

## Children's National: CASD CHAT

### Research Report

### Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) 51st Annual Convention

In November, members of the CASD research team attended the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies' 51st Annual Convention in San Diego, CA. The theme of this year's convention was "Applying CBT in Diverse Contexts." Presentations addressed the social and cultural aspects of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a practical approach to problem-solving.

CASD Faculty Member and Clinical Psychologist, Cara Pugliese, PhD, was presented with the 2017 Early Career Award by the ABCT'S Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Group (ASDD SIG). The prestigious award is given to an individual who has received their doctoral degree in the past 10 years and has made noteworthy contributions to science and practice relevant to ASD and Development Disabilities.



Cara Pugliese, PhD

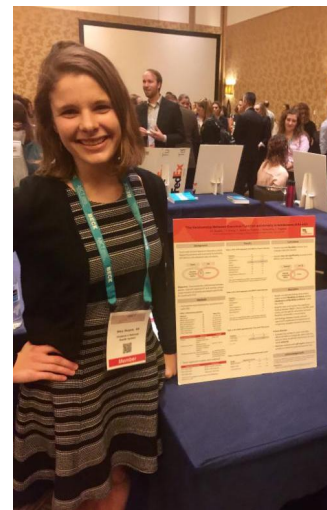
Dr. Pugliese also served as both a panelist and poster presenter. The panel, "Evidence-Based Treatments for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Neurodevelopmental Disabilities," presented recent efforts to adapt evidence-based interventions, such as Unstuck and On Target (UOT), for wider use. Dr. Pugliese specifically discussed the adaptation and upward extension of the UOT curriculum to create Flexible Futures, an intervention designed to improve executive functioning in adolescents with ASD. Dr. Pugliese's poster presentation, "Characterizing Longitudinal Change in Executive Functions in Autism Spectrum Disorder" explored the effects of age on executive function ratings, an area that can inform clinicians of skills to target during treatment at critical developmental periods.



Cara Pugliese, PhD receiving her Early Career Award (top left); presenting her poster (top right); and presenting on a panel (bottom, second from the left) at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention.

Additionally, CASD Research Coordinators, Mary Skapek, B.S. and Meredith Powers, M.Ed. (not pictured), both presented posters at the convention. Ms. Skapek presented her poster, "The Relationship Between Executive Function and Anxiety in Adolescents with ASD," which was sponsored by the ABCT'S Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Group (ASDD SIG). Ms. Powers' poster, "Racial Disproportionality in the Classroom: Why Do We See Black Students with ADHD as Having More Executive Function Problems?" was presented at the general conference.

CASD's faculty and staff would like to congratulate Dr. Pugliese on her award.



Mary Skapek at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention.

## CASD Cares

### Spirit of Holiday Sharing

Children's National Health System (CNHS) hosts the Spirit of Sharing Program annually, and is supported through the Health System's Social Work department. The program provides an opportunity for staff to assist patients and families during the holiday season by providing gifts, clothing, toys, and food for a holiday meal.

For the second year, CASD has nominated its own family to sponsor. CASD staff participates by donating money to purchase various gifts and toys for our sponsored family. Once all the gifts are wrapped, they are hand delivered to the family.



Justine Schellhammer

Justine Schellhammer, a Psychometrist in the Division of Pediatric Neuropsychology, has led the program on behalf of CASD's department and the larger division for six plus years. When asked what motivated her to lead this project, Justine said, "I really like the idea of spending time to help a family have a wonderful Christmas...It's the true spirit of Christmas to see everyone coming together to donate and pull together to get not just toys for the children but really set them up with all the essentials and comforts that many of us take for granted in our own homes."

Once the family is identified, Justine contacts the family to identify the level of need so she can strategize about where best to focus the division's efforts. Justine shared that, "Some years it's been winter clothes, bedding and toys. Other years the family is really struggling and I've gotten mattresses, lamps, dishes, clothing, bedding and other essentials among special gifts for the kids." In addition, Justine hosts a non-perishable food drive to stock the family's pantry and purchases a grocery store gift card to use towards a holiday meal. "When the families show up and see the amount of stuff we have for them it's an overwhelming feeling of joy," Justine says.

