

Eighth Annual Richard L. Simpson Conference on Autism

October 15 & 16, 2026

12600 Quivira Road, Overland Park, KS 66213

Sponsors [Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders \(MSLBD\)](#),
[The Kansas Technical Assistance System Network \(TASN\)](#),
[Project ACCESS-Missouri State](#)

Location 12600 Quivira Road, Overland Park, KS 66213 (On the campus of KU Edwards)

Theme Trauma Informed Practices for Students & Youth with Autism

REGISTRATION ITEMS	REGISTRATION RATES	TIMELINE
Early Bird Registration	\$250	Through Fri, Sept 25, 2026
Regular Registration Rate	\$325	Fri, Sept 26 - Thur, Oct 8, 2026
Week of the Event	*Registration Unavailable	Registration Ends Oct 8, 2026
BCBA CEUs Flat Rate, up to 10 CEUs Possible	\$70	Pre-pay or on-site

***Due to guarantees for meals, we are not able to accommodate walk-in registrations or make changes to daily attendance after September 26.**

We are not able to offer a daily registration option.

Thursday & Friday - registration, free parking, morning coffee & tea, lunches, beverage ticket to social event, letter of attendance.

- **Thursday**, Full-Day Workshop (3 parts), Lunch & Keynote 1, Special Networking & Social Event
- **Friday**, Keynote 2, Choice of Three-Hour Workshop session, Box Lunch
- **Continuing Education Credits for BCBAs**, option for 10 BCBA CEUs, flat rate \$70, additional fee applies.

Conference At-A-Glance

Thursday, October 15	FULL-DAY WORKSHOP (Three Parts), 5 BCBA CEUs available Implementing a Universal Protocol to Reduce Crisis and Increase Joy for Students with Unsafe Behavior <i>Claire Egan, PhD, BCBA & Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA</i>
7:30 - 3:45 p.m.	Conference Desk Open and Check-In Begins Coffee and Tea available
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	WELCOME FULL-DAY WORKSHOP: PART 1 (BCBA CEUs available) Implementing a Universal Protocol to Reduce Crisis and Increase Joy for Students with Unsafe Behavior <i>Claire Egan, PhD, BCBA & Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA</i> BCBA CEUs 5.5 Total ; Must attend and check-in/out of each part of this three part session. Option 1: 2.0 Ethics 2.0 Supervision 1.5 General Learning; Option 2: 2.0 Ethics 3.5 General Learning

10:00 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.	Break
10:20 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Full-Day Workshop: Part 2 (BCBA CEUs available) Implementing a Universal Protocol to Reduce Crisis and Increase Joy for Students with Unsafe Behavior <i>Claire Egan, PhD, BCBA & Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA</i> BCBA CEUs 5.5 Total; Must attend and check-in/out of each part of this three part session. Option 1: 2.0 Ethics 2.0 Supervision 1.5 General Learning; Option 2: 2.0 Ethics 3.5 General Learning
12:00 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch On-site
12:45 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Keynote 1: Mr. Armando Bernal, BCBA, LBA
2:00 - 3:45 p.m.	FULL-DAY WORKSHOP: PART 3 (BCBA CEUs available) Implementing a Universal Protocol to Reduce Crisis and Increase Joy for Students with Unsafe Behavior <i>Claire Egan, PhD, BCBA & Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA</i> BCBA CEUs 5.5 Total; Must attend and check-in/out of each part of this three part session. Option 1: 2.0 Ethics 2.0 Supervision 1.5 General Learning; Option 2: 2.0 Ethics 3.5 General Learning
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Social and Networking Event (Hotel)
Friday, October 16	
7:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.	Conference Desk Open; Check-In; Coffee & Tea
8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Awards Presentation & Keynote 2: Ms. Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Workshop (choose one session to attend)
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Boxed Lunch Break
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Workshops continue
1:30 p.m.	Conference Adjourns & Process BCBA CEUs; Turn in Attendance Forms

Professional Development

BCBA Type 2 CEUs will be available for this event. An extra fee of \$70 for those seeking up to 10 BCBA CEUs. General Learning, Ethics and Supervision CEs included.

A “**Letter of Attendance**” available for those who track sessions through the event at no additional cost, a tracking form will be provided.

Online Event Site

Register, Speaker Bios, Program Information: [Mobile Version](#) | [Desktop Version](#)

Hotel

Hilton Garden Inn Olathe | 12080 South Strang Line Road | Olathe, Kansas 66062

(913) 815-2345 | [Book your group rate](#) | \$164.00 per night plus taxes and fees

Breakfast available onsite for an extra fee

Rates are effective for stays between October 13 -17, 2026

Cut off Date is September 18, 2026, by 5:00 p.m., SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

Parking KU Edwards Campus

Free parking, you will be provided with instructions for parking both days of the event with your conference registration.

