



# AUTISM INVESTOR SUMMIT

APRIL 17-19, 2023  
THE LONDON, WEST HOLLYWOOD

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# WELCOME

We hope you're well and excited to gather for the 2023 Autism Investor Summit! This is your chance to connect with other investors and providers, learn from top experts in autism, and find new opportunities to invest in the future. At the Summit, you'll hear from seasoned experts who will share their insights on the latest trends and best practices within the industry. This exclusive opportunity allows those in the field to connect with one another in person and build valuable relationships.

We're proud to say that this year we have some of the industry's leading sponsors on board – including Braff, CentralReach, SimiTree, Proud Moments ABA, Ziegler, Burnett Therapeutic Services, Chorus Cloud, Intrepid Investment Bankers, Scioto Biosciences, TripleTree, Waller part of Holland & Knight, Martin Healthcare Advisors, Boost (formerly SIDIS Health), Triumph ABA, B. Riley Securities, Brentwood Capital Advisors, CapGrow Partners, Floreo, Inc., Plutus Health Inc., Raven Health, SpectrumAi, and Theralytics – all who make this event possible. Our deepest thanks to all of you.

Thank you for joining us and we look forward to connecting with you!

Sara Litvak on behalf of The Autism Investor Summit

#AIS2023



## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

### OPENING

Monday, April 17, 2023

5:00pm - 7:00pm Welcome Reception

### DAY 1

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

6:30am - 8:00am	Breakfast
8:00am - 8:30am	Coffee with Sponsors
8:30am - 8:45am	Welcome & Introductory Remarks
8:45am - 9:30am	Keynote: Dexter Braff
9:45am - 10:30am	Sessions 2A & 2B
10:30am - 10:45am	Break
10:45am - 11:30am	Sessions 3A & 3B
11:45am - 12:30pm	Sessions 4A & 4B
12:30pm - 1:30pm	Lunch Break
1:30pm - 2:15pm	Session 5
2:15pm - 2:30pm	Break
2:30pm - 3:15pm	Sessions 6A & 6B
3:30pm - 4:30pm	Sessions 7A & 7B
4:30pm - 5:00pm	Break
5:00pm - 7:00pm	Networking Reception

### DAY 2

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

6:30am - 8:00am	Breakfast
8:00am - 8:30am	Coffee with Sponsors
8:30am - 8:45am	Opening Remarks
8:45am - 9:30am	Keynote: Allison Kluger
9:45am - 10:30am	Sessions 2A & 2B
10:30am - 10:45am	Break
10:45am - 11:30am	Sessions 3A & 3B
11:45am - 12:30pm	Sessions 4A & 4B
12:30pm - 12:45pm	Adjourn

New! **Join the AIS Text Group.** We will be texting last-minute changes, emergencies, or onsite announcements during the Summit. And of course, we will never sell or trade your number to any kind of outside source. Text **AIS** to **205-662-7321** to join now!

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# Proud Moments ABA

The nation's premier ABA therapy provider



## Our Mission:

**Provide the gold standard of care for children diagnosed with autism.**

Proud Moments ABA was founded to provide the gold standard in care for children with autism. Our highly skilled care teams provide individualized ABA services to children from birth to age 21 at home, at school, in our treatment centers, and online.

Parents put their trust in us because our entire company is child-focused. Our rapid growth is a direct result of our success in providing scientifically proven ABA services that encourage children with autism to learn and grow.

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Focus on **gold standard of clinical care** for clients



**Best-in-class ABA talent** is recruited and retained



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We're proud to be a sponsor of the 2023 Autism Investor Summit and are always looking to meet the best and brightest. Please reach out to us at [info@proudmomentsaba.com](mailto:info@proudmomentsaba.com) and we will be in touch.





# KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DEXTER BRAFF

## Autism Mergers and Acquisitions: A Market in Flux



### DEXTER BRAFF

*The Braff Group*

Based upon proprietary data collected and analyzed by The Braff Group, one could argue that the boom in autism services M&A officially began around 2015 when a few earlier investments in the space began to catch the attention of other private equity sponsors. That year, PE accounted for 8 transactions, three of which were market-entry platform deals. By 2019, that number had swelled to 43 transactions including an extraordinary 17 platform investments. A pandemic, a shortage of caregivers, payor scrutiny, and a few high-profile stumbles later, autism M&A is a market in flux. And that's before we consider macro market factors including high inflation, a slowing economy, rising interest rates, and unrest in eastern Europe. To be sure, buyers are still buying, but there is caution in the air. High multiples can still be found, but they are not as de facto as they once were. In this session, we will examine how the autism M&A market has changed, where it is today, and where it is likely headed.

**Dexter W. Braff** is the Founder and President of The Braff Group, one of the nation's leading health care merger and acquisition advisory firms (source: Refinitiv). Since its founding in 1998, The Braff Group has closed transactions with an aggregate transaction value in excess of \$5 billion.

With 30 plus years of experience representing health care service companies, Dexter is recognized as one of the preeminent industry experts in health care M&A. He has written and contributed to feature articles that have appeared in numerous health care industry publications and has written a chapter in the Handbook of Business Valuation published by John Wiley & Sons. He is frequently interviewed on various topics regarding health care mergers and acquisitions by news outlets including Bloomberg News, CNBC, USA Today, The Huffington Post, BHB News, Hospice News, and HHCN News, along with various health care sector journals. Additionally, Dexter is the author of The Braff Report, a respected periodic market analysis of specific health care sectors including Behavioral Health, Home Health and Hospice, Health Care Staffing Services, Home Medical Equipment and Pharmacy Services as well as Viewpoints, which are treatises on various aspects of completing a transaction.

Dexter has been the keynote speaker, panelist or speaker on various issues regarding health care mergers and acquisitions or finance at conferences across the country including Home Care Innovation + Investment, McGuireWoods Healthcare Private Equity and Finance Conference, BRG Healthcare Leadership Conference, National Association for Home Care & Hospice Annual Conference and Financial Management Conference, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, HME News Business Summit, Staffing Industry Analyst's Healthcare Staffing Summit, Treatment Center Investment & Valuation Retreat, Autism Investor Summit, NATHO's Conference for Healthcare Staffing Executives, CCAPP Addiction Leadership Conference and Aging Media's INVEST, FUTURE, VALUE, ELEVATE and HOMECARE conferences on Behavior Health, Home Health, Home Care and Hospice. Dexter has presented seminars, webinars and moderated or participated in discussion panels for numerous entities including Expert Webcast, Aging Media's Behavioral Health Business and Home Health Care News and Staffing Industry Analyst.

Dexter holds an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh, a Master of Science from the University of Oregon, a Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University, and received the Vincent W. Lanfear Award for academic achievement from the University of Pittsburgh. Dexter has been selected to serve on the board of several companies and institutions including the advisory board for the Home Care Innovation & Investment Conference. Dexter was inducted into The Home Care and Hospice Financial Managers Association Hall of Fame as "Dealmaker Extraordinaire" in 2019.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ALLISON KLUGER

## Reputation Rules!



### ALLISON KLUGER

*Lecturer, Stanford Graduate School of Business*

Reputation Rules! Our reputations are defined not by who WE think we are, but how other people perceive us. In business and in your personal lives, a strong and positive reputation can be like currency. A strong reputation will open doors for you, create lasting bonds, and present valuable opportunities. In today's seminar we will discuss how to repair a damaged reputation, how to make a great first impression, what to be aware of your online reputation, and strategies to curate and maintain a positive working reputation among your colleagues and clients. Also covered will be topics that explore personal, team and corporate reputation. The good news is that no one is stuck in a reputation they don't want. Reputation is on a continuum, and we are the masters of our reputation destiny.

