

DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter by
The Autism Program at
Boston Medical Center
for families and
individuals with
Autism Spectrum
Disorder (ASD) & other
neurodevelopmental
diagnoses

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Pride Month 2026:
Guide to LGBTQ+
Friendly resources

Dear friends & families,

Happy June!

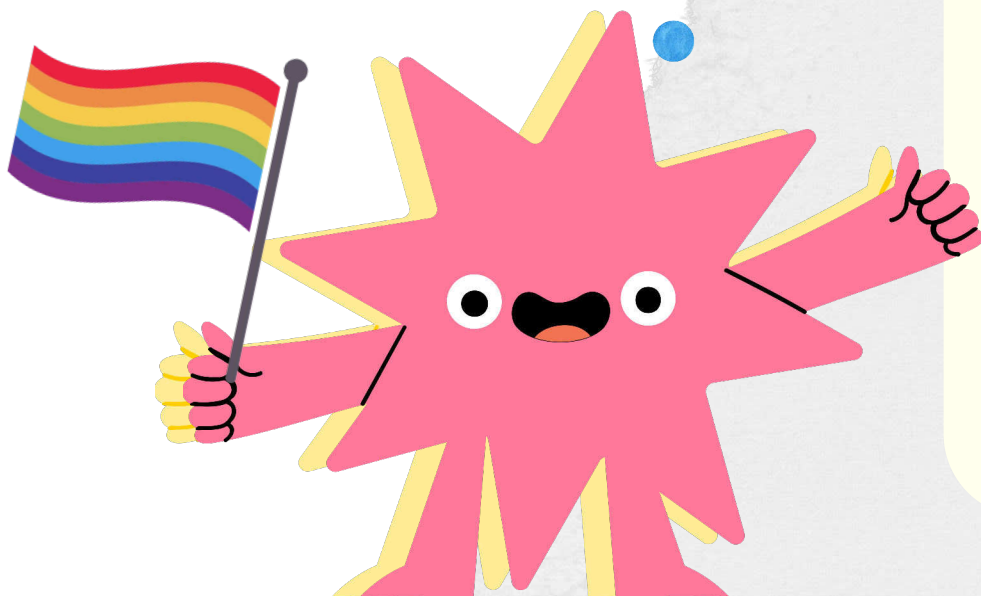
As the days grow longer and the warmth of summer begins to settle in, we're embracing the vibrant energy and sense of possibility that this season brings. June is a time of celebration and reflection—especially as we honor **Pride Month**, recognizing and supporting our LGBTQ+ community members, caregivers, and families!

In this edition of Development and Beyond, you'll find **a collection of valuable resources for Pride Month**, including supports for LGBTQ+ individuals, caregivers, and family members. We're also highlighting an **upcoming conferences** for professionals, families, and individuals with disabilities, along with **June events** such as support groups, educational programs, and webinars designed to empower and foster community.

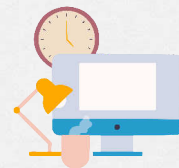
We invite you to explore what resonates with you, and we hope this month brings warmth, inclusion, and joy.

Warmly,

The Autism Program at
Boston Medical Center



August 5th, 2026



AUTISM ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Deepening Your Professional Competency

The Autism Program is a recognized leader in the healthcare landscape, providing support and resources to individuals and families across the lifespan. Our dynamic team of professionals specialize in early childhood development, school-based services, ABA, transition to adulthood, and adult systems.

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming virtual conference opportunity, ***Autism Across the Lifespan: Deepening Your Professional Competency***, being held on August 5, 2026.

Please see our **flyer** and **agenda** included in this newsletter (page 5 & 6) for more information, and help spread this event by sharing with your community.

Join us today - click **HERE** to register & for more information!



autismprogram@bmc.org

upcoming events



Click the title or scan the QR code to find more information.
Resources below are free of cost or offer financial assistance.

6/13 Autism Parent & Caregiver Support Group

Every 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month | Black Autism Coalition

You are not alone. A safe, supportive space for parents and caregivers of autistic children and youth to connect, share, and grow together. Have open conversations, receive emotional support, learn about resources, and connect with your community. Join via zoom ID 87919848273 098709.