Awards Nominations, Due August 20

The Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders annually recognizes an individual who has exhibited outstanding achievement and excellence in classroom service to students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Nominations are accepted through August 20, 2026. [Review nomination material.](#)

Thursday, October 15, 2026

FULL DAY WORKSHOP | THREE PARTS | BEST Conference Center

Part 1: 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. | Part 2: 10:20 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | Part 3: 2:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Implementing a Universal Protocol to Reduce Crisis and Increase Joy for Students with Unsafe Behavior

Universal Protocols are a set of strategies designed to reduce dangerous behavior for students in crisis. The goals are to teach educators and paraprofessionals how to (a) increase joy among students, (b) prevent escalation to severe problem behavior, (c) recognize and respond to early and idiosyncratic communication, (d) teach students that staff are not adversarial, and (e) regain job satisfaction. The Universal Protocols aim to eliminate staff and student injury and to minimize the need for any physical management tactics. They are also designed with the assumption that all people receiving specialized services may have experienced multiple adverse events and/or repeated stressful situations, which must be considered if staff are to develop trusting and productive relationships with them. Many organizations also appreciate the values that underlie Universal protocols, namely safety, televisability, dignity, and rapport-building, and are interested in establishing those values as the foundation from which all their student support services are provided. Universal Protocols have been used in settings including public and specialized schools, residential programs, clinics, homes, and hospitals, with individuals aged preschool through adult, with a range of diagnoses. During the interactive workshop, participants will learn about the elements that make up the Universal Protocols through description, rationale, video models, examples, and role play. Attendees will also see case examples of universal protocol implementation in school settings. (Intermediate, Advance, BCBA CEUs)

BCBA CEUs 5.5 Total; Must attend and check-in/out of each part of this three part session.

Option 1: 2.0 Ethics | 2.0 Supervision | 1.5 General Learning; **Option 2:** 2.0 Ethics | 3.5 General Learning

Presenters: Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA & Claire Egan, PhD, BCBA

KEYNOTE SESSION 1 & LUNCH | 12:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. | BEST Conference Center

The Difference One Teacher Can Make: Support, Understanding, and Lasting Impact

What if one teacher's response could completely change the direction of a student's life? This presentation uses personal educational experiences to explore the powerful impact teachers have on student confidence, emotional safety, and long-term success. Attendees will gain insight into the types of support students often need but do not always receive, along with practical strategies for creating more compassionate and supportive classrooms. Through honest reflection and real-life examples, this session challenges educators to rethink the difference they can make every single day.

Armando Bernal, BCBA, LBA, Founder, Autism International Consulting, PLLC, Spring, TX

Friday, October 16, 2026

KEYNOTE SESSION 2 | 8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. | Regnier Auditorium

Real Solutions, Real Impact - Lessons from the Field: A Compassionate Approach for Addressing Behavior

This presentation will highlight practical, relationship-centered strategies for supporting individuals with complex behavioral needs. Through a practitioner lens and real-life stories and examples from families, educators, and individuals, the presenter will demonstrate how a compassionate approach leads to meaningful and sustainable outcomes. The session will emphasize the critical role of trust and rapport in preventing and responding to severe problem behavior across home, school, and community settings. Resources and practical procedures will be highlighted. This session is designed for professionals and families seeking realistic, actionable solutions that create immediate impact while strengthening long-term relationships and outcomes. (1.0 BCBA Ethics CEU)

Annette Wragge, MEd, BCBA, LBA, State Coordinator, Nebraska ASD Network

THREE-HOUR WORKSHOPS & LUNCH | 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Regnier Classrooms

(Choose one session to attend)

WS 1. Sexuality Training - Consent and Self-Determination (No and Choices) from 5 years old to 100, *Shana Kaplan* (3.5 BCBA CEUs available)

WS 2. Teacher Self-Care, *Nichole Hitchcock*

WS 3. AI and Learning: Student Perspectives and Practical Implications, *Shannon Locke & Paul LaCava*

WS 4. De-escalation: Supporting Your Students Through the Crisis Cycle, *Cannon Ousley*

WS5. Using Humor as an Engagement Strategy *Susan Schiffelbein* & **Build a Trauma Prevention Self-Care Toolbox** *Sonja de Boer*

WS 1. Consent, Sexual Health, and Self-Determination from 5 years old to 100

This session presents advanced behavior analytic content, with practical applications and practices for certified behavior analysts and teachers. Participants will engage with strategies supported by current research, national standards, evidence-based practices that ensure sound instruction is implemented when teaching skills related to social and sexual health. The presentation reviews sequencing of skills that are the foundation skills needed for learners navigating public and private contexts, giving and receiving consent, and understanding their bodies. Participants will leave with a specific toolkit of resources, lessons, learning materials, and data-assessment strategies that can be applied immediately. The integration of advanced behavior analytic practices can lead to measurable, productive, and socially relevant improvements in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their support systems. (Intermediate, 3.5 BCBA Learning CEUs)

