



# REFLECTIONS

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2023-2024 ISSUE

**Warm Wishes & Happy New Year from ECHO Autism Communities!**



## ECHO AUTISM IN THE NEWS

ECHO Autism Communities is excited to share that the Profound Autism Alliance (PAA) is starting a new initiative, ECHO Autism: Intense Behavior. Funded by the Profound Autism Alliance, with support from the Autism Science Foundation, ECHO Autism: Intense Behavior aims to increase clinicians' ability to assess underlying causes of intense behaviors and deliver evidence-based treatments to stabilize them.

Dr. Kristin Sohl said, "ECHO Autism: Intense Behavior is the first project of its kind to specifically focus on clinician development, increasing knowledge and self-efficacy in delivering best-practice assessment, diagnosis, and treatment for people with intense behaviors."

Read more about this amazing initiative [HERE](#).

2024 ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES SYMPOSIUM

# APRIL 11, 2024

## REGISTRATION OPEN!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### ECHO AUTISM 2024 SYMPOSIUM

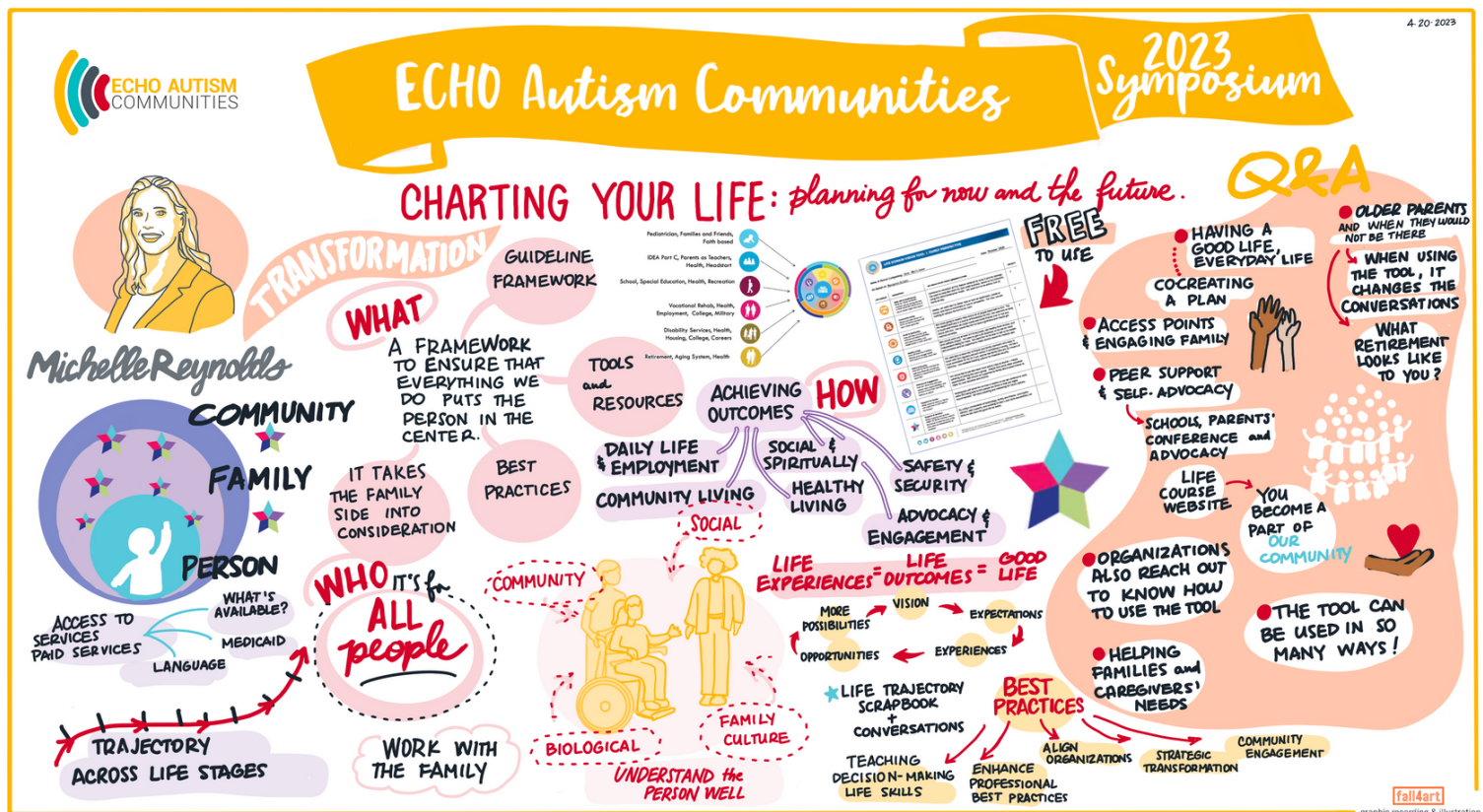
ECHO Autism Communities is excited to announce the 2024 Symposium date: April 11, 2024. Each month, we are highlighting presentations from our 2023 Symposium. This month, we are featuring graphic recordings and participant quotes from the presentation “Charting Your LifeCourse: Planning for Now and the Future” by Michelle Reynolds, PhD.

