



AGENDA

Date: September 27, 2025

Location: Capital Hotel, St. John's

Thriving Together...Community, Supports, and Stories Autism Symposium

Mindful Solutions in partnership with Kim French & Associates and ASNL

8:30am-9:00am	Registration
9:00am-9:25am	Welcome and House Keeping Greetings from Leah Farrell on behalf of the Autism Society NL
9:30am-10:30am	Option 1: Demystifying Autistic Language Development: What you need to know about Gestalt Language Processing Presenters: Kim French & Associates <i>Kim French & Associates is a team of registered Speech-Language Pathologists committed to working with people of all neurotypes who present with communication challenges. We believe it is important to build trusting and collaborative relationships with our clients and their families in order to achieve success in and out of therapy. All of our therapists have clinical experience and extensive training in the areas of autism, gestalt language development, sensory supports, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).</i> <i>Have past therapies not been the right fit? Seeking something new that optimizes the way your child learns? Got questions about Gestalt Language Processing and the evidence supporting it? In this presentation, you will learn the stages of Gestalt Language Development and quick tips to get started while supporting your child's sensory needs, meeting them where they are in their development, and working with their brain!!!</i> Option 2: Independent Living for Autistic Adults Presenters: Florence Strang and Paulette Moore <i>Florence and Paulette are both mothers of autistic young adults. In this presentation they will talk about community supports available through NL Health and how they are helping their young adults with differing levels of needs, transition to independent living.</i>
10:30am-11:00am	BREAK TIME A short break to rest and enjoy some refreshments
11:00am-11:45am	Option 1: Provincial Autism Services through NL Health Presenters: Ashley Butt and Susanne O'Neill <i>Ashley Butt, BCBA, is a Clinical Lead in the Direct Home and Autism Services Program at Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services. With over 15 years of experience in early intervention, she brings a compassionate, child-centered</i>

approach to autism care. As a certified JASPER trainer, Ashley emphasizes meeting children where they are and supporting their growth through respectful, assent-based practices.

Susanne O'Neill, BAA CYS, is a Child Management Specialist with the Direct Home and Autism Services Program and NL Health Services, with over 24 years of experience working in child development. Susanne supports intake with autistic children referred to the DHSP in St. John's area, working with families and children to help families determine best service delivery model.

Option 2: Avalon Employment

Presenter: Megan Marshall and Ashley Harris

Avalon Employment Inc provides employment supports and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities and autism. Megan and Ashley will share an overview of services, including news of a brand employment program called Autism@Work.

**11:45am-
1:15pm**

LUNCH On your own

**1:15pm-
2:15pm**

Option 1: ASNL Programs and Supports

Presenter: Rachel Hogan

Option 2:

Special Olympics - Brent Foote | 20 minutes

Easter Seals - Megan Wall | 20 minutes

Bright Haven - Dawn White and Cindy Adams | 20 minutes

**2:15pm-
3:15pm**

Option 1: Estate Planning | 30 minutes

Presenter: Nicole Green-Mitchell of McInnes Cooper Law Firm

Nicole is an estates lawyer based in St. John's. In this session, she will explore how estate planning can serve as a powerful tool to support and empower autistic individuals and their families. She will walk through the legal instruments available in Newfoundland and Labrador, including wills, powers of attorney, and health care directives. She will also share inclusive strategies for integrating beneficiaries with disabilities into estate plans, with a focus on preserving autonomy and safeguarding future access to government benefits. Whether you're an autistic person planning for your own future, or if you are seeking to create an estate plan that thoughtfully considers the needs of your loved ones, this session will provide practical guidance for building a plan that preserves autonomy and offers peace of mind for the years ahead.

Disability Tax Credit/Disability Savings (RDSP) | 30 minutes

Presenter: Crystal Northcott, Nurse Practitioner

In this presentation, you will discover what the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) is, who may be eligible, and how the application process works. It will also provide valuable information on disability benefits.

Option 2: Communication is More Than Requesting: How AAC Devices Support Connection

Presenters: Kim French & Associates

What is AAC? Assistive and Alternative Communication gives autistic individuals the opportunity to express how they feel, share what they think, ask questions, and get what they need regardless of verbal capacity. And it's never too late! In this presentation, you will learn how to integrate Gestalt Language Processing with AAC and model without expectation, facilitating engagement and motivating them to pick up systems long cast aside. By presuming the competence of autistic people, we support communication across their lifetime.

**3:20pm-
4:15pm**

Panel Discussion: Autistic adults speak of their experiences; e.g., what has been helpful and what could improve to help them meet life goals, etc..

Moderator: Lisa Pinhorn

We will be welcoming four panelists:

Bree Rossiter | Adam Davit | Stephanie Kennedy | Katelyn Mayo
R.S-LP

**4:15pm-
4:30pm**

Music by Lauda

**4:30pm-
4:45pm**

Closing remarks and prize draw

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Thank You