**Allison Kluger** is a four-time Emmy-nominated Producer with over 25 years of experience in broadcast media and entertainment, from network television to new media platforms including electronic retail, interactive television, and digital media. She is also a freelance writer and media consultant. Her superpower is being an innovative content creator and media coach across all platforms.

Presently Allison is a Lecturer at Stanford's Graduate School of Business in four courses: *Reputation Management*, *Strategic Communication*, and two classes she created: *Personal Branding* (which she teaches with Tyra Banks) and *Strategic Pivoting for Your Next Chapter* (Alex Rodriguez guest speaker). She also teaches the electives: *Executive Presence for Women* and *Media Training*.

Allison is the recipient of the Dorothy J. King Lecturer in Leadership for 2017-2018. She is an advisor for many of her graduate students' new ventures, she mentors young women and men in leadership, communication tactics, and personal branding and gives lectures and keynote speeches all over the world. In her spare time, she is a voracious reader, is writing a book, officiates weddings, and raises her two boys and Australian Shepard with her husband.



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SimiTree is proud to sponsor the Welcome Reception from 5-7 p.m.  
Monday, April 17, on the Rooftop Pool Deck!

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5:00pm -  
7:00pm

### Welcome Reception (*West End Rooftop*)

Meet fellow attendees while enjoying an open bar and delicious food on the beautiful West End Rooftop of The London. Create meaningful connections, network, and meet and admire the work of autistic artists Abdulla Lutfi and Asma Baker visiting from the United Arab Emirates. Listen to music and take in the beautiful southern California weather. Sponsored by:



**Asma Baker** is an inspiring Emirati artist based in the 'Next Chapter' studio at Tashkeel–House 10, Al Fahidi, and the creator of 'Little Heart People' artworks. "My aspiration is to use my voice and skills to advocate for the rights and inclusion of people of determination. I am determined to help create a world where inclusivity is the norm, not the exception. As an artist I work motivational speaker, writer and sat on the committee for the Special Olympics 2019 in Abu Dhabi. My work has been exhibited at Mawaheb, Dubai International Airport and Cuadro. It has also been featured on NOOR Bank merchandise."

**Abdulla Lutfi** is a young, dynamic Emirati artist who works from the 'Next Chapter' studio at Tashkeel–House 10, Al Fahidi. His passion for art stems from his amazing attention to detail, a black and white view of the world and his sharp sense of humour. Abdulla's distinct black and white drawings of the UAE skylines and landscape usually feature an exaggerated humorous glimpse of everyday Emirati life. As an artist on the Autistic spectrum, Abdulla sees and interprets the world in a unique, nonconventional way. He uses his condition as an advantage because his artwork communicates a powerful message and view of his world that is frequently not represented.

Having already had a couple of sold-out solo exhibitions, he has fulfilled several commissions from hotels, bank and retail stores under Majid Al Futtaim and Dubai International Airport. Abdulla has illustrated a children's colouring book commissioned by the Embassy of the UAE in Washington D.C.. He also gives speed drawing workshops and demos to schools and other entities. Abdulla continues to grow as a person and as a gifted artist. He continues to peer tutor his fellow artists, exhibit in various media styles and expand his repertoire. He aspires to raise awareness and promote inclusion of the special needs community through his artwork.



## DAY 1

Tuesday, April 18

8:00am -  
8:30am

### Coffee with Sponsors (*Marble Terrace*)

Note: A full breakfast for Summit attendees is available at The London in The Boxwood Restaurant, starting at 6:30am. Sponsored by:



8:30am -  
8:45am

### Welcome & Introductory Remarks (*Ballroom*)

**Sara Litvak**

CEO, Behavioral Health Center of Excellence and Co-Founder, Autism Investor Summit

8:45am -  
9:30am

### Keynote Speaker: Dexter Braff (*Ballroom*)

### Autism Mergers and Acquisitions: A Market in Flux



**Dexter Braff**

Founder & President, The Braff Group

Based upon proprietary data collected and analyzed by The Braff Group, one could argue that the boom in autism services M&A officially began around 2015 when a few earlier investments in the space began to catch the attention of other private equity sponsors. That year, PE accounted for 8 transactions, three of which were market-entry platform deals. By 2019, that number had swelled to 43 transactions including an extraordinary 17 platform investments. A pandemic, a shortage of caregivers, payor scrutiny, and a few high-profile stumbles later, autism M&A is a market in flux. And that's before we consider macro market factors including high inflation, a slowing economy, rising interest rates, and unrest in eastern Europe. To be sure, buyers are still buying, but there is caution in the air. High multiples can still be found, but they are not as de facto as they once were. In this session, we will examine how the autism M&A market has changed, where it is today, and where it is likely headed.



9:45am -  
10:30am

### Session 2A (Ballroom)

A Conversation with *Love on the Spectrum* Cast on Hearing Autistic Voices

**Moderated by:** Russell Lehmann, RUSSL.com and Sara Litvak, Behavioral Health Center of Excellence

#### Panelists:

- Dani Bowman, Cast, *Love on the Spectrum*; DaniMation
- Devin Morrissey, Cast of *Love on the Spectrum*
- Subodh Garg, Cast of *Love on the Spectrum*
- Aarti Garg, Sister of Subodh Garg

9:45am -  
10:30am

### Session 2B (Screening Room)

Digital Health Start-Ups for Autism Treatment: Challenges and Opportunities

#### Oliver Wendt, PhD

Director of the Potsdam Augmentative and Alternative Communication Research Lab, Associate Professor and Chair in Cognitive and Emotional Disabilities at the University of Potsdam, Germany

This session will focus on the technology transfer process of bringing innovations in digital health from the research lab to the autism market. The last decade has seen an explosion of new technologies aimed at assessing and improving behavioral and health related outcomes in the autism population. Examples include Mobile device applications ("apps") to aid communication, social media platforms that can help connect to caregivers, health or medical services, or eye tracking technology to identify and monitor gaze responses. Many of these inventions originate in university-based autism research labs and follow the current trend in research-based entrepreneurship. This session will start with an overview on the market for digital health innovations in autism which includes about 5M affected families nation-wide and 85M world-wide. The market is highly segmented into caregivers, clinics, educational institutions, professional societies, state advocacies, and support groups. A multi-faceted marketing and sales strategy is necessary to penetrate these tightly knit communities. The session will discuss business model options based on securing insurance funding, subscription versus in-app and one-time purchases, and site licenses for large networks. Fundraising strategies to support university start-up creation will be compared including non-dilutive federal funding through Small Business Research Innovation grants or autism foundations versus traditional angel investment and/or venture capital funding.

10:30am -  
10:45am

Break (Marble Terrace) Sponsored by

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10:45am -  
11:30am

### Session 3A (Ballroom)

#### Autism Care Trends Amid Uncertain Economic Conditions and Industry Constraints

##### Chris Sullens

CEO, CentralReach

Even with unprecedented pressures such as a global pandemic and the Great Resignation, the ABA industry has continued to experience rapid growth with no signs of slowing down. In 2022, providers saw a 39% year-over-year increase in the demand for autism services and a 21% year-over-year increase in services billed. Will the ABA industry remain resilient in 2023 with uncertain economic conditions and continued industry constraints ahead? Based on a dataset of nearly 1,000+ ABA providers, Chris Sullens, CEO of CentralReach, will deep dive into the factors impacting the industry at a macro level and how providers, and their clients are responding to those pressures.

