

Horizons Newsletter

Summer 2021



Autism Society of Michigan

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In Loving Memory of ASM's Board President

Penny Bearden

October 7, 1968-May 18, 2021

Penny became a volunteer at ASM in the early 2000's, after her young son, Troy was diagnosed with autism. It was Penny's passion to educate and advocate not only for her son, but other children and adults on the spectrum. Penny helped to save ASM from closing its doors around 2010. In 2014, Penny became the President of ASM and was still serving at the time of her passing. Penny attended every 5k fundraising event ASM held, as well as many conferences and workshops. She always had time to talk with parents, attend events to share her own story or volunteer her own time to help out in any way that she was able. We will miss your smile, dedication, perseverance, understanding, and sense of humor. Thank you for all you did for ASM over the past 18 years.

[Penny Bearden's Obituary](#)

Reporting vs. Tattling

Hi, my name is Leanne, and I am a young adult who is on the autism spectrum (my diagnosis used to be known as Asperger's syndrome). I know some people with disabilities struggle to know when they should attempt to address a situation on their own, and when to seek help.

Some individuals might seek help over even the most minor infractions because they want to make sure everybody is doing exactly as they are supposed to. This is likely to eventually cause a rift between the individual and their fellow students, teachers, and later, their coworkers, supervisors, and/or managers. Other individuals might take it to the other extreme and not inform an adult about even the most serious incidents, because they think doing so is tattling. If a serious issue occurs and an adult is not informed about it, significant injury or other problems can result. I hope this article will help people on the spectrum and their parents with learning when and how to report situations. If you choose not to use terms such as "reporting" or "tattling," you can use terminology such as, "I **should** tell an adult if..." or "I **do not need** to tell an adult if..."

REPORTING (I should tell an adult if...):

- I am being made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Somebody else is being made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Somebody is doing something harmful or destructive.
- Somebody talks about doing something harmful or destructive.
- I am sick or injured.
- Somebody else is sick or injured.
- I have tried several times to address the issue, and have been unsuccessful.
- There is no other way to handle the situation.

TATTLING (I do not need to tell an adult if...):

- I am not being made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Nobody else is being made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Nobody is doing anything harmful or destructive.
- Nobody talks about doing anything harmful or destructive.
- I am not sick or injured.
- Nobody else is sick or injured.
- I have not tried handling the situation myself, or some of the strategies I have tried have been successful.
- There is another way to address the issue.

Here are some examples of **REPORTING** (times when you **SHOULD** tell an adult):

- "Kyle is running toward the road, and I am worried he might get hit by a car."
- "Brianna touched me in an area where she's not supposed to."
- "Dan tried to get me to touch him in an area where I don't feel comfortable touching him."
- "I overheard Joan and Lynda talking about how they are planning on going to the mall this weekend, and 'accidentally' take some very expensive items without paying. I told them, 'No, girls! That's stealing!'"

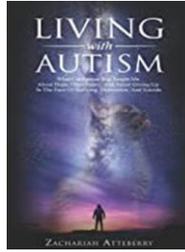
- “David keeps saying this, & I don’t like it. I’ve asked him several times not to say it, but he keeps saying it.”
- “Courtney keeps cutting in line. I have reminded her to wait her turn on several occasions, but she won’t stop cutting in line.”
- “Greg just threw up over there.”
- “Holly hit me, and Brian threatened me.”
- “Ashleigh told me her mom hurts her physically.”
- “Brandon threatened Jason.”
- “Noelle keeps teasing me. I have asked her to stop several times, but that just seems to make it worse.”
- “Mike is showing parts of his body we do not need to see.”
- “Nicole is trying to get me to show parts of my body I do not feel comfortable showing.”
- “Charles just fell down and Melissa got hit in the head.”

Here are some examples of **TATTLING** (times when you **DO NOT NEED** to tell an adult):

- “Sharon took the last of the mint chocolate chip ice cream, and Diane wanted it. We begged and pleaded with her to give it to Diane, but she won’t give it.”
- “Fred said this, and I didn’t like it.”
- “Maggie is in the wrong spot.”
- “Connor didn’t save me a seat on the bus, like he told me he would.”
- “Hayleigh won’t let me have one of the muffins she brought with her.”
- “Jake is taking more than his fair share of the brownies.”
- “Lisa is hogging the ball, and won’t give anyone else a turn.”
- “George won’t share.”
- “Susan is doodling on her paper instead of doing her work.”
- “Bob is doing his work the wrong way.”
- “Jessica took my pencil.”
- “Kevin and Adam won’t let me play with them.”
- “Sarah and Brittni won’t let me sit with them at lunch.”
- “Mark cut in line.”
- “Stephanie said a bad word.”
- “I couldn’t get a drink, because Mikey took too long at the drinking fountain.”

In closing, I want people with autism spectrum disorder or other challenges to understand it is a good idea to tell a trusted adult about serious incidents, but coming to trusted adults about minor issues should be avoided. As I mentioned earlier, if someone informs an adult about minor infractions, it may eventually cause people not to want him/her around. On the other hand, if someone witnesses a serious incident and doesn’t tell an adult about it, someone could get hurt, or there could be a problem.

This article was featured in [Issue 118 – Reframing Education in the New Normal](#)



“Book Review: Living with Autism”

Reviewed by Chika Anene

Living with Autism is a memoir that details both the early and current years of Zachariah Atteberry. In it, the author discusses the challenges he faced growing up with autism and how his love for cats helped him find purpose. It’s an inspirational read that encourages us to empathize with others who might be different and a motivating read for those on the spectrum to follow their dreams.

