



Governors State  
UNIVERSITY



# 2024

## CHHS CONFERENCE

FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL AND  
VOCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR YOUNG  
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Featuring the Comedians with Disabilities Act



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024**  
**8AM TO 5PM**

COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

## ALL DAY

- 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Registration and Volunteer Check-in  
8:00 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. Self-Service Coffee and Tea | **Exhibit Hall**  
*Courtesy of The College of Health and Human Services*
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Complimentary Water and Snacks | **Exhibit Hall**  
*Courtesy of The Center for Independence*
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall

## MID-DAY

- 11:15 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Sensory Break Space Demo | **F1622**
- 11:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m. Grab-n-Go Lunch (included) | **Lakeside Lounge**

## PRESENTATION SESSION SCHEDULE

- 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Opening Session | **Engbretson Hall**  
*Catherine Balthazar, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services*
- Neurodiversity: Shifting Perspectives for a Changing World | **Engbretson Hall**  
*LaVae Hoffman*
- 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Concurrent Session 1**  
Sensory Processing Sensitivity: Caring for a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)- Maybe that HSP is You!  
*LaVae Hoffman* | **Sherman Hall**
- The Dyslexic Shuffle: Deepening Your Understanding of Dyslexia  
*Nina Ghiselli* | **Engbretson Hall**
- Disability History, Pride, and Action  
*Michael Beers* | **Hall of Honors**
- 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Panel Discussions**  
Life After High School: What Happens When the IEP Expires?  
*Theresa Carroll, moderator* | **Hall of Honors**
- Self-Advocacy in College  
*Angie Wanek, moderator* | **Engbretson Hall**
- 1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Concurrent Session 2**  
Thriving with Neurodiversity  
*Brian King* | **Engbretson Hall**
- Self-Regulation and Mindfulness in the Classroom  
*Caren Schranz, Frank Czuba* | **F1622**

## RELATED EVENTS

- 4:00 p.m. The Comedians with Disabilities Act in Sherman Hall

# PRESENTATIONS

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## **DISABILITY HISTORY, PRIDE AND ACTION**

***MICHAEL BEERS***

There is a rich Disability history that is not taught in schools. Knowing this history and the people who fought for your rights is empowering. It is where Disability pride comes from. Michael Beers will talk about this history, Disability pride and how to put it all into action. Michael will help participants develop advocacy skills to use in school, the workplace, in relationships and in life in general. Discussion will also include how to develop an identity as a Disability activist that is personal to every individual who participates.

## **THE DYSLEXIC SHUFFLE: DEEPENING YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF DYSLEXIA**

***NINA GHISELLI***

Dyslexia impacts 1 out of 5 people. Despite the large number of people with it, it remains misunderstood. The core of the presentation will delve into the neuroscience behind dyslexia, elucidating how variations in brain structure and function can influence learning processes. By employing a lively and accessible approach, we will transform complex scientific concepts into relatable experiences, helping attendees to gain a deeper understanding of dyslexia.

Be prepared to be active in this dynamic presentation. You might even be part of an interpretive dance! This unique approach promises to educate and entertain, challenging preconceived notions about dyslexia and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of this common learning disability.

## **THRIVING WITH NEURODIVERSITY**

***BRIAN R. KING***

This interactive address will help parents, professionals, and educators connect with individuals who live with the unique challenges associated with Autism and ADHD. Based in his experience as a father of three boys with these diagnoses, his own diagnoses, and his extensive experience as a recognized specialist in supporting and counseling, his address conveys a message of self-compassion, resilience and the importance of working together.

## **SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY: CARING FOR A HIGHLY SENSITIVE PERSON (HSP) -MAYBE THAT HSP IS YOU!**

***LAVAE M. HOFFMAN***

The concept of neurodiversity includes the broad range of normal neurological functioning in 'neurotypical' individuals too! More than 30 years of research informs psychologist Elaine N. Aron's assertion that a substantial proportion of the human population is comprised of individuals who meet the criteria for being a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP). An HSP has a central nervous system that processes physical, emotional, and/or social stimuli more deeply than the general population. This type of neurological system is innately configured to drive that individual to notice subtleties and nuances to a greater extent than the general population and to respond more acutely to the environmental context. Dr. Aron has formally named this trait "Sensory Processing Sensitivity" (SPS), which is differentiated from Sensory Processing Disorder. SPS is not a disorder. . . and HSPs help to expand our understanding of the diversity of neurological systems within the wide range of normal.

## **NEURODIVERSITY: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES FOR A CHANGING WORLD**

***LAVAE M. HOFFMAN***

Among the many changes that leaders and health care providers are now navigating is an accelerating awareness of neurodiversity and respect for the many ways that individuals fundamentally experience the world differently. Issues of ableism and diversity are requiring health care professionals to challenge foundational ideas and perceptions related to disorders, disabilities, abilities, and diversity of experiences. “Neurodiversity” as a term is rapidly being adopted to convey a new view of Autism Spectrum Disorders, one that ascribes greater autonomy and respect to individuals who identify with the spectrum of Autism. This session provides an overview of neurodiversity as inclusive of Autism Spectrum Disorders. In addition, we assert that the concept of neurodiversity inherently includes all human beings, and this term should not be used to pigeon-hole individuals who identify as Autistic.

