2026 Autism Symposium Program Guide

A day of learning, connection, and community.

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2026

Location: Capital Hotel

This guide includes the event schedule, accessibility supports, presenter biographies, sponsors, and practical details for the day.

Presented by

Mindful Solutions | Kim French and Associates | ASNL

Growing Potential, Building Futures

Accessibility and sensory support

We want participants to be able to take part in the way that works best for them. These supports are available throughout the day.

Throughout the day

Support	What to expect
Quiet / Sensory Room	Board Room - calm, low-stimulation space; come and go as needed. Bright Haven provides on-site support.
Talking & Mingling	Salon C - a designated space for participants who want to connect, chat and explore the booths.
Communication Access	AAC, written communication, and other preferred communication methods are welcome.
Sensory Environment	Moderate background noise is expected; the Quiet / Sensory Room remains available.
Flexible Participation	Flexible seating, stepping out and returning, and written questions are welcome.
Name Badges	Optional communication-preference indicators are available at registration.
Accessible Washrooms	Accessible washrooms are available on the main floor.

Bright Haven
PLAY. EXPLORE. BELONG

Sensory Room support provided by Bright Haven

Use the supports that work for you. You are welcome to change seats, step out, communicate in different ways, or take quiet time throughout the day.

Need an accommodation or have an accessibility question?

Please contact the organizing team prior to the event.

Program schedule morning

Time	Program	Presenter or details
8:30 AM to 9:00 AM	Registration & Welcome	Arrive, pick up your name badge and program, get settled, and enjoy light refreshments.
9:00 AM to 9:10 AM	Welcome & Housekeeping	Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C) and Kaitlyn Jarvis, B.Sc (Hons)
9:10 AM to 9:15 AM	Land Acknowledgment	Opening acknowledgement, First Light.
9:15 AM to 9:25 AM	Greetings from ASNL	Leah Farrell, M.A.
9:25 AM to 9:30 AM	Transition	A short transition before the first session.
9:30 AM to 10:30 AM	Session 1: Workplace Accommodations & CCRW	Stephanie Kennedy, C.C.C. and Stephanie Evans, BSW, RSW
10:30 AM to 11:00 AM	Break & Movement Time	Stretch, move around, connect in Salon C, or recharge in the Quiet Room.
11:00 AM to 11:45 AM	Session 2: Post-Secondary Accommodations	Ted Power, M.Ed. (CNA) - 45 minutes
11:45 AM to 1:15 PM	Lunch Break	A 90-minute lunch break. Participants are on their own for lunch. The Quiet Room remains open.

Lunch note: The 90-minute break is intentionally longer so participants have time to leave for lunch, recharge, or use the Quiet Room.

Program schedule afternoon

Time	Program	Presenter or details
1:15 PM to 2:00 PM	Session 3: Co-Regulation	Lori Penny, R.S-LP
2:00 PM to 2:05 PM	Transition	A brief reset between sessions.
2:05 PM to 2:50 PM	Session 4: Neuro-Affirming Care	Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C) and Katelyn Mayo, R.S-LP
2:50 PM to 3:20 PM	Cookie Break	A planned break for refreshments, movement, connection, or quiet time.
3:20 PM to 3:40 PM	Entertainment	Neurodynamic Theateratics
3:40 PM to 4:15 PM	Panel Discussion	Panelists: Erin Walters, Rebecca Furlong, Leah McDonald and Isabella Mullins. A moderated panel bringing together voices from the day. Audience questions may be submitted in writing.
4:15 PM to 4:30 PM	Recognition Ceremony	A brief moment to recognize individuals and organizations helping make a difference.
4:30 PM to 4:45 PM	Closing & Prize Draw	Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C) and Kaitlyn Jarvis, B.Sc (Hons)

Schedule note: Times, presenters, and activities are subject to change.

Thank you for being part of the 2026 Autism Symposium.

Growing Potential, Building Futures

Event partners

Presented by

Mindful Solutions

Kim French and Associates

Autism Society Newfoundland and Labrador

Sensory room support

Bright Haven

Audio and visual support

Eastern Audio Limited

Thank you for supporting our audio/visual needs with a nonprofit discount.

Sponsors

Platinum sponsors

Executive Coffee



CIBC Private Wealth Wood Gundy



Gold sponsors

Kim French and Associates



Mindful Matters



Silver sponsors

NLCU



Goldenrod Private Practice



Event information and presenters

A quick reference for the people, supports, and practical details that make up the day.