The author describes his early years as quite turbulent. He spends a good amount of those years living in a foster home — due to his mother battling cancer — and having to put up with an abusive foster caregiver. Atteberry recalls being fed terrible food and sometimes even being starved by the caregiver who ran the foster home. This woman wreaks havoc on anyone who questions her, and she even hides and spends the money that’s meant for the children in her care. Escaping the foster home feels like his only choice, his only chance for a new start.

“Unless you are a paragon of self-confidence, the feeling of being unsure of yourself ebbs at you like frost through a leaf.”

The author vividly illustrates the everyday trials of having autism, like when it lands him in trouble for his inability to communicate in a manner “acceptable to society.” It’s a way in for readers to recognize unexpected daily struggles; even the changing of a routine can throw you off balance and cause others to see you as difficult and stubborn. As readers, we can’t help but empathize with Zachariah here and root for the next time someone will see the true him.

And even though he spends most of his time trying to make himself invisible, his need for order (like repeating phrases aloud) makes him an easy target for bullies. But as with many inspirational stories, Zachariah finds his way to purpose through the thing he loves the most—cats. His passion gets him through the difficult times, while it reminds readers that we can find something to love in order to thrive.

The book, while heartbreaking, still has a lot of funny and relatable stories packed into it. This can easily send the reader back to the memories of their own childhood, but that doesn’t come only with the positive memories. While reading, I found myself revisiting my own past and recognizing the all-too-familiar concern of feeling like an outsider.

What stands out to me here is not only the insights of one particular human on the spectrum but the connection I now feel with others on it. I have no problem saying that this will go down as one of my favorite nonfiction books of the year. It certainly is something I won’t be forgetting any time soon.

Reprinted from: www.independentbookreview.com

Brain Study Suggests Autism Develops Differently in Girls than Boys

By Robert Preidt, *HealthDay Reporter*

Autism appears to develop differently in girls and boys, so the findings of research conducted mainly with boys might not apply to girls, a new study suggests.

Autism spectrum disorder is four times more common in boys, which may help explain why there's far less research about autism in girls.

"This new study provides us with a roadmap for understanding how to better match current and future evidenced-based interventions to underlying brain and genetic profiles, so that we can get the right treatment to the right individual," said lead investigator Kevin Pelphrey. He is an autism expert at the University of Virginia's School of Medicine and Brain Institute.

"This advances our understanding of autism broadly by revealing that there may well be different causes for boys versus girls," Pelphrey added in a university news release.

For the study, the researchers combined brain imaging with genetic investigation to learn more about autism in girls.

Functional MRI was used to examine brain activity during social interactions. It showed that girls with autism use different sections of their brains than girls without autism.

The difference between girls with and without autism was not the same as the difference between boys with and without autism, meaning that brain mechanisms involved in autism vary depending on gender, according to the study authors.

The investigators also found that girls with autism had much larger numbers of rare variants of genes active during early development of a brain region called the striatum. A section of the striatum is believed to be involved in interpreting social interaction and language.

The findings were published April 16 in the journal *Brain*.

Ultimately, Pelphrey said, the team hopes to use the findings to generate new autism treatment strategies tailored to girls.

SOURCE: University of Virginia, news release, April 20, 2021



Ice Cream Sandwich Cake - www.dinneratthezoo.com

Ingredients:

- 12 ice cream sandwiches unwrapped
- 16 ounces whipped topping thawed
- 1/2 cup miniature chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup mini M&M's
- 1/3 cup fudge sauce

Instructions:

1. Place 4 ice cream sandwiches in a row on a serving plate.
2. Use a piping bag fitted with a large star tip to pipe dollops of whipped topping over the ice cream sandwiches.
3. Sprinkle chocolate chips and M&M's over the layer of whipped topping.
4. Freeze until firm.
5. Repeat the process with the remaining ice cream sandwiches, whipped topping and candies until you have 3 layers of ice cream sandwiches and 3 layers of whipped topping and candies. Freeze each layer until firm before proceeding with the next layer.
6. Freeze the whole cake until firm, at least 1 hour.
7. Drizzle the fudge sauce over the top of the cake. Cut into slices then serve.



Grounding

INFORMATION & HOW TO

WHAT IS GROUNDING?

Grounding is the use of techniques which can help to calm our nervous system, and to help us connect to the here and now. Grounding helps us to connect to our 5 senses when we feel things might be getting out of our control.

WHEN TO USE GROUNDING

- ▶ When you notice you are beginning to dissociate
- ▶ When a trigger is present
- ▶ When you are experiencing intrusive thoughts or memories

TYPES OF GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

SOUND

- Listen to loud music
- Call a loved one
- Put on soothing sounds (waves, rain)
- Read aloud

TOUCH

- Hold an ice cube & focus on it melt
- Take a hot or cold shower
- Hug a pet or loved one
- Rub your hand on fabric - notice the texture

SMELL

- Smell your favorite essential oil
- Light a scented candle
- Smell something that is associated with good memories

TASTE

- Chew mint or cinnamon gum
- Eat something spicy
- Let a piece of chocolate melt in your mouth - noticing how it tastes and feels

SIGHT

- Take inventory of what's around you
- Count pieces of furniture around you
- Watch your favorite movie/TV show
- Play a distracting game

REMEMBER

- ▶ Everyone is different - what works for you could be triggering for another person & vice versa
- ▶ Discovering what works for you will be a trial and error process
- ▶ For more help reach out to a counselor near you:
 - <https://adba.org/>
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

Special Thanks To:

In Honor of Daniel Brakhage:

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In Honor of North Branch Educators & Staff:

Patricia Laur

In Honor of Erica Stuart's Birthday:

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In Memory of Penny Bearden:

Tom & Joy Heinlein

In Memory of Angela Bosley:

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Uncle Randy & Aunt Dawn

Uncle Howard & Aunt Becky

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