

2023 AUCD Autism Acceptance Month Webinar Series

PEERS: What Is It and What We Learned

Monday, April 10, 2023

4:00 PM-5:00 PM Eastern Time

Sponsored by AUCD's Interdisciplinary Technical Assistance Center (ITAC) on Autism and Developmental Disabilities and the Autism Special Interest Group (SIG)



A project of AUCD to support Autism CARES programs

- Ensure your name is displayed correctly in the participant list. You may also include program name and state and preferred pronouns.
 - Example: Rachel Miller, AUCD, she/her
- Hover over your name in the “Participants” box and select “More” → “Rename”
- Remain muted unless speaking
- State your name prior to speaking
- Captioning is available
- Use chat box to introduce yourself!



Autism SIG Co-Chairs

Anjali Rao, M.D.



Gyasi Burks-Abbott





**Mary Helen Richer, M.A.
CEO, Autism Connections**

PEERS[®]

What is it and What We Learned



Who I Am

Autism Connections is a Cincinnati, OH based nonprofit organization whose mission is to uplift the southwest Ohio autism community through education, resources, connections, and lifelong support.

Mary Helen Richer
CEO
Autism Connections



Agenda

01

What is PEERS ? [®]

02

What we LOVE about it.

03

What doesn't work so well.

04

Our future plans for PEERS

[®]

What is PEERS[®] ?

- 16-week evidence-based social skills intervention/training developed at UCLA
- Goal is for teens to understand the social skills around making and keeping friends
- Comprised of didactic, role plays and skills practice
- Homework/real world practice
- Parents/social coaches attend separate sessions at the same time
- Parents/social coaches learn how to assist their teens/adult in making and keeping friends through coaching
- Individualized training and goals within a group session

A Little More about PEERS[®]

- Certification for PEERS through UCLA
- Cost for online certification = \$500
- Do not need to be certified to teach PEERS
- Comes with training manuals that outline each session, have homework, parent/social coach handouts, role plays,

Different PEERS[®] Programs

1. PEERS for Teenagers
2. PEERS for School-Based Professionals
3. PEERS for Young Adults

PEERS[®] in Development at UCLA

1. PEERS for Preschoolers
2. PEERS for Dating
3. PEERS for Careers

Our Involvement with PEERS[®]

- Certified in PEERS for Teenagers and PEERS for Adults in late 2022
- Began teaching PEERS in January 2023
 - Running one cohort each of Teens and Adults
- Charge a fee for the 16-week course
- Cap our cohorts at 8 for Teens and 12 for Adults

What we LOVE
about PEERS[®]



What We LOVE About PEERS

- Evidence-based with years of research before it was released.
- Demystifies the rules for communication, social interaction and making friends.
- Each lesson builds on the last one.
- Parent/social coach component builds a supportive training environment.
- If you are certified, you have access to additional materials:
 - PowerPoints
 - Videos
 - Training materials adapted for online

What Doesn't Work So Well



What Doesn't Work So Well

- Geared toward:
 - low support needs
 - minimum behaviors
 - ability to sit in a classroom style environment for 90-minutes
 - generally verbal
- Moves through a lot of skills rapidly.

Our Future Plans for PEERS[®]



Our Future Plans for PEERS

- We plan to build a training series that addresses
 - high support needs
 - non verbal and alternative communication styles
- More interactive
 - less didactic lecture
 - more experiential opportunities
- Slow pace of program to ensure skills are internalized

Questions?

2023 Autism Acceptance Month

- **2023 Disability Policy Seminar Orientation and Policy Education 101 Workshop**
Wednesday, April 12, 3:00 PM EST – 4:30 PM EST
- **Leadership and Mentorship Through the Eyes of a Self-Advocate**
Tuesday, April 18, 4:00 PM EST- 5:00 PM EST
- **A First Look at the 2023 IACC Strategic Plan**
Wednesday, April 26, 2:00 PM EST – 3:00 PM EST
- **Autism SIG: Roundtable on Leadership and Mentorship**
Monday, May 8, 4:00 PM EST – 5:00 PM EST



Thank You for Joining Us!

The archive of this event will be posted on the AUCD and ITAC websites one week from the event date.

Please provide feedback on this webinar:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AutismPeers>

Or Scan the QR Code