10:45am -  
11:30am

### Session 3B (Screening Room)

#### Storytellers

##### **Better Outcomes, Better Business**

Lori Ann Dotson, Senior Director of Strategic Vision and Innovation, Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis

##### **Data Analytics as a Critical Component of Operations Management**

Rob Nicolai, Chief Strategy Officer, Autism Behavioral Institute, LLC

##### **It's Not Just About Goal Attainment: Wellbeing as an Outcome Measure**

Doreen Samelson, Chief Clinical Officer, Catalight Foundation

##### **Journey of an Autism Company in the Middle East**

Rajashree Balasubramanian, Behaviour Enrichment, Dubai

11:45am -  
12:30pm

### Session 4A (Ballroom)

#### Building a Winning Strategy for New Market Expansion and Growth

**Moderated by: Rick Loewenstein, TeamGame Advisors**

##### **Panelists:**

- Dennis May, Hopebridge Autism Therapy Centers
- Anna Bullard, Accelerated Delegated Credentialing
- Benjamin Wessels, Early Autism Services

Outstanding clinical quality, leadership, and clear communication are key factors to building a successful ABA practice. Leveraging those qualities with a strategic, operational-focused growth initiative will ensure expansion plans are executed with success and become the lifeblood of an organization. This presentation will explore various operational growth strategies that can be standardized and replicated. It will explore the de novo vs. acquisition discussion, how to build a winning implementation team, and ways to develop internal capacity to meet your growth goals.

## DAY 1

Tuesday, April 18

11:45am -  
12:30pm

### Session 4B (Screening Room)

2023 AIS Autism Award Innovators' Fast Pitches: Startups will pitch their Autism Innovation ideas with Celebrity Judges. The winner will be announced at Tuesday evening's Networking Reception, sponsored by Ziegler.

#### Judges

**Jon Stout**, Optum Ventures

**Kelly Bertenthal DeJean**, Multiple

**Michelle He**, Autism Impact Fund

#### Innovators

##### ***Wearable Medtech for Monitoring and Treating Self-Injurious Behavior in Autism***

Brandon Herscovitch, HBH Development

##### ***A Pop Music Relational Frame for Outcome Measures for Autism***

Amanda Ralston, NonBinary Solutions

##### ***Beaming Health***

Chris Olmanson, Beaming Health

12:30pm -  
4:30pm

### "Speed Dating"

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### One-on-One Meetings with Investment Bankers

\*Must be registered for speed-dating in advance of the Summit. Onsite appointments are not available.

12:30pm -  
1:30pm

### Lunch (Hampton Court)

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1:30pm -  
2:15pm

### Session 5 (Ballroom)

Developments in Neurodiversity, ABA Reform and Patient Treatment Experience

**Moderator:** Sara Litvak, Behavioral Health Center of Excellence

#### **Panelists:**

- Keith Wargo, Autism Speaks
- Christopher Banks, Autism Society of America

2:15pm -  
2:30pm

Break (Marble Terrace) Sponsored by



2:30pm -  
3:15pm

Session 6A (Ballroom)

Raising Capital: Options for Self-Financing

**Moderated by: Dr. Ronit Molko**, [RonitMolko.com](http://RonitMolko.com)

**Panelists:**

- Patrick Bunt, MeBe
- Yvonne Bruinsima, In STEPPS
- Kris Gochenour, Verbal Beginnings
- Steven Shill, BDO
- Harry Nelson, Nelson Hardiman

2:30pm -  
3:15pm

Session 6B (Screening Room)

Using Clinical Standards, Data & Technology to Drive Better Outcomes

**Co-Presented by:**

- Mike Miller, Caravel Autism Health
- Dr. Jodi Nuernberger, Caravel Autism Health
- Mahin Para-Cremer, Caravel Autism Health

Clinical excellence is at the heart of autism treatment and organizations continue to strive to achieve the best outcomes for clients served. This presentation will provide an overview of how an outcomes platform founded upon a quality improvement framework can be used to drive the delivery of quality care and best outcomes. Clinical standards and a clinician centered approach served as the foundation for the development of leading and lagging indicators of quality care. Using cloud-based data collection that can be evaluated using advanced analytics and machine learning, the outcomes platform provides visibility into 'near-real-time' clinical KPIs, access to program recommendations via artificial intelligence algorithms with objective to improve care quality and allow for more responsive treatment. Data Insights are provided that enhance the clinician's ability to differentiate learning styles and design the most effective treatment package. The impact the development of quality framework and outcomes platform has had on the delivery quality care will be discussed.

3:30pm -  
4:30pm

### Session 7A (Ballroom)

#### Evolving Payment Models: The Role of Self-Insured Employers in the Future of ABA

**Moderated by: Ling Shao, SpectrumAi**

**Panelists:**

- Justin Funches, LEARN Behavioral Health
- Melissa Reilly, Evernorth
- Rob Paczkowski, Global Benefits, eBay

The ABA industry's explosive growth and change in funding sources has been a wild ride during the last two decades. While a large opportunity still exists to penetrate untapped markets for commercial, Medicaid and TRICARE reimbursement, ABA providers should familiarize themselves with another new funding source: self-insured employers.

Over the last 20 years, ABA went from cottage-to-mainstream behavioral health specialty, as school district and private pay funding gave way to commercial insurance reimbursement. During that same period, self-insured employers have driven many of the breakthrough innovations in healthcare benefits. The reasons are simple: 1) employers are the ultimate payors for most Americans, and, 2) self-insured employers are less-encumbered by regulations that govern benefit offerings, structure, payment and steerage than insurance companies can offer to their fully-insured membership. As such, large, brand-name self-insured employers have catalyzed adoption of significant innovations like price transparency, centers of excellence, value-based purchasing, narrow networks, telehealth and expansion of behavioral health benefits.

This highly-expert panel will discuss how employers and payors work with service providers to find solutions to employees' evolving needs to attract and retain talent, the role insurance companies play in broad adoption, and how market leaders should think about delivering employer-based ABA solutions.



3:30pm -  
4:30pm

### Session 7B (Screening Room)

#### Healthcare Transaction Deal Killers: How to Avoid Them

##### **Rachel Boynton**

Managing Director & Partner, Vertess

Although there are always situations where deals fall apart, there are those potential deal killers that can be avoided. This discussion will make references to the diligence process as well.

These include:

- Knowing your P&L and financial landscape. Offers are made based on financial numbers that are sometimes incorrect or misrepresented. There are steps to take to clean up your financial picture and to help improve the likelihood of a close.
- Find strong and knowledgeable representation – Lawyers with M&A experience and regulatory knowledge is key, while an M&A advisor and an accountant/tax advisor can also be very helpful. A bad lawyer can cost not only time and a lot of money, but bad advice can kill a deal.
- Be completely truthful and honest from the beginning of the discussions because any skeletons you might have will be found during diligence.
- Recruit a trusted and discrete team member to help with diligence, as it's time consuming and involved.
- Commit to the process – diligence is painstaking. But taking too long to get this done can kill a deal. A seller needs to keep their eye on the daily operations while getting the diligence done.
- Choose your buyers (don't let them choose you) since a cultural fit is as important as the purchase price.

Takeaways from this session include:

- Understanding your financials and their importance to the deal.
- Knowing what the deal process is like and how important the diligence piece is.
- Successful completion involves a team of knowledgeable people, from inside and outside your organization.

5:00pm -  
7:00pm

### Networking Reception (West End Rooftop)

Join us for an evening of networking and cocktails before heading out for dinner! Meet and connect with professionals from various industries while enjoying an open bar and delicious hors d'oeuvres. This is a great opportunity to expand your network and make valuable connections in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Sponsored by:



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# Advising the Behavioral Healthcare Community

## Ziegler Corporate Finance Healthcare

Ziegler has long-standing relationships with healthcare providers, information technology firms, financial sponsors and other thought leaders across the nation, giving us unique insight into emerging trends and the future direction of the healthcare industry.