[Virtual event - join Zoom meeting to attend.](#)



6/16 The Mental Health IEP

12pm | Parent & Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)

Build confidence for your next IEP meeting with tips specific to children and youth with mental health needs. Learn about school-based evaluations related to mental health, accommodations and modifications for students with mental health needs, and much more.

[Virtual event - registration is required.](#)



6/26 Race, Disability & Intersectionality: Leading from Lived Experience

12:30pm | MA Department of Developmental Services

Author, educator, and autistic self-advocate Gyasi Burks-Abbott will discuss the role of lived experience in disability advocacy and leadership. Gyasi will trace his journey from relying on the advocacy of his mother to being able to advocate for himself as well as others. He will also talk about the power of the personal story in driving systems to change.

[Virtual event - registration is required.](#)



6/30 Conversations About the Transition to Adult Life

6pm | Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)

Life after high school can be confusing — jobs, independence, education, friendships, support. I've Been There is a free virtual series where two young adults with disabilities share their real stories about making the transition to adult life in each session. New people each month. You're part of the session — ask questions, share tips, or just listen in to a real 1-hour conversation about the transition to adult life. This session is for young people with disabilities aged 14 to 26.

[Virtual event - registration is required.](#)





Self-advocacy

Youth Leadership Disability Forum

June 25th to 29th | Boston & Worcester, MA

The Youth Leadership Forum is a FREE conference for youth and young adults with disabilities held annually across the country. YLF participants build leadership skills and leave better prepared for future employment, higher education, and independent living. Join to hear about experience living on a college campus, listen to renowned keynote speakers, and select from a range of workshops on topics such as advocacy, disability pride, post-secondary education, career readiness, and independent living. Explore careers, network with professionals, and gain access to valuable resources!

<https://pyd.org/youth-leadership-forum/>



Continuing Education

Autism Across the Lifespan: Deepening your Professional Competency

August 5th | virtual conference

Join the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center for a full day of learning, collaboration, and lived expertise. This virtual conference will bring together multidisciplinary voices to strengthen autism affirming practices and improve care pathways for autistic individuals, their families, and care providers through resources and practical strategies. CEU will be provided – please see the agenda for further details on select sessions. \$250 registration fee per person, \$50 discounted rate for Boston Medical Center staff.

<https://form.jotform.com/251243924570051>



AUTISM a c r o s s

THE LIFESPAN:

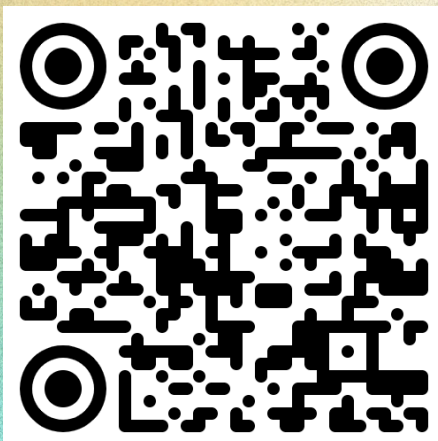
Deepening Your
Professional Competency
A Virtual Conference

COST:

\$250 – Professional Registration
\$50 – Discounted Rate for
Boston Medical Center Staff

REGISTRATION:

Scan QR code below or click
[HERE](#) to register



August 5th 2026



9:30 AM to 3 PM

Join the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center for a full day of learning, collaboration, and lived expertise. This virtual conference will bring together multidisciplinary voices to strengthen autism affirming practices and improve care pathways for autistic individuals, their families, and care providers through resources and practical strategies.

CEU will be provided. For further details on select sessions, please see agenda.