Shana Kaplan, MEd, BCBA, LBA, Content Specialist, TASN ATBS, Spring Hill, KS

WS 2. Supporting the Supporters: Creating a Personalized Self-Care Plan

Educators face increasing demands that can contribute to stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout, impacting both personal well-being and professional effectiveness. This interactive session explores the importance of self-care as a proactive strategy for sustaining resilience and supporting positive outcomes for students and school communities. Participants will examine common sources of stress, reflect on their current wellness practices, and identify factors that influence their ability to maintain balance in demanding educational environments. Through guided activities and discussion, attendees will assess multiple dimensions of self-care and develop an individualized action plan tailored to their unique needs, values, and responsibilities. Participants will leave with practical, evidence-informed strategies, increased self-awareness, and a personalized roadmap for implementing sustainable self-care practices that promote long-term well-being and effectiveness in their professional roles.

Nichole Hitchcock, MEd, BCBA, LBA, Content Specialist, TASN-ATBS, Ottawa, KS

WS 3. AI and Learning: Student Perspectives and Practical Implications

Prior research shows that neurodiverse students often face barriers during their academic experiences including access for help-seeking and difficulty engaging instructional environments. Additional studies suggest that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots and virtual coaches show promise as scaffolds for students for whom traditional support channels are not effective. Focus on AI in education is quickly growing both in terms of benefits for the teaching and learning process and serious concerns about adopting AI into the curriculum. Thus, this session will focus on further exploring AI within the curriculum to benefit the entire student body through inclusive, flexible design while considering and adapting structures and policy based on the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

This session will explore research aimed at identifying student and educator perceptions, expectations, and ambitions for integrating AI into the learner experience. We will share outcomes from recent research garnering student voice and educator feedback on integration of AI to support student learning and difference/similarities between neurodivergent and neurotypical student experiences. Finally, we will discuss practical implications and recommendations for AI integration in education settings.

Shannon Locke, PhD, MS, CCC-SLP, Postdoctoral Fellow, College of Engineering, University of Missouri-Columbia, Speaker, Trainer, Advisor, Autism Outfitters, LLC, Belton, MO

Paul LaCava, PhD, Professor, Department of Special Education, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

WS 4. De-escalation: Supporting Your Students Through the Crisis Cycle

In this session, attendees will learn how they can support their students during moments of escalation, and how they can return their students to the Calm stage. Attendees will first receive quick, foundational information on the ABCs and function of behavior, followed by an in-depth walkthrough of the 7 stages of the

crisis cycle. Specific examples of what their students' behavior may be through each stage and how they should be navigating each step as the instructor will be provided. Additionally, strategies to repair the student-teacher relationship and antecedent-based strategies to prevent challenging behavior from occurring will be discussed. All strategies discussed will fall under one of the 28 evidence-based practices identified for working with students with autism. This content was developed in partnership with Project Access. More information on their trainings and resources can be found here: <https://projectaccess.missouristate.edu/> (Intermediate)

Cannon Ousley, MS, BCBA, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Summit Behavioral Services, Kansas City, MO

WS 5. This session will include two topics, each presented in a 75-minute block.

Using Humor as an Engagement Strategy: Balancing Connection, Learning, and Well-Being

Grounded in neuroscience, this session will explore when and how humor is most effective for engaging students in content, emphasizing how emotional safety and belonging directly affect learning outcomes. We will connect brain-based research to practical classroom application. By the end of the session, participants will have a clear brain-informed framework for leveraging humor as a tool for engagement, while recognizing when restraint is essential to maintain trust, inclusion, and overall well-being. (Foundational)

Susan Schiffelbein, MEd, State Trainer, Greenbush: Kansas MTSS & Alignment, Baldwin City, KS

You CAN Take Care of Yourself Too -- Build a Trauma Prevention Self-Care Toolbox

We all work in a field that requires all our attention and energy every day. It is difficult to shield our hearts and psyche from the difficult things we encounter with our students – their trauma. We need to be present with our students and their families, but we need to TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES if we plan to continue working in this field. We need our own proactive and preventative intervention strategies to counteract everyone else's trauma from becoming our trauma! We may also be dealing with our own past trauma. Thus, we need our own tools and reinforcers that sustain us, nurture us, give us strength, keep us healthy, and keep our hearts empathic but protected and our psyche engaged but safeguarded. During our brief time together, we will review and practice ways to build your own Trauma Prevention Self-Care Toolbox. (Foundational)

Sonja de Boer, PhD, BCBA-D, Behavior Analyst Consultant, Sheepscot Valley, ME

1:30 PM

Conference Adjourns