**Mergers & Acquisitions**  
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– Buy-side Advisory



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Refunding/  
Acquisition

**\$12,165,000**



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8:00am -  
8:30am

### Coffee with Sponsors (*Marble Terrace*)

Note: A full breakfast for Summit attendees is available at The London in The Boxwood Restaurant, starting at 6:30am. Sponsored by:



8:30am -  
8:45am

### Opening Remarks (*Ballroom*)

**Sara Litvak**

CEO, Behavioral Health Center of Excellence and Co-Founder, Autism Investor Summit

8:45am -  
9:30am

### Keynote Speaker: Allison Kluger (*Ballroom*) Reputation Rules!



**Allison Kluger**

Lecturer, Stanford Graduate School of Business

Reputations Rules! Our reputations are defined not by who WE think we are, but how other people perceive us. In business and in your personal lives, a strong and positive reputation can be like currency. A strong reputation will open doors for you, create lasting bonds, and present valuable opportunities. In today's seminar we will discuss how to repair a damaged reputation, how to make a great first impression, what to be aware of with your online reputation, and strategies to curate and maintain a positive working reputation among your colleagues and clients. Also covered will be topics that explore personal, team and corporate reputation. The good news is that no one is stuck in a reputation they don't want. Reputation is on a continuum, and we are the masters of our reputation destiny.

9:45am -  
10:30am

### Session 2A (Ballroom)

What Every Investor Wants to Know about the ABA Workforce

**Presented by: Dr. Ellie Kazemi**, California State University, Northridge

9:45am -  
10:30am

### Session 2B (Screening Room)

Advancing Whole-Child Value-Based Autism Care

**Moderated by: Kathleen Stengel**, NeurAbilities Healthcare

**Panelists:**

- Neil Hattangadi, Cortica
- Jia Jia Ye, Springtide Child Development
- Mark Mintz, NeurAbilities Healthcare

10:30am -  
10:45am

### Break (Marble Terrace)

Sponsored by



10:45am -  
11:30am

### Session 3A (Ballroom)

The Next Era is Here for Investment and Innovation in the Autism Space

**Moderated by: Rob Sarrazin**, Autism Impact Fund

**Panelists:**

- Ling Shao, SpectrumAi
- Vijay Ravindran, Floreo
- Cheryl Tierney, Meliora Health
- David Aspinall, auticon US

10:45am -  
11:30am

### Session 3B (Screening Room)

Revenue Cycle Management: The Achilles Heel for ABA Organizations

**Moderated by: Jonathan Mueller**, Ascend Behavior Partners, Element RCM

**Panelists:**

- Brent Koskosky, Simple Fractal
- Michele Silcox-Beal, ABA Therapy Billing and Insurance Services
- Dan Cross, 360 Behavioral Health
- Chris Cason, Ziegler

11:45am -  
12:30pm

### Session 4A (Ballroom)

Negotiating Reimbursement Rates:

Changing the Payor-Provider Narrative from Transactional to Relational

**Co-Presented by:**

- Jonathan Mueller, Ascend Behavior Partners, Element RCM
- Rick Loewenstein, TeamGame Advisors

Want to negotiate better reimbursement rates? Learn best practices focused on identifying the right Payor contact, understanding Payor policies around rate increases, how to collect and provide data to justify your requested increase, benchmarking, and more.

It all starts with investing in the Payor relationship, then building a strong Payor Relations Platform. This disciplined approach impacts almost every department of your autism therapy practice and is often the most overlooked. Whether it's rate negotiation contracting, credentialing, VBC, APMs, clinical excellence, accounts receivable, growth, or just creating open lines of communication, developing a rock-solid working relationship with your Payors is imperative to growth and success.

11:45am -  
12:30pm

### Session 4B (Screening Room)

The Hiring Dilemma: Culture, Core Values, and Servant Leadership

**Moderated by:** Eric Scharber, SimiTree

**Panelists:**

- Sarah Trautman, Defy Community
- Katrina Hille, Aprendamos
- Erin O'Donnell, Aprendamos

12:30pm

### Adjourn

We look forward to seeing you next year.



# Benefits of BHCOE Accreditation



**BHCOE Accreditation gives you peace of mind.** By being BHCOE Accredited, you demonstrate your unique approach to care and your commitment to quality.

**Best in Class Care:** ABA Organizations who complete a thorough independent third-party audit better define their practices by improving quality care for all.

**Distance from Liability:** Third-party consulting and documentation of forms processes and client interaction and designation show your organization's systems are set up for ethical and fair treatment.

**Increased Revenue:** Rejections and reimbursement delays from some payors are major concerns in the ABA industry. BHCOE can help. Our payor department assists in aiding organizations with information that can improve rejection rates and negotiations for higher reimbursements.

## **Value-Based Care Readiness**

More and more payers are moving toward value-based payment programs (VBP) that reward providers for delivering high-quality care. These programs require that providers demonstrate the quality of their services through patient outcomes and other measures. Those accredited organizations who are in-network with our VBP partners will have the opportunity to participate in the program which includes pay-for-reporting as well as pay-for-performance. Accredited organizations who are not yet in-network with our VBP partners will have the opportunity to participate in BHCOE's data sharing and benchmarking service that allows the organization to compare their outcomes and quality indicators against other accredited organizations and will prepare them for participation in VBP.

**LET'S OUTLINE YOUR PATH TO ACCREDITATION**

Grow Your ABA Organization Today. Set up a consultation today at

[www.bhcoe.org/getstarted](http://www.bhcoe.org/getstarted).

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**David Aspinall** has served as CEO of auticon US since 2020. He is responsible for overseeing the further market development of auticon in the U.S. to create more job opportunities for autistic professionals in the technology space. Prior to joining auticon, David was an executive in a Fortune 10 brand at AT&T, where he spent nearly 12 years, including time leading the telecommunication giant's Canadian operations. He also served as Regional President, South for Sprint in Texas. More recently, David worked as an operating executive with various private equity firms specializing in scaling businesses and revenue growth.



**Rajashree Balasubramanian** is a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) and is part of the Founding team at Behaviour Enrichment, a group of therapy centres in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A former M&A lawyer, Rajashree left a career in corporate law in 2016 to lead BE's management team. With her passion to make a difference, Rajashree has been instrumental in growing the team at BE from a 2 therapist team focussed on ABA to now, a multi-disciplinary team of 80 therapists across 2 locations in Dubai.



**Christopher Banks**, has a comprehensive background of serving the nonprofit community. He has worked in a wide variety of organizations including medical centers, community hospitals, assisted living communities, secondary and higher education institutions, national parks, human service organizations and religious communities. He has a successful record of significantly increasing fundraising support, measurably improving revenue strategies, and dramatically transforming culture, diversity and inclusion. Chris has been providing executive direction and leadership for the Autism Society since the beginning of 2020. At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, he pivoted the national organization to be a resource, service, and support enterprise for the affiliates, and individuals and families.



**Kelly Bertenthal DeJean** is responsible for driving strategic initiatives at Multiple. Kelly has a deep understanding of the autism and IDD space, having previously worked at Autism Speaks as an Area Senior Director responsible for fundraising in Northern California and the Northwest. She has a degree in Public Health and Tropical Medicine from Tulane University and a Master's of Health Administration from Louisiana State University and is an active member of Tulane University's Public Health Alumni Association Board of Directors, the first school of public health in the US.