Presenters and contributors at a glance

Presenter or contributor	Role or session
Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C)	Welcome & housekeeping; closing & prize draw
Leah Farrell, M.A. (ASNL)	Greetings from ASNL
Stephanie Kennedy, C.C.C. and Stephanie Evans, BSW, RSW	Session 1: Workplace Accommodations & CCRW
Ted Power, M.Ed. (CNA)	Session 2: Post-Secondary Accommodations (45 min)
Lori Penny, R.S-LP	Session 3: Co-Regulation
Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C) and Katelyn Mayo, R.S-LP	Session 4: Neuro-Affirming Care
Leah McDonald and troupe	Entertainment - scene from a play
Kaitlyn Jarvis	Welcome & housekeeping; closing & prize draw
Lisa Pinhorn	Presenter introductions and panel discussion moderator
Erin Walters (she/her)	Panel discussion
Rebecca	Panel discussion
Isabella Mullins	Panel discussion
Leah McDonald	Panel discussion

Presenter biographies

Meet the presenters and contributors sharing their experience throughout the day.

Stephanie Evans, BSW, RSW



Accessibility & Inclusion Training Specialist, CCRW

Social Worker | Accessibility Educator

Stephanie is an Accessibility & Inclusion Training Specialist with CCRW. She works with people leaders, HR teams, managers, and staff on disability inclusion, accessible communication, hiring, and workplace accommodations. Her workshops focus on practical, lived-experience-informed strategies.

Stephanie Kennedy, C.C.C.



Canadian Certified Counsellor (C.C.C.); ADHD & Executive Function Coach, Navigating Neurodiversity

Stephanie is a Canadian Certified Counsellor (C.C.C.), ADHD and Executive Function Coach, and founder of Navigating Neurodiversity. With more than 15 years of HR experience, she speaks on inclusive hiring, job design, workplace accommodations, and neurodivergent strengths. She holds a Master's in Employment Relations.

Presenter biographies continued

Ted Power, M.Ed.



Accessibility Services Coordinator & Guidance Counsellor, CNA

Ted is an Accessibility Services Coordinator and Guidance Counsellor at CNA's Prince Philip Drive campus. He holds an M.Ed. in Counselling Psychology from Memorial University and brings more than 17 years of guidance counselling experience focused on mental health, accessibility, and student success.

Lori Penny, R.S-LP



Registered Speech-Language Pathologist

Lori is a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist with 30 years of experience and a specialized interest in autism. Her background includes school-based autism support and provincial program and policy work. She has been part of Mindful Matters' autism assessment team since 2019.

Presenter biographies continued

Kim French, M.A., R.S-LP(C)



Registered Speech-Language Pathologist

Kim is a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist, Autism Consultant, and owner of Kim French & Associates. Her relationship-first, neurodiversity-affirming practice is informed by training in Gestalt Language Processing, AAC, sensory supports, and autism assessment.

Katelyn Mayo, R.S-LP



Registered Speech-Language Pathologist

Katelyn is a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist with an honours degree in Linguistics from Memorial University and a master's in Speech-Language Pathology from Western University. Her work emphasizes all forms of communication, safe environments, client confidence, and collaboration.

Presenter biographies continued

Kaitlyn Jarvis, B.Sc (Hons)



Mindful Solutions Committee Member

Kaitlyn Jarvis holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree and is currently a medical student at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Above all, Kaitlyn is a proud big sister to two younger siblings, including an autistic brother. This personal connection has helped shape her passion for autism awareness, advocacy, and creating inclusive communities.

Kaitlyn is also a proud member of the Mindful Solutions Committee, where she is dedicated to promoting education, awareness, and access to resources for neurodivergent individuals and their families.

She is incredibly proud to help present the 2026 Autism Symposium and looks forward to bringing together individuals, families, professionals, and advocates to learn, connect, and celebrate neurodiversity.

Leah Farrell, M.A.



Chief Executive Officer, Autism Society Newfoundland & Labrador

Leah is CEO of Autism Society Newfoundland & Labrador. She holds an M.A. in Social Anthropology from Memorial University and has experience in advocacy, community services, health and wellness, and business. She previously served as ASNL's Director of Advocacy and Outreach and is committed to centring Autistic voices.

