

# VT Autism Clinic & Center for Autism Research Biennial Spring Conference: Celebrating 10 Years of VTCAR: Access and Neurodiversity



CENTER FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

**Angela Scarpa, Ph.D.**  
**Director , VT Autism Clinic & Center for Autism Research**  
**[ascarpa@vt.edu](mailto:ascarpa@vt.edu)**

(540) 231-8747    [VTautismcenter@vt.edu](mailto:VTautismcenter@vt.edu)

# Overview of our clinic and research

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the U.S.
- Our mission: *To improve lives of people on the autism spectrum and families through service, education, and research.*
- VTAC (Psychology Department) opened in 2005 to train clinical science graduate students in evidence-based autism services.
- VTCAR (College of Science Center) opened in 2012 to add multidisciplinary research.
- The Mobile autism clinic launched in 2018 to provide mobile and telehealth services to rural underserved locales.



# Core Research Areas

Promoting Inclusion and SAFE Spaces for Autism



Registry and Weekly Newsletter

Mobile app for Behavioral Parent Training



Preventing Attrition in Rural Special Education Teachers

**Clinical/  
Translational**

Improving Emotion Regulation in Autistic Preschoolers

Using MRI to Diagnose and Subtype ASD

**Education**

**Technology**

Machine Learning for Neurodiverse Workplaces



**Biomedical  
& Imaging**



Understanding Neurodevelopment and Nervous System Maturation

Using Technology/Telehealth For Evidence-based Practices

# Housekeeping

- Restrooms
- Visit exhibitors during breaks
- Refreshments throughout the day
- Events during lunch
- If you need assistance
- Raffle tickets for give-aways!
- SAFE space inside the MAC (parked out front)

## Overview and Speakers

### **OPENING KEYNOTE**

Dr. Julie Lounds Taylor: *Transitions to adulthood for autistic youth: Improving outcomes by supporting families*

### **BIOMEDICAL TALKS**

Dr. Michelle Patriquin: *A Decade of Uncovering Physiological Responses in ASD – What it Tells Us & Where to Go from Here*

Dr. Marika Coffman: *Relationships between Quantitative Autism-Related Digital Phenotypes and Autism Clinical Profiles in Young Autistic Children*

### **TECHNOLOGY TALKS**

David Jones and Shiva Ghasemi: *Privacy, Safety, and Security in Extended Reality - User Experience Challenges for Neurodiverse Users*

Dr. Luke Achenie: *Machine Learning in Autism - State of the Art Approaches*

### **EDUCATION TALKS**

Dr. Amy Azano: *Why Context Matters: Autism in Rural Schools and Communities*

Megan Fok: *A Qualitative Examination of the Impact of COVID-19 on Transition Services for Autistic Youth*

### **SAFE AWARD PRESENTATION**

#### **PARENT PANEL**

#### **CLINICAL TALK**

Jennifer Bertollo: *On the Road or on the Web: Novel Methods of Autism Assessment in Rural Appalachia*

#### **FINANCIAL PLANNING WORKSHOP**

Jerry Hulick, Special Care Planner

#### **SELF ADVOCATE KEYNOTE**

Daniel Durany: *My Journey with Aspergers from Nonverbal to Raising a Family*

#### **CLOSING**

Dr. Angela Scarpa

## Virginia Tech Center for Autism Research Biennial Spring 2023 Conference

*Celebrating 10 Years of VTCAR:  
Access and Neurodiversity*

Friday, April 21 at the Inn at Virginia Tech  
8:30am – 4:30pm

Inviting researchers, self-advocates, parents/  
caregivers, providers and anyone interested.

Cost is \$10.  
Pre-registration required.  
Register at  
[www.vtcar.science.vt.edu](http://www.vtcar.science.vt.edu)  
or with the QR code.



Scholarships available for autistic individuals,  
students, or others as needed.  
Email [vtautismcenter@vt.edu](mailto:vtautismcenter@vt.edu) for more information.  
Refreshments and lunch provided.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire  
accommodations, email [vtautismcenter@vt.edu](mailto:vtautismcenter@vt.edu) at  
least 10 business days prior to the event.



Research Keynote Dr.  
Julie Lounds Taylor,  
Vanderbilt University



Self-Advocate Keynote  
Daniel Durany, Dallas-  
Fort Worth, Texas

*Merging science with  
service, through  
interventions, education  
and research.*

# *SAFE Champion Award*

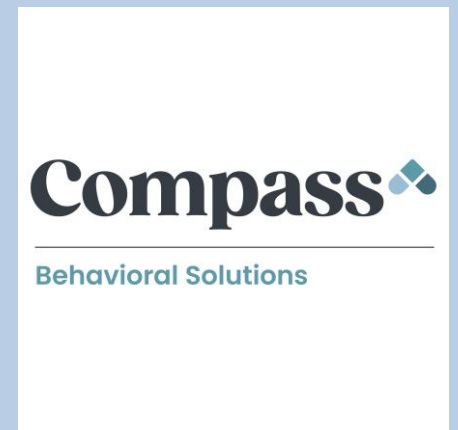
## Supporting Autism Friendly Environments



**Tori Thurston, Assistant Director of Marketing & Fan Experience and the VT Women's Basketball Team**



# Exhibitors



# Exhibitors





# Thank you to our sponsors:



Their mission is to help educate families and caregivers of people with special needs about the importance of creating a life care plan to help provide a secure financial future. The team offers Life Insurance, Disability, Insurance, Trust Services and additional resources.

<https://www.massmutual.com/specialcare>

# Research Keynote Speaker

## Dr. Julie Lounds Taylor

*Transitions to adulthood for autistic youth: Improving outcomes by supporting families*



Dr. Taylor is Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and Associate Director of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center, Data Sciences Core at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

The goal of her research program is to understand how to promote positive outcomes in adulthood for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. Much of her current work focuses on the transition to adulthood for youth on the autism spectrum.

# Self-Advocate Keynote Speaker

## Daniel Durany

*My Journey with Aspergers from Nonverbal to Raising a Family*

Daniel will share his journey with Asperger's and how he went from nonverbal to raising a family. He brings an enthusiastic perspective reflecting on his time in school, the world of a working adult, and dating/relationships.

He will discuss his childhood trails/tribulations, transitioning experiences into adulthood, failures/successes of relationships and approaches to help others.





# In Closing: Happy anniversary to VTCAR!

We believe that every person and family affected by autism should have access to the services they need, regardless of age, income, or residence.

We aim to *merge science with service* to make this a reality.

THANK YOU for your support! If you believe in what we do and want to support our work, visit this QR code.



**The Virginia Tech Autism Clinic & Center for Autism Research newsletter** aims to provide weekly communication about autism and neurodivergent related events, research, news, groups, workshops, educational opportunities and more.

If you're interested in joining, email [vtautimscenter@vt.edu](mailto:vtautimscenter@vt.edu) and ask us to add you to the listserv!