**Dani Bowman** founded her company, DaniMation Entertainment LLC, at age 11. She has worked professionally in the animation industry since 14. Dani uses her passions of Public Speaking, Animation, Illustration, Fine and Visual Arts, and Teaching Animation to demonstrate to others on the autism spectrum that anything is possible.



**Rachel Boynton** is Co-Founder of LifeShare, a multi-state human services organization. Rachel has a unique background of over 20 years of successful operational and executive experience. She began her professional life as a home care provider, an experience that created the foundation for the innovative quality and success of LifeShare, while also changing her life. At LifeShare, she managed Operations (Adult Day/Residential; Child Therapeutic Foster Care; HCBS; Child Therapeutic Day/Diversion Services, and Educational Programming), Finance, HR and Quality Assurance (facilitating COA accreditation and policy/procedure implementation). After selling LifeShare to Centene, she remained during the transition of management and helped to provide outcome measurements and COA compliance reporting. At VERTESS she is a Managing Director providing M+A advisor and consultant services, specifically in the I/DD, behavioral health, SUD and home healthcare markets, and providers are striving to adapt strategically to diverse challenges.



**Yvonne Bruinsma, Ph.D., BCBC-D** is Founder and CEO of In STEPPS. In STEPPS has a broad and bold vision of the future. In 8 years In STEPPS has grown to 3 locations serving more than 300 families. We are proud of this accomplishment, and we are continuing to push the boundaries to do as much as it/we can do to continue our work in creating, building, and sustaining connections. To further our missions In STEPPS is committed to delivering a community center of excellence where research and reality coalesce to produce the best possible treatment for each child by providing a comprehensive range of services to families and the children to optimize their interventions. In STEPPS Academy, launched in September 2018, is an enriched environment with dedicated and experienced teachers, rooted in science and grown with love. It is a school where building friendships is part of the curriculum, where autism strengths can be recognized and celebrated, where support is there when needed. We believe that if children don't learn the way we teach, then we need to teach the way they learn.

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Anna Bullard** currently serves as the Vice President of Government and Payor Relations for the BHCOE. Most notably, Anna successfully passed legislation named after her daughter, Ava, who had been diagnosed with autism. “Ava’s Law” creates access to the diagnosis and treatment for individuals with autism in Georgia regardless of age, funder, or location. Recognized consistently for performance excellence and contributions to the autism field, Anna has over a decade of experience in developing policy and advocating at the state and federal level. Additionally, she has developed payor relations to increase access to quality patient centered care while developing capacity for growth. In 2014 Anna received the Autism Speaks national “Speak Out” award. She has over 8 years of experience integrating acquisitions, developing processes for timely patient intake, and managing multi-site teams for contracting, credentialing. Her perseverance and knowledge in government relations and business development has led to thousands of lives accessing care nationally.



**Patrick Bunt** is Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer of MeBe (2013 to present). Other qualifications include Financial Advisor, Valuation Manager, and Investment Associate (2006 to 2015), Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Level 1, CFA Institute (2012), Certified Financial Planner™ Qualification Program, College for Financial Planning (2007), and Bachelor of Science, Finance & Accounting, Virginia Tech – Pamplin College of Business.



**Chris Cason** joined Ziegler in 2019 and currently serves as a Vice President within the firm’s healthcare corporate practice. He specializes in mergers and acquisitions, strategic advisory, and capital formation engagements for clients in the healthcare services and healthcare information technology sectors. Over the course of his career, Chris has completed +25 buy-side and sell-side transactions.



**Dan Cross** joined the 360 Behavioral Health team in January 2019 as the Chief Financial Officer. Prior to joining 360BH, Dan served as CFO at Pain Specialists of America in Austin, TX. A graduate of BYU Marriott School of Business, Dan has an MBA in Finance and Business Operations, specializing in financial, operational and technical analysis.



**Dr. Lori Ann Dotson** is the Senior Director of Strategic Vision and Innovation at the Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis. She has over 25-years of experience serving families and individuals across the lifespan whose lives have been impacted by intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or substance abuse and mental health challenges. She was a 2020-2021 fellow in the Napa Infant-Parent Mental Health Fellowship. Her research in the area of intellectual and developmental disabilities has been presented in peer-reviewed publications and at over 40 academic and professional conferences throughout North America, Europe and Asia.



**Justin Funches** As president of LEARN, Justin oversees the organization’s autism services team. He brings to the position more than a decade of experience working with clinicians serving children with autism and other special needs at LEARN and Progressus Therapy (now Invo Healthcare). He holds both a B.A. and an MBA from Harvard University and is a founding board member of the National Coalition for Access to Autism Services.



**Aarti Garg, CPA** is an Indian-American and Southern California native who appeared alongside her brother Subodh on the Emmy-winning docuseries “Love on the Spectrum U.S.” on Netflix. Aarti works with her family’s business as the Director of Operations at Insight Examination Services Inc. in Long Beach. Insight is a leading advisory firm that delivers assurance and due diligence services to financial institutions and is 8(a) certified. She has been working there since 2017 and is proud to be the leading second generation of Insight.



**Subodh Garg** is an Indian-American living in Southern California. He was diagnosed with autism around 3 years old, and although he’s seen his fair share of challenges, nothing has stopped him from pursuing his dreams of gaining independence, finding love, and leading a fulfilling life. He was featured as a cast member on the Emmy-winning docuseries “Love on the Spectrum U.S.” on Netflix. Fans of the show look to Subodh as a beacon of hope and acceptance in the Autism community.



**Kris Gochenour** has the pleasure of serving as the Chief Financial Officer for Verbal Beginnings, a clinician-owned Autism provider headquartered in the mid-Atlantic. Verbal Beginnings serves families in five states and the District of Columbia and has over 600 employees who change the lives of clients and their families through client-centered Autism Therapy.



# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Neil Hattangadi** is CEO and Co-Founder of Cortica, a whole-child physician-led autism services company. His driving passion is healthcare innovation by bringing together teams of diverse talent to address unmet clinical need through science. He co-founded Cortica in 2014 with his wife, Suzanne Goh, MD, BCBA, a child neurologist and behavior analyst. Neil and Suzanne are champions of neurodiversity and enjoy spending as much time as they can in their clinics, engaged in patient care. Neil previously served in leadership roles and built/transacted 3 innovative healthtech companies in cardiology and ENT. He was previously a healthcare investor and a consultant with McKinsey.



**Michelle He** is the Associate at Autism Impact Fund, where she executes due diligence on potential opportunities and supports AIF's existing portfolio. Leveraging her statistics/neuroscience background and a solid financial foundation developed at Morgan Stanley, she builds valuation models across sectors, including data-enabled services, SaaS, and biotechnology. Her valuation work is integral to AIF's deal prioritization and decision-making process. For existing portfolio companies, she monitors financial and operational conditions, industry dynamics and works at a strategic capacity with select companies to ensure meaningful business development and growth.



**Brandon Herscovitch** is co-owner & CEO of HBH Development. His credits include: repeat entrepreneur in emerging autism & ABA markets; founded ABA agency 2006, sold 2019; Founding (past) president of NPO trade org for ABA providers; Healthcare consulting practice CEO in sector; University autism center director, professor of ABA; Provider rep on ABA CPT coding group; and research publications related to SIB in autism, precursors, managed care.



**Katrina Hille** is the daughter of an immigrant, first generation American, and proud US Army veteran. She has been a Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2009, and has shared her passion for Autism Awareness and Behavior Analysis with Southern New Mexico since 2010. She is happy to be back with Mariposa Autism Service Center as their Director of Autism Services. In both her personal and professional life, she believes in diversity, equality, inclusion and advocacy at all levels.