Lisa Pinhorn



Co-founder and operator, Empowered Parents

Lisa Pinhorn is the co-founder and operator of Empowered Parents, a holistic family intervention service designed to cultivate trauma-informed, calm, connected and compassionate environments for neurodiverse children.

Lisa has over 25 years of experience in non-profit community work. She is a public speaker, writer and advocate for children and their families within schools. She is passionate about authentic inclusion practices.

Lisa holds a Bachelor of Child Studies specializing in Developmental Disabilities from Mount Saint Vincent University and a Master of Education from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, specializing in Adult Education.

She is also a member of The Academy of Naturopaths and Naturotherapists (ANN). Lisa is Level 1 and 2 certified in Shanker Certified Self-Reg™ and is also a Self-Reg® Learning Facilitator.

Panelist biographies

Erin Walters (she/her)



Discussion panelist

Erin Walters (she/her) is an early-diagnosed autistic woman who enjoys sharing her experiences, and she has written two self-published novels and been published in an academic journal.

In her spare time, she enjoys watching Jeopardy!, NASCAR races, and 2000s family sitcoms, collecting diamond painting kits, making digital abstract and nostalgia-themed pictures, and competing in trivia.

Rebecca



Discussion panelist

Rebecca has received Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Special Education, and Master of Education degrees from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Having worked with Autistic individuals for well over twenty years in various capacities, she now runs the Autism Community of Newfoundland and Labrador group on Facebook.

A proud Autistic activist for both Autistic individuals and their families, Rebecca is extremely excited to be answering questions on the discussion panel for this year's Autism symposium. She strongly believes that by getting everyone on the same page and working together, we can make a difference.

Panelist biographies continued

Isabella Mullins

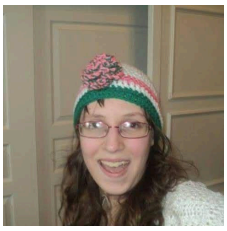


Discussion panelist

Isabella Mullins was formally diagnosed with autism as an adult after navigating the public health systems with the help of her mother. She is an artist, primarily focusing on crochet, and uses abstract colors to represent her inner world.

Isabella is heavily involved in the autistic community and uses her personal advocacy experience to assist others in similar positions. She believes autistic joy is one of the most beautiful things in life.

Leah McDonald



Writer, Performer & Community Advocate

Leah McDonald is 28 years old and loves all forms of performance art! She is a gold medal rhythmic gymnast with Special Olympics CBS, a voice and piano student of Peter Halley and has been acting since she was a kid (favourite recent credits include Katherine in "Shakespeare Shorts" (SBTS 2020), various roles in "A Christmas Carol: Live Radio Drama" (Theatre CBS 2022), Alice in "Understanding Wonderland" (Theatre CBS 2025, 2026 and 2027) and chorus in "Seussical" (Etcetera Productions 2026). Lately, she has added circus performer (Autism Society Physical Art Troupe) and foley artist ("Miracle On 34th Street: Live Radio Drama", Theatre CBS 2023) to her extensive résumé!

When she is not rehearsing for something, she loves baking, watching live theatre, drawing and being a children's ministry volunteer.

Know before you go

Lunch: 90 minutes. Participants are on their own for lunch; the Quiet / Sensory Room remains available.

Venue: Capital Hotel. Check in at registration on arrival for event-room directions and day-of updates.

Accessibility: Bright Haven supports the Quiet / Sensory Room in the Board Room. Salon C is the talking and mingling space. AAC, written communication, flexible seating, and stepping out/returning are welcome.

Photography & Recording: If photography or recording takes place, details and any opt-out process will be shared at registration.

Event Updates & Social Media: Follow Mindful Solutions, Kim French and Associates, and ASNL. Add final handles or an event hashtag before publication.

Mindful Matters website

Scan the QR code to visit the Mindful Matters website, or use the accessible text link below.



www.mindfulmattersnl.com

Thank you and acknowledgements

Thank you to our presenters, sponsors, community partners, volunteers, exhibitors, performers, and attendees. Special thanks to Executive Coffee and CIBC Private Wealth Wood Gundy for their Platinum Sponsorship; Kim French & Associates and Mindful Matters for their Gold Sponsorship; NLCU and Goldenrod Private Practice for their Silver Sponsorship; Bright Haven for supporting the Quiet / Sensory Room throughout the day; and Eastern Audio Limited for supporting our audio/visual needs with a nonprofit discount.

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