

## 2023 AUCD Autism Acceptance Month Webinar Series

PEERS: What Is It and What We Learned

Monday, April 10, 2023 4:00 PM-5:00 PM Eastern Time

Sponsored by AUCD's Interdisciplinary Technical Assistance Center (ITAC) on Autism and Developmental Disabilities and the Autism Special Interest Group (SIG)





### **Zoom Logistics**

- Ensure your name is displayed correctly in the participant list. You
  may also include program name and state and preferred pronouns.
  - Example: Rachel Miller, AUCD, she/her
- Hover over your name in the "Participants" box and select "More" →
   "Rename"
- Remain muted unless speaking
- State your name prior to speaking
- Captioning is available
- Use chat box to introduce yourself!



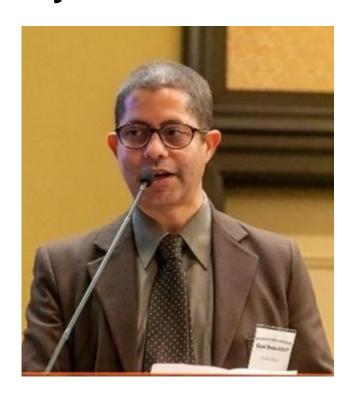


#### **Autism SIG Co-Chairs**

Anjali Rao, M.D.



**Gyasi Burks-Abbott** 





### **Featured Speaker**



Mary Helen Richer, M.A. CEO, Autism Connections

# PEERS®

What is it and What We Learned



### Who I Am

Autism Connections is a Cincinnati, OH based nonprofit organization whose mission is to uplift the southwest Ohio autism community through education, resources, connections, and lifelong support.

Mary Helen Richer CEO Autism Connections



### Agenda

- 01 What is PEERS? ®
- 02 What we LOVE about it.
- 03 What doesn't work so well.
- Our future plans for PEERS ®

### What is PEERS?

- 16-week evidence-based social skills intervention/training developed at UCLA
- Goal is for teens to understand the social skills around making and keeping friends
- · Comprised of didactic, role plays and skills practice
- Homework/real world practice
- Parents/social coaches attend separate sessions at the same time
- Parents/social coaches learn how to assist their teens/adult in making and keeping friends through coaching
- Individualized training and goals within a group session

## A Little More about PEERS®

- Certification for PEERS through UCLA
- Cost for online certification = \$500
- Do not need to be certified to teach PEERS
- Comes with training manuals that outline each session, have homework, parent/social coach handouts, role plays,

### Different PEERS® Programs

1. PEERS for Teenagers

2. PEERS for School-Based Professionals

3. PEERS for Young Adults

# PEERS<sup>®</sup> in Development at UCLA

1. PEERS for Preschoolers

2. PEERS for Dating

3. PEERS for Careers

## Our Involvement with PEERS ®

- Certified in PEERS for Teenagers and PEERS for Adults in late 2022
- Began teaching PEERS in January 2023
  - Running one cohort each of Teens and Adults
- Charge a fee for the 16-week course
- Cap our cohorts at 8 for Teens and 12 for Adults

# What we LOVE about PEERS ®



### What We LOVE About PEERS

- Evidence-based with years of research before it was released.
- Demystifies the rules for communication, social interaction and making friends.
- Each lesson builds on the last one.
- Parent/social coach component builds a supportive training environment.
- If you are certified, you have access to additional materials:
  - PowerPoints
  - Videos
  - Training materials adapted for online



### What Doesn't Work So Well

### What Doesn't Work So Well

- Geared toward:
  - low support needs
  - minimum behaviors
  - ability to sit in a classroom style environment for 90-minutes
  - generally verbal
- Moves through a lot of skills rapidly.

# Our Future Plans for PEERS



### Our Future Plans for PEERS

- We plan to build a training series that addresses
  - high support needs
  - non verbal and alternative communication styles
- More interactive
  - less didactic lecture
  - more experiential opportunities
- · Slow pace of program to ensure skills are internalized

## Questions?



### 2023 Autism Acceptance Month

- 2023 Disability Policy Seminar Orientation and Policy Education 101 Workshop
   Wednesday, April 12, 3:00 PM EST 4:30 PM EST
- Leadership and Mentorship Through the Eyes of a Self-Advocate
   Tuesday, April 18, 4:00 PM EST- 5:00 PM EST
- A First Look at the 2023 IACC Strategic Plan
   Wednesday, April 26, 2:00 PM EST 3:00 PM EST
- Autism SIG: Roundtable on Leadership and Mentorship
   Monday, May 8, 4:00 PM EST 5:00 PM EST







### **Thank You for Joining Us!**

The archive of this event will be posted on the AUCD and ITAC websites one week from the event date.

Please provide feedback on this webinar:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AutismPeers

Or Scan the QR Code