**Dr. Ellie Kazemi** has over 20 years of global experience as a behavioral scientist and consultant. Her passion is innovation and leveraging advanced technologies to make learning, training, and data-based decisions efficient, scalable, and accessible. She has worked on several large nationwide grants such as FEMA (with Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation) and NASA (with Autonomy Center for STEAM) and has served as the Chief Science Officer of an accreditation organization (BHCQE).



**Brent Koskosky** is a seasoned leader in the autism service industry with more than 10 years of experience in building and scaling ABA businesses. Currently, he is Director of Discovery and leading the Healthcare division at Simple Fractal. In this role, Brent applies his expertise in ABA and consulting in Healthcare and Education to design customer-centric automation solutions. He is well-versed in Robotic Process Automation and primarily works with ABA providers of all sizes to deliver customized solutions that enhance operational efficiency, accuracy, employee satisfaction, and generate positive ROI.



**Russell Lehmann** is an award-winning and internationally recognized thought leader, speaker, poet, and advocate contextualizing autism, mental health, disabilities, and the overall human condition. His words have been featured in the USA Today, LA Times, NPR, Yahoo! News, Success Magazine and archived in the Library of Congress. A graduate of MIT's "Leadership in the Digital Age" course, Russell sits on numerous boards such as the national Board of Directors for The Arc of the United States and is a lead council member for the Autism Society of America. He also serves as an advisor to NEXT for Autism and is a consultant for the US Department of Justice, restructuring our criminal justice system in a more equitable fashion for those with disabilities.



**Sara Litvak** is an entrepreneur and behavioral scientist who currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of Behavioral Health Center of Excellence, the only ABA-specific accrediting body. She has served as a consultant for numerous payers, state and governmental organizations designing Quality Assurance processes to ensure that ABA organizations provide clinically sound services. Sara also regularly provides due diligence for healthcare investors with a special focus on technology, autism and developmental disabilities.

Sara is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who serves as an Adjunct Professor for the Applied Behavior Analysis program at Pepperdine University. She is an education blogger for the Huffington Post, has served as past Co-Chair of the Autism Special Interest Group for the Association for Behavior Analysis International, on the Board of Directors for the Association for Science in Autism Treatment, and as a Subject Matter Expert for the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB).

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Rick Loewenstein** is a leader who leverages the power of strategic relationships to build consensus, motivate, and impact growth, corporate culture, and success. His extensive executive leadership career spans a multitude of sectors including private and nonprofit healthcare and human services. In 2019 Rick and his wife, Dana, founded TeamGame Advisors, an advisory practice focused on driving market expansion and growth, organizational development, and community engagement in both the private and nonprofit sectors. Their client partners include PE firms, PE and VC backed providers, as well as family office and privately held ABA providers. They also work with nonprofit behavioral health providers and healthcare technology companies throughout the USA and Israel. Rick believes that “Success is a TeamGame” based on collaboration, shared vision, and yes, fun. His vast experience and knowledge guiding organizations focused on changing lives and communities is his passion.



**Dennis May** has 30+ years of experience building and scaling multi-site, private equity backed, and publicly traded consumer retail and healthcare services businesses and leading companies through dynamic transformation and growth. Currently, Dennis is the CEO of Hopebridge, a leading, high-growth Autism Therapy Provider responsible for helping thousands of children achieve their best life possible. Under Dennis’s leadership since 2016, Hopebridge has expanded from 5 to 50 locations across the country bringing access to autism therapy to thousands of children in need.



**Mike Miller** leads Caravel Autism Health with a focus on building its team of passionate clinicians, investing in results-driven technology, and establishing industry-leading practices to provide better clinical outcomes for children with autism and their families. Mike has more than 20 years of experience working with and evolving growing businesses to be the best in their fields. He earned his bachelor of science degree in marketing from Miami University and his master’s degree in business administration from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.



**Dr. Mark Mintz** attended medical school at Rutgers–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, performed his pediatric residency training at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center, and completed a Pediatric Neurology fellowship at Rutgers–New Jersey Medical School. He is quadruple–Board Certified in Neurology with special qualifications in Child Neurology, Pediatrics, Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, and Epilepsy. Dr. Mintz has been on the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Rutgers–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and is presently on the faculty of Rutgers–New Jersey Medical School. Dr. Mintz is presently a member of the medical staffs of Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center–Camden, Weisman Children’s Rehabilitation Hospital, Hackensack University Medical Center and Inspira Health Network.



**Dr. Ronit Molko** is a leading behavioral health expert and pioneer in the field of autism treatment and awareness, channeling her passion for the subject into roles as a serial entrepreneur, thought leader, and published author—in addition to holding multiple non-profit and for-profit board roles. Drawing upon three decades as a psychologist, clinician, and consultant—as well as executive leadership skills attained as the Founder and CEO of Autism Spectrum Therapies (acquired by Learn It Systems)—Dr. Molko has a uniquely multi-faceted understanding of the behavioral healthcare landscape and a passion for helping those interested in the field to better understand the pathway ahead. As an advisor to investors, service providers, clinical organizations, and communities, she is able to provide cutting-edge insights into the rapidly expanding field of behavioral healthcare, advising clients on understanding current trends and best practices, navigating complex care intersections, designing innovative solutions, and identifying/pursuing intelligent behavioral health investment opportunities.



**Devin Morrissey** is an Autistic powerhouse who has been able to live his own life by his standards and rules. His Autism diagnosis at the age of 3 was only the beginning of many chapters and milestones waiting to be written. After receiving his Master’s Degree from University of Southern California in 2021, he now works in Employee Relations at an EdTech firm in Los Angeles. Devin has also worked alongside several businesses and organizations, such as Joey Travolta’s Inclusion Films, DaniMation Entertainment, and Autism Alliance SoCal.



**Jonathan Mueller** has been a leader in the autism services field for more than a decade. He’s the co-founder of Ascend Behavior Partners, a multi-state, independent ABA practice; and of Element RCM, a billing and insurance partner to ABA practices. Jonathan’s a fierce advocate for families and for building world-class organizational cultures. As an influencer in the ABA field, Jonathan hosts Building Better Businesses in ABA podcast and is a co-host of PodCASP. He has testified to Colorado Medicaid Legislative committees on autism legislation; he’s been a keynote speaker at the Autism Investor Summit; and Ascend’s culture has been featured in a Stanford Case Study. You can find him at [linkedin.com/in/jonathanmueller](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonathanmueller)



# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Harry Nelson** has been recognized as one of the leading legal experts in the field of behavioral health, including regulatory and reimbursement issues related to ASD. He is the managing partner of Nelson Hardiman, a Los Angeles-based healthcare and life science law firm, where he advises clients on regulatory and business strategy. Harry is the author of *From ObamaCare to TrumpCare: Why You Should Care* (2017) and *The United States of Opioids: A Prescription of Liberating a Nation in Pain* (2019), and a forthcoming book on the remaking of health privacy. Harry has received extensive awards and recognition for his advocacy and legal reform efforts to improve U.S. healthcare.



**Rob Nicolai** is Chief Strategy Officer for the Autism Behavioral Institute, NC, GA, SC. Born & raised in West Virginia, Rob left a career in Industrial Manufacturing Management to begin his journey into the MH/BH field in VA then NC where he's enjoyed working over 20 years in the MH/BH field in various Operations Management/Leadership positions including RCM, Contracts, Regional Operations, Business Intelligence Data Analytics/Reporting, EHR Administration, FP&A, etc.