“Such an excellent framework for helping children and caregivers make life plans at a time when their futures seem so unsure. I love the way it incorporates all aspects of life and services (the star) into the plan.”

“I think this is an excellent model. I benefitted from learning more about the life domains and concepts of the supports.”

“We can all benefit from strategies/plans to help us manage various experiences or stages of life and the life course provides a framework to assist all individuals.”

“The idea of Dignity of Risk. Allowing and teaching someone about their own choices, even if they make some mistakes along the way.”







## **ECHO AUTISM: ADOS-2 TRAINING**

Last month, ECHO Autism Communities supported 17 professionals in learning the leading tool in diagnosing autism spectrum disorder across the lifespan. Access to professionals with clinical expertise to evaluation for autism spectrum disorder characteristics across the lifespan is essential for equitable autism best practices.

We thank the organizations and the dedicated professionals who joined us in learning the ADOS-2 and expanding capacity. We are thrilled to continue growing expertise across Missouri. We are committed to building local access to best practice autism evaluations and supports and services around the world.



## NEW ECHO: PROJECT EMPOWER

We are excited to share about a new ECHO launching in January 2024. Echo Autism Communities has partnered with the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), along with the Associate of Pediatric program Directors (APPD) to help develop and coordinate an ECHO program geared toward helping pediatric residency program educators bridge the gap in training pediatric resident physicians in the care of pediatric behavioral/mental health conditions.

The current state of mental health for children in the US has escalated to nearly 25% of pediatric primary care visits involving a concern for behavioral and mental health (BMH) issues, and suicide is now the leading cause of death in both children ages 10 – 14 and adolescents/young adults ages 15-24. Despite this mental health crisis, 65% of pediatricians surveyed indicated they lacked training in treating children and adolescents with BMH diagnoses and 40% lacked the confidence to even recognize BMH issues. Mental health training is not emphasized in pediatric resident training programs leading to this deficiency in resident knowledge and skills in BMH care.

The American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), along with the Association of Pediatric Program Directors (APPD) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), have deemed improving mental and behavioral health as one of the most pressing issues facing pediatric resident training programs to ensure that patients have access to providers who are competent in the diagnosis and treatment of the most common BMH disorders.

These organizations have sponsored project EMPOWER: **E**ducation in **M**ental health improves **P**atient **O**utcomes, **W**ell-being, and **E**mootional **R**esiliency. The primary aim of this project is the creation of an open-access, standardized curriculum to address the gap among training programs in BMH education. The EMPOWER curriculum will be piloted in 2024 with a small group of residency programs.

The EMPOWER ECHO offers enhanced support to program directors and faculty implementing the EMPOWER curriculum and other mental health resources for their residents. This important ECHO program will run the 2nd Tuesday of each month for 60 minutes through 2024.

The hub team consists of: Sue Poynter, MD Program Director, PICU physician Cincinnati Children's, Elizabeth Chawla, MD Associate PD General Pediatrician Georgetown, Rachel Ballard, MD Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist Lurie Children's, Kenya McNeal-Trice, MD Vice Chair of Education Pediatric Hospitalist UNC, Katherine Soe, MD TB/Psychiatrist Cincinnati Children's, Keith Ponitz, MD Program Director Pediatric Hospitalist Rainbow Babies, Stephanie Brennan, MD TB/Psychiatrist UNC.

The response has been impressive, and the target recruitment goal has been met. We look forward to a great year ultimately working toward improving the next generation of pediatrician's level of competency and comfort in managing BHI issues in their patients.