Questions? autismprogram@bmc.org

A G E N D A

9:30 - 10:00	Creating Autism Friendly Practices for Your Clients Alex Friedman, MPH Program Manager	● +
10:00 - 10:30	Supporting Families After an ASD Diagnosis: Caregiver Perspective and Community Resources Elizabeth Ferriero & Hillary Hollis Autism Program Co-Leads	● +
10:30 - 10:45	Break	
10:45 - 11:15	Supporting Positive Behavior Change in the Medical Setting Jacqueline McKendry, BCBA Behavior Specialist	● + ●
11:15 - 11:45	Addressing Language Barriers in ASD Care Juju Ha Autism Resource Specialist	● +
11:45 - 12:30	Lunch & Talent Show	
12:30 - 1:00	The Next Step: Supporting and Empowering Transition-Age Youth and Their Families Katie Bristol, MA Transition Specialist	● +
1:00 - 1:30	Steps Towards Independence: How to Promote Successful Transfer of Care for Autistic Adults Katie Shields Adult Autism Resource Specialist	● +
1:30 - 1:45	Break	
1:45 - 2:15	Autism Today: A Multidisciplinary Conversation on Diagnosis and Follow-Up Care Shari Krauss, MA, MPH Program Director	● +
2:15 - 2:45	Lived Experiences: Panel Discussion with Autistic Individuals	● +
2:45 - 3:00	Q&A and Open Discussion	● +

CEUs Offered Per Session:



Social Work



Nursing



BACB ACE CE



Happy Pride

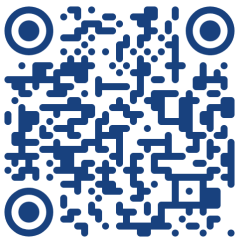
Autism Program's guide to community
celebration, resources, and support in
honor of **Pride Month 2026.**



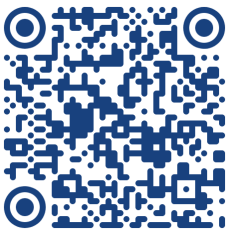
About This Section

In this section, we're shining a light on the resources, voices, and support systems that help our LGBTQ+ community and allies thrive. You'll find tools to stay connected, opportunities to engage with local and online support networks, and a spotlight on neurodivergent-friendly tips and materials designed to make our community spaces more accessible for everyone. We're stronger when we learn, share, and grow together.

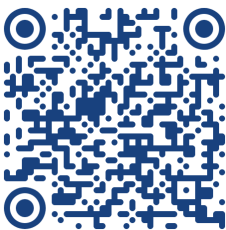
Written Resources: Guides, Definitions, and First-Person Accounts



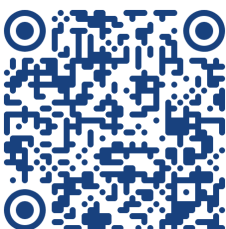
ASERT (*Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative*) is a statewide initiative funded by the Office of Developmental Programs of Pennsylvania. In **this page**, you will find a comprehensive collection of resources on gender identity and sexual orientation developed by a young autistic adult who is part of the LGBTQ+ community. This is a great starting place for those who want a straight forward introduction to definitions and terminology.



NeuroSpark Health features a list of LGBTQ+ and neurodivergent affirming resources that reflect the full spectrum of identity, expression, and lived experience. In **this page**, you will find a collection of hotlines, helpful websites, and books.



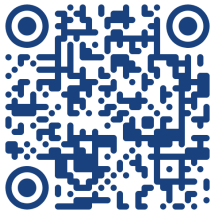
The Autism Books by Autistic Authors Project is an incredible resource for those looking for books written by autistic authors that delve into the rich and diverse themes relating to autism. **This catalogue** specifically features a variety of fiction & non-fiction books where LGBTQ+ identity is central to the author's story.



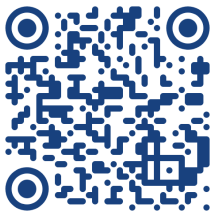
Pride Guide for Autistic LGBTQ+ Community is an article by Maya Capasso, discussing the common obstacles they have faced attending Pride events such as sensory overwhelm. Read **this article** if you have ever felt: *"As an autistic person, Pride events can be massively overwhelming for me... I have some tips to help other autists manage the challenges that come up at Pride"*.



LGBTQ+ Affirming Healthcare



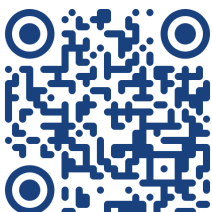
LGBTQ+ Health Resources is a comprehensive list of resources by Massachusetts Department of Public Health on where to access safe and inclusive LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare near you. It also includes information about how to get free or low-cost health insurance such as MassHealth, as well as resources for LGBTQ+ parents & families.



LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory is another resource for those looking for local health services. **This website** offers a search engine dedicated to finding a specialized provider based on your needs, location, and provider's approach (e.g., trauma-informed care, racial equity, weight inclusive, harm reduction, etc).



LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health Resources is offered by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services MA. Youth and young adults who are part of the LGBTQ+ community face unique challenges, making them more susceptible to mental health struggles and leading to greater rates of behavioral health needs. In Massachusetts, young people have a wide variety of options for mental health and substance use support, from countless community-based organizations, therapeutic services, peer support groups to resource navigators that provide empathetic, culturally sensitive care. Check out **this resource guide** to learn more.

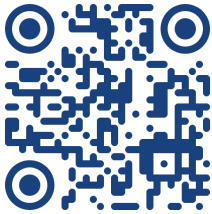


TransHealth is the only independent, non-profit healthcare organization in the United States devoted solely to serving trans and gender-diverse communities. It is a hub of a variety gender-affirming care, from clinical services, community support (drop-in space, community closet & pantry, support groups, harm reduction supplies, etc), education and advocacy.

Note: If you are unsure of where to begin your search of LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare, you can also reach out to your current medical provider for support. They will likely be able to connect you with someone within your medical organization and/or network.



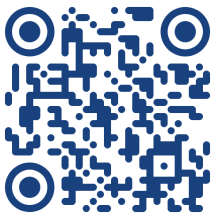
Community Organizations & Support Groups



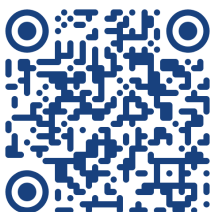
Greater Boston PFLAG is an organization of LGBTQ+ people, parents, families, and allies who work together to create an equitable and inclusive world. This chapter serves the Greater Boston area, but there are hundreds of chapters from coast to coast! Visit **their website** to find a rich library of resources and upcoming support groups. Groups are safe and welcoming spaces (in-person & virtual), led by trained volunteers (most of them parents) where you can connect with others who have LGBTQ+ loved ones, receive & offer support, answer questions, and share helpful resources for free.



AANE (Association for Autism & Neurodiversity) is a wonderful organization that offers a hub of support and resources for autistic individuals, their family members, and professionals who support them. Part of their resources are the diverse support groups they offer, both in-person and virtual. Every first Thursday of the month, AANE offers a **virtual & free support group** for post-high school autistic adults who are interested in discussing and exploring their gender identity. Join to share stories, perspectives, and support.



Trans Emergency Fund is a critical resource providing support for those who are struggling with housing due to being transgender. They can help you find shelter and cover costs of necessities if you are unable to afford things such as utility bill, warm clothes, prescription costs, and others.



LGBTQ Senior Housing provides welcoming, safe, and affordable housing for low-income LGBTQ+ seniors in the Greater Boston area. This is the first development of such resource in New England, and offers 74 units of affordable housing and gathering space of connection, support, and advocacy.

Note: There are so many more community organizations that provide a wide range of support for queer individuals across Massachusetts! Look through the resources listed under "*Written Resources: Guides, Definitions, and First-Person Accounts*" for a larger list.

DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 94: June 8th, 2026



Resources

The Autism Program is continues to support families in many ways both inside and outside of Boston Medical Center. Check out our website to learn more about the services, supports and programs we offer including our Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative, Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM) program, and our training offerings. We also have a huge resource library where you can access free information on a variety of topics such as safety, behavioral support, transition to adulthood, insurance and more!



www.bmc.org/autism

[@BMCAutismProgram](https://twitter.com/BMCAutismProgram)

autismprogram@bmc.org

Clinic

Our DBP clinicians are available for developmental evaluations, assessments and follow up. To connect with the clinical team, please call 617-414-4841 and follow the prompts for Developmental Pediatrics.

Marilyn Augustyn, MD
Arathi Reddy, DO
Rachel Amgott, NP
Christina Lazdowsky, NP
Mei Elansary, MD
Audrey Christiansen, MD
Sarah Canale, MD
Mary Ellen Killion, NP
Arielle Spellun, MD
Bridget Poznanski, PhD
Rachel Vuolo, MD

About this newsletter...



Development and Beyond is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. Join our mailing list for future newsletters, community resources and more - just scan the QR code to the right!

