept of honoring and celebrating neurodiversity sits at the core of the ADAPTS pedagogy.

Curriculum - Details of the ADAPTS curriculum, offering insights into how we devise our lessons and sharing an example of a daily lesson plan from our most recent residency, as well as a video montage depicting highlights from the residency.

Inclusive Strategies - An explanation of some of the common differences we might see in a neurodiverse classroom setting and shared appropriate support strategies — all of which are grounded in a Universal Design framework. The most important concept from this section is that these strategies need not be exclusively reserved for individuals with disabilities — keeping Universal Design in mind while planning any curriculum will benefit *all* learners.

Evaluation - An example of an evaluation tool we use in order to assess student progress and our program effectiveness.

Pandemic Response - StageWrite’s pivot of the ADAPTS programming when schools shifted to remote learning and how we plan to move forward with the upcoming virtual residencies.

Celebration - Examples of the celebratory impact of ADAPTS on three different levels (celebration between students and their families, celebration and impact in the greater school culture, and celebration through a city-wide public performance).

Supplemental Materials

Research Referenced

Corbett, B. A., Gunther, J. R., Comins, D., Price, J., Ryan, N., Simon, D., Schupp, C. W. and Rios, T. (2011), 'Brief report: Theatre as therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder', *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 41: 4, pp. 505-11.

D'Amico, M., Lalonde, C., & Snow, S. (2015). *Evaluating the efficacy of drama therapy in teaching social skills to children with ASD*. *Drama Therapy Review*, 1(1), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.1386/dtr.1.1.21_1

Goldstein, H., & Cisar, C. L. (1992). *Promoting interaction during sociodramatic play: Teaching scripts to typical preschoolers and classmates with disabilities*. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis*, 25(2), 265-280.

Karnezi, H., & Tierney, K. (2009). *A novel intervention to address fears in children with Asperger syndrome: a pilot study of the Cognitive Behavior Drama (CBD) model*. *Behavior Change*, 26, 271–282.

Neufeld, D.J. (2012). *Integrated Drama Groups: Promoting symbolic play, empathy, and social engagement with peers in children with autism (Doctoral dissertation)*. Available from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2sp1262w>

Sherratt, D. and Peter, M. (2002). *Developing Play and Drama in Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders*. David Fulton Publishers.

Thorp, D. M., Stahmer, A. C., & Schreibman, L. (1995). Effects of sociodramatic play training on children with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 25(3), 265-282.

StageWrite ADAPTS Library

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
<i>Acting for Kids on the Autistic Spectrum</i>	<i>Alisa Wolf, M.Ed.</i>
<i>Creative Therapy for Children with Autism, ADD and Asperger's</i>	<i>Janet Tubbs</i>
<i>Developing Play and Drama in Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders</i>	<i>Dave Sherratt and Melanie Peter</i>
<i>Drama Therapy and Storymaking in Special Education</i>	<i>Paula Crimmens</i>
<i>Early Intervention Games</i>	<i>Barbara Sher</i>
<i>Play & Imagination in Children with Autism</i>	<i>Pamela J. Wolfberg</i>
<i>Social Skills, Emotional Growth and Drama Therapy</i>	<i>Lee R. Chasen</i>
<i>Special Talents, Special Needs - Drama for People with Learning Disabilities</i>	<i>Ian McCurrach & Barbara Darnley</i>
<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>	<i>Mark Haddon</i>
<i>The Reason I Jump</i>	<i>Naoki Higashida</i>

<i>Life, Animated</i>	<i>Ron Suskind</i>
<i>The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism & Asperger's</i>	<i>Temple Grandin, Ph.D.</i>
<i>Autism: The Musical</i>	<i>Film by Tricia Regan</i>
<i>From Novice to Expert: Guiding Children on the Autism Spectrum in Integrated Play Groups</i>	<i>Article by David Neufeld & Pamela Wolfberg</i>
<i>NeuroTribes The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity</i>	<i>Steve Silberman</i>
<i>Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking</i>	<i>Collection of essays edited by Julia Bascom</i>
<i>Autistic Self Advocacy Network</i>	Website: https://autisticadvocacy.org/