**Dr. Jodi Nuernberger** is Vice President of Clinical Excellence, and sustains the vision for compassionate, high-quality care. She is responsible for the development and implementation of clinical programs and ensuring clinical excellence. She plans and directs quality improvement practices through education, mentoring, behavioral systems analysis, and ongoing evaluation of clinical operation outcomes. Dr. Jodi has more than 18 years of experience in ABA providing care, directing clinical and operational programs, consulting, providing training and development opportunities, and conducting research. Dr. Jodi is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and earned her doctoral degree in Rehabilitation from Southern Illinois University.



**Erin O'Donnell** is a native New Mexican and proud American! She has been in Human Resources for nearly 20 years and is currently the Human Resources Director for Apendamos. Erin graduated from New Mexico State University with a degree in Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management with a minor in Human Resources. Prior to Apendamos, Erin worked in the hospitality industry and with another healthcare provider. Erin is also active with her local and state chapter of SHRM and in 2019 received the "2019 Southern New Mexico SHRM Chapter's Kent Evans Eagle Award". She has been heavily involved with her local community and was most recently a part of Leadership Las Cruces' 29th class.



**Chris Olmanson** is the Co-Founder of Beaming Health, a marketplace for autism care and other developmental differences. Beaming Health connects families with the care providers that are the best fit for their kids, saving both sides time and money in the process.



**Rob Paczowski** has 30 years of experience in employee benefits. Specialty areas include health and welfare, wellness work/life, time off, international benefits and retirement benefits strategy, design and administration. Prior to eBay, Rob worked for several organizations, including most recently, Google and Capital One. Areas of focus include value-based health care/direct contracting, transparency efforts, data analytics and a comprehensive high-value health care strategy. In addition, Rob was an early pioneer in developing autism benefits and helping other employers implement those programs for their employees. Rob also has a passion for health care public policy and is active with the American Benefits Council and the PBGH public policy leadership groups. Rob now lives in San Jose, California with his wife Connie and 16-year-old son Jason. Rob also has two adult daughters and two dogs named Tuff and Angus.



**Mahin Para-Cremer** is the Director of Clinical Outcomes Data for Caravel Autism Health supporting services across the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. She supports the development, implementation and adoption of data and product solutions, aligning clinical standards of practice with data and product development initiatives. In addition, Mahin is an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where she teaches courses in Applied Behavior Analysis and Special Education. She previously served as the Director of Operations for a large autism service provider for in-home and clinic-based services in Wisconsin, overseeing all clinical and operational activities, and has worked in various leadership capacities, including managing adult residential programs, supported apartments, and adult foster care settings. Mahin has worked as a clinician with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, acquired and traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, co-occurring mental health disorders, and at-risk children and youth in clinics, schools, residential treatment centers, treatment foster care, and in-home services. Mahin Para-Cremer is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and currently serves as Secretary for the Board of Directors for the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts.

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Amanda ("Mandy") Ralston** has been certified as a behavior analyst since 2001. During her career she has founded two ABA clinics- the most recent of which was successfully acquired in 2019. She continues to mad-happily create unique solutions by synthesizing her own history of reinforcement and punishment with evidence-based practices, Clinical and Business Intelligence, and Technology to further support clinicians, funders, businesses, and founders in changing the world for Quality of Life, Outcomes, neuro/diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her most recent venture is NonBinary Solutions - a data analytics and technology firm making Clinical Decision Support Systems for constituents of ABA. Her behavior continues to be shaped by its impact on a world where autism exists, and the field of behavior analysis.



**Vijay Ravindran** is an accomplished entrepreneur and technology executive with experience in online retail at Amazon and the news media industry for The Washington Post Company. Ravindran is the founder and CEO of Floreo, a venture-backed start-up developing virtual reality learning for people with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD and anxiety. Ravindran's career spans digital commerce and news media. He joined Amazon in 1998 when the company sold books and music. He later served as director of the ordering department at Amazon and led the team that launched Amazon Prime. As Chief Digital Officer for The Washington Post Company, he founded WaPo Labs and oversaw the development of over a dozen products in digital news and launched Washington Post Social Reader and Trove, a personalized news web application.



**Melissa Reilly** is Chief Growth Officer at Evernorth Behavioral Health.



**Doreen Samelson EdD, MSCP** is a licensed clinical psychologist and author with 30 years of experience in healthcare as a practicing clinician, administrator and thought leader. Before joining the Catalight Foundation, Doreen was an Area Director for five mental health clinics with Kaiser Permanente where she also provided direct services to individuals with behavioral health needs.



**Rob Sarrazin** is Chief Investment Officer and Managing Partner of the Autism Impact Fund where he oversees the firm and leads AIF's Life Sciences practice. Rob's career as a longtime healthcare investor, private equity partner and corporate development executive includes decades of experience overseeing a large portfolio of control investments, including corporate strategic transactions and over 30+ middle market growth acquisitions under multiple private equity funds. Most recently, Rob was the VP Global Head of External Innovation and Direct Investments for the GlaxoSmithKline ("GSK") Consumer Healthcare division, where he built a new strategically focused corporate development capability. Rob managed a global team, reviewed over 7,000 medical innovations and start-ups, and closed 30+ transactions with emphasis on digital devices, AI and diagnostics, neuromodulation, microbiome, Rx to OTC Switch, bio-actives, and category line extensions.



**Eric Scharber** is a Managing Principal at SimiTree, leading all talent acquisition and employee retention efforts for the Post-Acute and Behavioral Healthcare industries. He oversees executive search, management recruiting and interim leadership services, as well as advisory services related to workforce management. After founding the firm in 2005, Eric led it to become the top recruiting and executive search entity for the Post-Acute and Behavioral Health industry, serving clients across the U.S. and completing more than 3500 recruiting and interim leadership projects since inception.



**Ling Shao** is the founder and CEO of SpectrumAi, a digital health start-up that develops innovative solutions for life-changing therapies. As a mom of four young boys on the Autism Spectrum, she has a deep rooted passion for democratizing access to high quality care for families like hers. Prior to founding SpectrumAi, Ling delivered rapid growth as Chief Commercial Officer of Buoy Health, as SVP Strategic Solutions of AmWell, and in leadership roles in a decade at UnitedHealth Group ranging from national employer sales and account management, to clinical business development for the dual-eligible Medicaid and Medicare population.



**Steven Shill** has more than 30 years of public accounting and consulting experience with two global accounting firms serving a variety of publicly and privately held companies (including nonprofits and NGOs) in the healthcare sector. During this time, he also spent several years working in private industry in a senior management role with an actuarial and risk management company. Steven's experience in public accounting over the years has been global. Steven qualified as a Chartered Accountant and worked as a Public Auditor in South Africa for many years prior to joining BDO in the USA. His experience included providing audit and accounting services to various healthcare and social programs operating in Africa including USAID.

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Michele Silcox-Beal** has focused her career on ABA Therapy billing and insurance funding sources, founding ABAB and MKS Consulting, LLC, nationally recognized Autism Services revenue cycle, consulting, and auditing companies, supporting the provider just starting out through the large ABA agency flourishing with multiple providers, clients, and funding sources. As a CPMA and CMRS, she can provide a risk assessment to support revenue cycle compliance. With tighter regulations on healthcare services, providers need to know when they are at risk for non-compliance and remain out of harm's way of fraudulent activity. Helping providers find that peace of mind is her goal.



**Kathleen Stengel** is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and currently serves as CEO of NeurAbilities, a health care organization, where she is charged with increasing clinical outcomes by implementing an interdisciplinary model of intervention including neurology, neuropsychology, behavior analysis, speech and language and occupational therapy services. She maintains a unique skill set in providing high quality care through standardized and replicable intervention models. In addition, Ms. Stengel is skilled in OBM and ensures that systems are implemented from the hiring and training of staff to budget development and long-range planning to ensure that clinical outcomes are maximized.