## **SELF-REGULATION AND MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM**

***CAREN SCHRANZ, FRANK CZUBA***

Self-regulation in the classroom is essential for learning. The student needs to be able to adjust their level of alertness for learning to meet the demands of the environment. Environmental modifications need to be considered to support the student and foster a positive learning environment. Evidence-based practices will be shared that teach self-regulation, coping skills, and mental health literacy.

## **LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE IEP EXPIRES?**

***THERESA CARROLL***

After high school it can be difficult to create an adult life that fosters independent living, community engagement, employment, post-secondary education, and social participation. Many individuals languish after high school with limited options to participate in society. This panel will include current and alumni participants in the Jaguar Jump program at GSU, as well as other parents and/or young adults who have navigated life after high school. Panelists will discuss strategies and barriers to building a meaningful life after high school. Additional topics will include accessing transportation, employment, attending post-secondary classes, and strategies for maintaining social relationships.

## **SELF-ADVOCACY IN COLLEGE**

***ANGIE WANEK***

Once students are out of high school and into college, the responsibility for getting supports and accommodations shifts to their own shoulders. What are the resources, challenges, and successes of college life? Panelists will speak about their own experiences navigating college life.

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

**BEERS, MICHAEL**—He won the Norman G. Brooks Comedy Competition at the Hollywood Improv in 2005. He was also the previous winner of Funny Fest (Calgary Comedy Festival) and has opened for comedians like Gilbert Gottfried. He is a sought-after keynote speaker on topics like humor, disability advocacy, education, and community building.

**CARROLL, THERESA, OTD, OTR/L**— Dr. Carroll is a Clinical Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator at Valparaiso University. She teaches Introduction to OT Practice, Synthesis I, the pediatric module in Functional Movement and Mobility, and other pediatric content throughout the curriculum. She has clinical experience working with children and adolescents with disabilities in school and community settings. Dr. Carroll's scholarly interests include post-secondary transition and best practices for occupational therapy in school settings. She currently partners with community organizations serving children and young adults with autism.

**CZUBA, FRANK, DROT, OTR/L**— Dr. Czuba has been a licensed Occupational Therapy clinician and manager for over 25 years, and has been teaching full time as an assistant professor in the GSU OT department since 2019. Dr. Czuba's background has primarily been in post-acute rehabilitation facilitating optimal client outcomes for medically complex clients transitioning from hospital to home. His research platform is focused on health promotion, wellness and prevention; interprofessional practice; leadership and management.

**GHISELLI, NINA, PHD**—Dr. Ghiselli is a comedian, and author of "Stutterer Interrupted" and co-author of "Bay Area Standup Comedy: A Humorous History." In May 2023, her album debuted at #1 in Comedy on iTunes and Amazon. Her first comedy special, "Nina G: Stutterer Interrupted," debuted in October 2023. She has shared the stage with comedy legends like Don Novella (aka Father Guido Sarducci) and Mort Sahl as well as disability activists like Judi Heumann and Jim Lebrecht.

**HOFFMAN, LAVAE, PHD**—Dr. Hoffman, Associate Professor and Communications Sciences and Disorders Program Director at University of Virginia, specializes in child language development and disorders. Her research interests include the efficacy and effectiveness of language interventions, as well as developing measures of language abilities in children. She regularly presents to practicing speech-language pathologists on topics related to the academic success of children with language deficits, such as Response to Intervention, narrative assessment, literature-based language intervention, dynamic assessment, and information processing.

**KING, BRIAN, MSW**—A Professional Workshop Facilitator and Keynote Presenter who has been wowing audiences for over 30 years, Brian R. King, MSW has become increasingly known for his personal story of resilience in the face of Learning and Physical disabilities to become a #1 Best-Selling Author and successful Entrepreneur.

**MEAN DAVE**—A favorite in the San Francisco Bay Area, he has performed across all the major comedy clubs. Dave is in his tenth year of addiction recovery, which he ingeniously weaves into his humor for the Comedians with Disabilities Act. He's opened for many notable comedians like Josh Blue, Big Kay Oakerson, Judy Tentuta, and Jay Mohr, and has performed at colleges across the U.S.

**SCHRANZ, CAREN, DROT, MS, OTR/L**— Dr. Schranz, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy and Interim Chair of the Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department at Governors State University, is an occupational therapist with over 29 years of experience. She is a clinician with a primary focus in working with children and young adults. She is an expert in sensory processing disorders. A significant strength of Dr. Schranz is family-centered care with an emphasis on finding strategies to support success in daily life events. Her research agenda is focused on family-centered care using the Collaborative Coaching Model which works on ways to support the generation of strategies for improved participation.



# Stand Up Comedy Show

featuring The Comedians with Disabilities Act



Please join us at:

## 4PM in Sherman Hall



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