CASD would like to acknowledge and thank Justine for all her hard work in leading this important effort. We would also like to wish everyone a joyous holiday season.

## Holiday Resources and Supports

With the 2017 Holiday Season in full swing, CASD would like to provide a few resources for our families. We hope these resources will make the holidays a little easier to navigate, if you experience challenges during this time of year.

1. Looking for the perfect toy this holiday season? Download the [Toys R Us' Toy Guide for Differently-Abled Kids](#) for gift ideas.
2. Is your family traveling for the holidays and you have concerns? If traveling by air, contact [TSA Cares](#). TSA Cares is a toll-free helpline for passengers with disabilities and medical conditions that provides information to those who need extra assistance before traveling. Representatives are available at 1-855-787-2227 Monday through Friday 8am to 11pm, and weekends and holidays 9am to 8pm Eastern Time. If traveling by rail, visit [Amtrak's accessible travel services page](#).
3. Check out the "[Twelve Tips for Helping Individuals with autism Have a Happy Holiday Season](#)" created by the Autism Society of America.

## Calendar of Events

### December 2017

**Kids in Action: Friday Night Fever**

**The HSC Pediatric Center**

**Washington, DC**

**Friday, December 8th at 7pm**

Join Kids in Action for Friday Night Fever, a chance for teens with disabilities to hang out with their peers. Designed for teens ages 11 and older, the program provides opportunities to participate in social events and make new friends. Activities vary month to month and include: teen dances, karaoke night, movies, game night, ice cream socials, various educational topics and more! Advance registration required. Email Robyn Winston-Cohen, CTRS at [RWinston@Hshealth.org](mailto:RWinston@Hshealth.org) or call 202-557-1851. For more information, please visit, <http://www.hshealth.org/medical-programs-therapy/services-programs/adaptive-sports>

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Coco**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Saturday, December 9th at 10am**

The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! For more information, please visit, [www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**Sensory Friendly Santa**

**Columbia, MD**

**Sunday, December 10th at 8:30am**

Bring the family to visit Santa in this welcoming, sensory-friendly environment. The event is made possible by the Howard County Autism Society and The Mall in Columbia! The event takes place before the mall opens. The elevators and music will be turned off. Plus, no waiting in line! Just check in with one of the volunteers when you arrive to get a number and you will be called when it is your turn. There will be plenty of fun activities and treats while you wait!

**Red Branch Sensory-Friendly Performance: Madagascar**

**Columbia, MD**

**Sunday, December 10th at 2pm**

This sensory-friendly program is designed to be more accessible to those on the autism spectrum or others with sensory sensitivities. How will our Sensory-Friendly Performance of Madagascar be different? House lights will be left on at a low level; sound levels will be adjusted to a lower level; space will be reserved between each party to allow extra room for those who might need to "move it move it" while they watch the show, or exit a row during the performance; preparatory materials will be provided ahead of the performance to help families know what to expect from both the performance and the performance experience; and patrons are permitted to bring personal sensory supports for their use during the performance, as well as personal communication aids (iPads, smartphones, and other devices). A designated "break space" will be available in the lobby for those who might feel overwhelmed or need to take a quiet moment. For more information please check out the [Sensory Friendly Flyer](#), call 410-220-6517 to purchase tickets or visit [www.redbranchtheatrecompany.com](http://www.redbranchtheatrecompany.com)

**AJE Special Education Thursdays**

**Understanding Restorative Justice Practices for Students with Disabilities**

**Guest: Leila Peterson, RestorativeDC and SchoolTalk DC**

**Thursday, December 14th at 12:30pm**

These 30 minute sessions are available online every other Thursday to give parents and professionals: information, education and a better understanding of DC special education issues in a "bite-size" format. For more information, please visit, <http://www.aje-dc.org/programs-3/special-education-thursdays/>