**Jon Stout's** financial background, managed care know-how and start-up scrappiness make him a unique type of venture investor. Most recently, Jon was the Chief Growth Officer at AbleTo, which was one of Optum Ventures earliest investments. During Jon's six-year tenure, the business grew to become one of the largest and most successful innovators in the mental health market. Jon held ultimate accountability for revenue growth and led the strategy, business development, account management, client solutions and marketing functions.



**Chris Sullens** is the Chief Executive Officer of CentralReach and is leading the company in its mission to provide an end-to-end platform of software and services that enable Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) clinicians and educators to produce superior client outcomes for people with autism and related disorders. Sullens brings decades of experience to the company and has a proven track record of building strong company cultures and taking customer-centric technology companies, like CentralReach, to the next level. Since he joined, CentralReach has won 30+ awards including Deloitte Technology Fast 500, NJBIZ Fast 50, Silver Stevie for Most Innovative Company of the Year, NJBIZ Best Places to Work, and Best in Biz Company of the Year – demonstrating the positive effects of the investments the company is making in its people, process, systems and client satisfaction initiatives.



**Dr. Cheryl Tierney** is a board-certified developmental pediatrician with expertise in dealing with developmental and behavioral problems of children and teens. Dr. Tierney is the Medical Director of Meliora Health, a leading virtual mental health company offering assessment and intervention for children and young adults with autism, ADHD and mental health conditions. She has more than 20 years of experience in the field of developmental medicine and is an active advocate for children with special healthcare needs and autism spectrum disorder.



**Sarah Trautman** is the CEO & Co-Founder of defy community. defy community is focused on preventing and reducing Behavior Analyst burnout ([www.defy.community](http://www.defy.community)). Sarah has been a Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2004 (she even took the exam using real paper and a pencil). Sarah founded and was President of STE Consultants from 2004-2019. During that time STE Consultants worked to provide quality ABA services to individuals with ASD and developmental disabilities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento and Washington state. Sarah is the past-President of the California Association for Behavior Analysis. Sarah loves her family, coffee and hip-hop.



**Keith Wargo** joined Autism Speaks as president and CEO in October 2021. In this role, Keith is responsible for the overall leadership, administration and management of the organization. This includes leading the strategic vision for the future and ensuring the organization is fulfilling its mission while measuring impact and results. Keith brings a unique and diverse background to Autism Speaks with nearly 30 years of business building experience at leading global financial institutions including Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, BMO Capital Markets and Mizuho Securities. Over the course of his long and successful tenure, he developed a proven track record of building effective teams, partnering with an array of stakeholders to tackle complex issues and helping to grow and scale multifaceted businesses across multiple industry sectors.

# MODERATORS, SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Oliver Wendt, PhD**, is Director of the Potsdam Augmentative and Alternative Communication Research Lab, Associate Professor and Chair in Cognitive and Emotional Disabilities at the University of Potsdam, Germany. He is also a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Families at Purdue University, USA, and a Research Associate at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.



**Benjamin Wessels** earned a master's degree in the administration and management of social services from the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration. Benjamin's past clinical experience includes providing group social work sessions to youth at a community center in Chicago and to adolescents with disabilities, as well as providing direct ABA therapy. While attending DePaul University, Benjamin worked under the instruction of Dr. Karen Budd, whose research examines the effectiveness of Parent Child Interaction Therapy. Additionally, Benjamin's past experience includes grant writing and program development for youth programs as well as program evaluation and quality improvement. While at the University of Chicago, he also consulted for the Urban Education Institute's 5Essentials program, which measures school success and outlines specific areas for improvement.



**Jia Jia Ye** is Co-Founder and CEO of Springtide Child Development.

For complete bios and speaker information, please visit:

[autisminvestorsummit.com](https://autisminvestorsummit.com)

## Scioto Biosciences

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- 01** First-in-class treatment for autism-related disability targeting the gut-brain axis
- 02** Completed Phase 1b Clinical Trial in April 2022 showing safety and tolerability and therapeutic improvements in adaptive behavior and core symptoms in individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- 03** Unique Activated Bacterial Therapeutic (ABT™) platform technology currently in IND-enabling studies for multiple CNS and gut disorders
- 04** **Moving forward for** Phase 2 trial in ASD and clinical development for other indications in later 2023





# More than just an ABA Practice Management and EMR solution

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**Chris Sullens**  
CEO, CentralReach  
[linkedin.com/in/chrissullens](https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrissullens)



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CentralReach, the leader in Autism and IDD Care software and services.

[centralreach.com](https://centralreach.com)





## Everything You Need to Know About Accelerated Delegated Credentialing

Our expert team at ADC has 15+ years of experience in contracting and credentialing. Our strong connections with payors will ensure the timely processing. ADC reduces credentialing delays and improves reimbursement timelines.

**Why Delegated Credentialing:** Delays in credentialing can cost up to \$10-\$12k per month, per BCBA, in reimbursements. Our goal is to reduce unnecessary administrative and financial burden on ABA organizations so that your team can focus on improving access, and providing quality care, to your patients. Our pricing model is competitive and cost-effective, which saves you money.

**How Will This Benefit Your ABA Business?** Credentialing with payors takes 90-180 days, and every payor has slightly different requirements. This is why attention to detail is critical, especially when it comes to ongoing compliance.

**What We Do:** With ADC, you'll have experts in your corner who will take your organization through the entire credentialing process from start to finish. Our credentialing services are designed to accommodate every organization from sole proprietors to large corporations. We offer services that are customizable to fit your unique business needs and help you reach your goals.


**Why We Do It:** Individuals with autism can not receive services until the provider is credentialed with their specific payor. ADC directly aligns with our mission to continue to create access to quality care for all persons with autism.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW ACCELERATED DELEGATED CREDENTIALING CAN HELP YOU!**  
Schedule an appointment to discuss your specific needs: [info@acceleratedcredentialing.co](mailto:info@acceleratedcredentialing.co)




# Advising You So You Can Help Others

## Autism Services



a portfolio company of



**Arsenal**  
Capital Partners

acquired

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
*Multi-State Autism Services Provider*

Advisor to Hopebridge

## Select Transactions

### Autism Services



has been acquired by



Advisor to AST

### Telehealth

**Apostrophe**

has been acquired by

**hims & hers**  
(NYSE: HIMS)

Advisor to Apostrophe

### Primary Care



has received a growth equity investment from



Advisor to AllCare

### Healthcare Staffing



has been acquired by



(NYSE: AMN)

Advisor to Connetics

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## Mergers & Acquisitions | Capital Advisory

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# The leader in Autism Services Mergers & Acquisitions

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Featured Speaker Dexter Braff

## State of the Autism Services M&A Market:

The Deals, The Data, and  
Implications for Buyers & Sellers



The Braff Group is the leading mergers and acquisitions advisor covering ASD, with a deal team focused exclusively on behavioral health. The firm provides an array of sell-side only transaction advisory services including representation, debt and equity recapitalization, strategic planning, and valuation. Founded in 1998, The Braff Group has completed more than 370 sell-side only transactions. According to Refinitiv, The Braff Group has repeatedly been ranked among the top 5 health care mergers & acquisitions advisory firms.

## Our Industry Experts



**Ted Jordan**  
Managing Director



**Nancy Weisling**  
Managing Director



**Steve Garbon**  
Managing Director



**Deirdre Stewart**  
Director of Research