

Differences Not Deficits: Understanding the Neurodiversity Affirming Approach to Support Autistic Clients Through a Strength-Based Lens

Kristin Jones, MS, OTR/L



Faculty

Kristin Jones, a Neurodivergent Occupational Therapist, has been practicing OT for over 23 years. She has worked in multiple pediatric settings including early intervention, outpatient clinic, respectful feeding, and school based. The past 14 years she has been at the Community School of Davidson where she has taken the lead in guiding the administration and staff to become a trauma informed and neurodiversity affirming organization. Kristin has a passion for the latest research in brain development and translating this information for teachers to apply in the classroom. Her favorite quote is “if they could, they would”. It is our responsibility as educators to figure out the “why” to provide the most effective strategies for student success and to ensure the student feels understood.

About this Live Webinar

Neurodiversity affirming is a description that more and more therapists are using in their practices today, but it is much more than just changing your language and a basic understanding of Autism. While this course will address the basics of affirming language, the Double Empathy Problem, and masking, we will also focus on developing a sense of felt safety and connection, low versus high functioning environments, understanding and honoring all forms of communication, supporting sensory differences, and self-determination. Learn how to write measurable goals that are strength based and actually promote a student's access to the supports they have helped to identify. This course will include current research, case studies and practical strategies that can be applied to early intervention, elementary, middle, and high school.

Objectives

- Identify the potential impact on an Autistic person's mental health living in a world designed for a neurotypical brain.
- Recognize the impact of the Double Empathy Problem on a student/adult relationship.
- Utilize at least 2 ways to build a sense of felt safety with a student.
- Integrate 2 ways to honor all forms of communication when creating a relationship with a student.
- Choose a way to change a low functioning environment to a high functioning environment.
- Relate the positive impact of a strength-based approach on a student's sense of self-determination.
- Determine at least 2 interventions to support a Neurodivergent client's self-advocacy.

Audience

This course is relevant for OTs, OTAs, PTs, PTAs and SLPs working with Pediatric, Birth to 3, Early Intervention or School (ages 3-21) populations in home care, outpatient or school settings.

Financial Disclosures: Kristin Jones receives a speaking fee from Education Resources. **Non-Financial Disclosures:** Kristin Jones has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Help your patients achieve better outcomes.

Schedule – Day 1 5:40 pm - 9:00 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 6:00-6:50 Introduction to Neurodiversity and The Importance of Affirming Language
- 6:50-7:40 Double Empathy Problem, Masking, The Concept of Monotropism
- 7:40-8:10 Sensory Differences
- 8:10-8:30 Trauma and Mental Health Related to the Autistic Experience
- 8:30-9:00 Pulling It All Together

Schedule – Day 2 5:40 pm - 9:00 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 6:00-6:50 The Importance of Felt Safety and Connection
- 6:50-7:20 Honoring All Forms of Communication
- 7:20-8:20 Low vs. High Functioning Environments and Supporting Sensory Differences
- 8:20-8:30 Coaching Model
- 8:30-9:00 Pulling It All Together

Schedule – Day 3 5:40 pm - 9:00 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 6:00-6:15 Medical Model vs. Social Model of Disability
- 6:15-6:30 Introduction to a Strength-Based Approach
- 6:30-8:00 Research-Based Interventions to Support Sensory Differences, Interoception and Self-Determination (tiered, individual, group, whole class)
- 8:00-8:15 Self-Monitoring
- 8:15-8:30 Understanding Your Own IEP From a Student Perspective
- 8:30-9:00 Pulling It All Together

Schedule – Day 4 5:40 pm - 9:00 pm EST (US)

- 5:40-6:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 6:00-6:45 How to Write A Strength-Based Evaluation and Present Level
- 6:45-7:45 Strength-Based Goal Writing
- 7:45-8:15 Integrated Goal Writing: A Team Approach
- 8:15-8:30 Closing Thoughts – Be You!
- 8:30-9:00 Pulling It All Together

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Credits

This course meets the criteria for 12 contact hours (1.2) CEUs, Intermediate Level.



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This course can be used toward your NBCOT renewal requirements for 12 units.

Approved provider of the FL Board of Occupational Therapy-CE Broker – 14 hrs.

This course meets the approval of the TX Board of OT Examiners.



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12 hours of this course qualify towards the discipline-specific hours for the 20-hour requirement for NDTA re-certification. They do NOT qualify towards the 8-hour NDTA Instructor requirement for re-certification.

For special needs requests, please contact info@educationresourcesinc.com or 800-487-6530.

Education Resources Inc. 266 Main St, Suite 12, Medfield, MA 02052

Webinar Dates and Times

September 17, 18, 24 and 25, 2025

5:40 pm EST • 4:40 pm CST • 3:40 pm MST • 2:40 pm PST (US)

Registration is for all four sessions. Zoom log-in instructions and course materials will be emailed/added to your ERI account 5-7 days prior to the first date of the Webinar.



\$389 fee. **LIMITED ENROLLMENT.** Cancellation will be accepted until 14 days prior to the start date of the course, minus a \$75 Administration Fee. There will be NO REFUNDS after this 14-day deadline. We encourage you to register online!

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September 17, 18, 24 and 25, 2025

Course Registration Form

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Address: _____

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Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

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Needed in the event of an emergency scheduling change

Email: _____

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How did you learn of this course? _____

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