

Deep Dive Session F

Understanding the BASICS of co-occurring Down syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder



Charlotte Gray and Jeanne Doherty, both are parents of individuals who have co-occurring Down syndrome and autism spectrum disorder (DS-ASD)



Down syndrome and autism can be challenging disabilities separately, however when combined the challenges can be quite complex and often times are misunderstood by the family members and professionals in the individual's life. This workshop will take a look at what we know about DS-ASD, explore basic behavioral red flags from childhood through adulthood, learn more about the differences in thought processes and the strategies that can be used, discuss the importance of building a support network and care team through the lifespan, and gain a family's perspective on living with DS-ASD.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify basic criteria for diagnosing autism spectrum disorder
2. Identify behaviors/signs that may indicate co-occurring Autism Spectrum Disorders in children, teens and adults with Down syndrome
3. Have an understanding of the differences in thought processes and gain tools/ techniques on how to help with information processing disorder

About the Speaker:

Charlotte Gray has served as the Executive Director of the Down Syndrome-Autism Connection since 2015. In addition to managing the daily operations and fiscal reporting, Charlotte provides direct support to families across multiple channels. Charlotte presents workshops on DS-ASD both in-person and via webinars for audiences which include the NDSC, MDSC and DSAIA conferences. Charlotte also co-founded Morning Travelers, a play group for families who have a child with Down syndrome, which now has 3 other locations in Massachusetts. Charlotte worked for a child psychologist as a Floor-Time Therapy Consultant for children with ASD for 4 years providing home-based support and therapy for children with emotional and social developmental challenges, and currently works as a staff accountant for a retirement community. Charlotte has her Master's in Business Administration and lives in the Boston area with her husband Bill and their son Jacob, who is now 16 years old.

Jeanne Doherty serves as President of the Board for the Down Syndrome-Autism Connection since 2016 providing leadership with the Connection's direction and overseeing operations of the organization. Jeanne brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge about providing care to an individual with complex needs. She has supported families with loved ones with DS-ASD for over 10 years. Jeanne currently is the Family Support Specialist for the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress and serves as Board President for a regional provider of residential options for adults with I/DD. Jeanne lives in the Boston area with her husband and three daughters, including Jessica who is 23 years old and has DS-ASD.