**Kids in Action: Santa's Secret Workshop**

**The HSC Pediatric Center**

**Washington, DC**

**Saturday, December 16th at 10am**

Join Kids in Action for it's first Santa's Secret Workshop! Participants will have the opportunity to practice money management skills to purchase gifts for their friends and family. They will also have the opportunity to wrap their presents and get pictures with Santa! Advance registration required. Email Robyn Winston-Cohen, CTRS at [RWinston@Hshealth.org](mailto:RWinston@Hshealth.org) or call 202-557-1851. For more information, please visit, <http://www.hshealth.org/medical-programs-therapy/services-programs/adaptive-sports>

**The Kennedy Center Sensory Friendly Performances: Washington National Opera:**

**The Little Prince, a Holiday Family Opera**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

**Washington, DC**

**Saturday, December 16th at 2pm**

Sensory friendly performances are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to all families with children with autism or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. Accommodations for these performances include: lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds; lights remain on at a low level in the theater during the performance; a reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience; patrons are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance; designated quiet areas within the theater; space throughout the theater for standing and movement; limited crowds and visitors at the Kennedy Center during the day and timing of the performance; and Kennedy Center staff trained to be inviting and accommodating to families' needs. To purchase tickets for a sensory friendly performance, please call the Instant-Charge Service Desk at 202-476-8528 (voice) or visit, <https://www.kennedy-center.org/pages/accessibility/sensory>

**Sensory Friendly Santa**

**Columbia, MD**

**Sunday, December 17th at 8:30am**

Bring the family to visit Santa in this welcoming, sensory-friendly environment. The event is made possible by the Howard County Autism Society and The Mall in Columbia! The event takes place before the mall opens. The elevators and music will be turned off. Plus, no waiting in line! Just check in with one of the volunteers when you arrive to get a number and you will be called when it is your turn. There will be plenty of fun activities and treats while you wait!

**Imagination Stage Sensory Friendly Performance: Charlotte's Web**

**Bethesda, MD**

**Sunday, December 17th at 11am**

Sensory-Friendly performances are designed to be more accessible to those individuals on the autism spectrum or to others with sensory sensitivities. Adaptations for Sensory-

Friendly performances include: Reduction of the sound level; low lighting; intentionally unsold seats; a social story; designated break spaces; and more. For more information please check out the [Sensory Friendly Flyer](#), call 301-280-1660 or visit <http://imaginationstage.org/shows-tickets/accessibility/>

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Star Wars: The Last Jedi**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Saturday, December 23rd at 10am**

The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! For more information, please visit, [www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**AMC Sensory Friendly Films: Star Wars: The Last Jedi**

**AMC Theatres Nationwide**

**Tuesday, December 26th at 7pm**

The program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums dedicated to the program have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout, or sing! For more information, please visit, [www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](http://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

**The Kennedy Center Sensory Friendly Performances: Mr. Popper's Penguins**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

**Washington, DC**

**Saturday, December 30th at 11am**

Sensory friendly performances are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to all families with children with autism or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. Accommodations for these performances include: lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds; lights remain on at a low level in the theater during the performance; a reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience; patrons are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance; designated quiet areas within the theater; space throughout the theater for standing and movement; limited crowds and visitors at the Kennedy Center during the day and timing of the performance; and Kennedy Center staff trained to be inviting and accommodating to families' needs. To purchase tickets for a sensory friendly performance, please call the Instant-Charge Service Desk at 202-476-8528 (voice) or visit, <https://www.kennedy-center.org/pages/accessibility/sensory>

**Research Opportunity**

**IS YOUR CHILD 2 TO 5 YEARS OLD?  
LOOKING FOR A FUN ACTIVITY TO DO  
TOGETHER AND HELP US LEARN ABOUT  
HOW THE BRAIN DEVELOPS?**



**Earn \$50 per visit by participating in our infant to toddler developmental studies @ the Autism And Neurodevelopmental Disorders Institute (ANDI) at George Washington University & Children's National Health System**

Eligible children should either have an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis or no current and / or past neurological or psychiatric disorder.  
To learn more, please contact us!

ANDI Baby Project  
[babystudy@gwu.edu](mailto:babystudy@gwu.edu)

Children's National, Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders,  
15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 350, Rockville, MD 20850

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