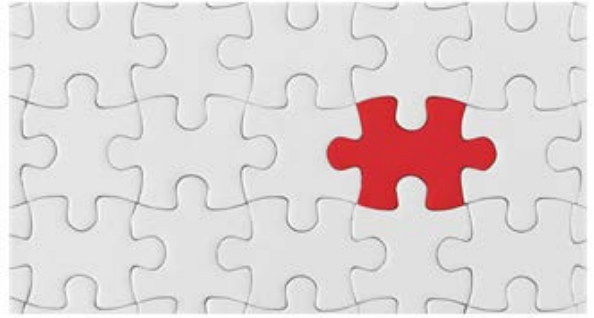


# Second Annual Autism & Neurodiversity Conference



**William Carey University**  
**March 9 & 10, 2023**  
**Tradition Campus**  
**Belmont Room, Building A**

## Agenda

### Thursday, March 9

**Registration opens at 7:30 am**

**Opening and Welcome 8:00 - 8:30 am**

Welcome from our team and Dr. Cassandra Conner, Vice President of WCU Tradition campus.

**Session 1 – 8:30 – 9:30 am**

**Ms. April Carter-Till**

April will be discussing access to service and educational systems from both the perspective of an autistic person and a service provider. She will present strategies to enhance accessibility and discuss barriers to accessibility related to having an autism spectrum condition or parenting/caretaking for an individual with an autism spectrum condition.

**Session 2 – 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Dr. Melissa Stephens**

As a Board-Certified Family Physician, Dr. Melissa Stephens has practiced the full scope of her specialty. Since early in her career, she has had a special interest in caring for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). She has also cared for children with autism and other neurodiversity within her home as a licensed foster parent. She and her husband adopted one of these exceptional children. Through this experience, she has become a strong advocate for individuals with neurodiversity. She will share her views on autism and neurodiversity from her lived experience as a parent and physician.

**Session 3 – 10:45 - 11:45 am**

**Dr. Christina Liverett**

In this session, participants will be introduced to twice exceptionality and become acquainted with the various types of twice exceptional learners. Participants will learn how to identify some social and emotional traits of twice exceptional learners along with some contextual elements of their intellectual development. Dr. Liverett will discuss the kinds of relationships that influence social and emotional development and give strategies and methods for how these students can best be served and supported in both the general education and pull-out classroom environments.

**Session 4 - 12:00 – 2:00 pm**

**Dr. Scott Robertson, Keynote Presenter**

This lunchtime presentation features the perspectives of Dr. Scott Michael Robertson, a social scientist and nationally recognized expert in disability policies and practices in Washington, DC. Dr. Robertson's presentation will highlight his insights as an autistic adult with additional disabilities and his experience in conducting qualitative research. His presentation will also discuss the role of key technologies and focused supports to help address challenges and barriers and ensure that autistic people can achieve their life goals.

**Session 5 – 2:15 – 4:00 pm**

**Petal Behavior Academic Triage Team – Ms. Dana Reed, Ms. Anita Knott, Ms. Kaitlyn Perry, and Dr. Mark Yeager**

Do you have notebooks and files full of FBAs and BIPs (BSPs) that are not working and/or not being actively and effectively implemented? In today's litigious environment, having these in place with no effective implementation, evidence, or data is worse than not having a plan at all. The need for conducting an FBA is often overstated, and a plan may not need to be a complex implementation nightmare. Behavior Academic Triaging allows behavior specialists to address behavioral concerns without having to move into FBA mode for situations that do not actually necessitate the full process. This session will introduce this unique concept through a panel of professionals that are actively using the approach through BAT Teams.

## **Friday, March 10**

**Session 6, 8:00 – 11:45 am**

**Mr. Garrett Yeager**

Applied Behavior Analysis, the leading recommended treatment for the treatment of behavior difficulties related to autism spectrum disorder, has research-based effective treatments for clinical settings. However, these strategies are often difficult to apply outside of the clinical setting. This presentation will explore effective strategies for home, community, and education settings utilizing behavior analytic strategies for effective behavior change.

**Video Presentation & Discussion, 12:00 – 1:30 pm**

Video presentation about the challenges of living with Asperger's syndrome.

**Conclusion, Door Prizes & CEUs/SEMI credits 1:45 - 2:00 pm**

---

## **About Our Speakers**

**Ms. April Carter-Till**

Ms. April Carter-Till is a late diagnosed autistic adult parent of two children with autism spectrum condition, as well as the child of an autistic parent. She currently works in Early Intervention Services and manages an online support and information group for the Gulf Coast region. She aspires to use her experiences from her varying roles to bridge gaps in information, access, and understanding between those who experience autism and those who wish to support autistic people.

**Dr. Melissa Stephens**

Dr. Melissa Stephens attended the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Medicine before completing her family medicine residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) in 2001. After residency, Dr. Stephens remained at KUMC, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine. She later served as faculty at the Goppert-Trinity Family Medicine Residency Program in Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Stephens then spent more than a decade in clinical practice in both rural and urban settings in the Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Mississippi Gulf Coast. In 2015, Dr. Stephens joined the full-time faculty of the William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine (WCUCOM). She currently serves as Associate Dean of GME and Population Health and Professor of Clinical Sciences at WCUCOM. She and her husband have five children including a son with special needs.

**Dr. Christina B. Liverett**

Christina Liverett, a native of Laurel, MS, has over 19 years of teaching experience in various settings within Hattiesburg and Laurel, with the majority in gifted education. Prior to her appointment at Carey, she taught gifted education in the Laurel School District and served as Gifted Contact Person. Her professional interests include gifted education, metacognition, creativity and teacher education. Her current research encompasses differentiation techniques that will make the classroom creative and engaging for all learners. Christina enjoys reading, writing, watching sports and spending time with family, especially her daughter Anne Claire.

**Dr. Mark Yeager**

Dr. Yeager has been in service to people with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1975. Dr. Yeager is considered the foremost authority on autism spectrum disorders in the State of Mississippi. He is the author of the Autism Bill of Rights. His teachings abroad include a lecture series provided to the Minister of Education of India as well as guest lecturer in England and Ireland. In addition to his many lecture offerings and presentations, he is well published in several languages and consults with schools, universities, and other autism programs. Dr. Yeager is currently the Program Director for Special Education at WCU. He also serves as the Executive Director of TEAAM Autism. TEAAM Autism's main offices are located at The Center Ridge Outpost, the organizations adventure base camp that is the home of one-of-a-kind adventure-based programs of which Dr. Yeager is the Founder.

**Mrs. Dana Reed**

Mrs. Reed grew up in Petal, MS and graduated from Petal High School in 1998. She graduated from the USM with a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 2002. She began working for the Petal School District in 2003 and later went on to receive a MED in 2012. She has worked in the Petal School District for nearly 20 years where she taught 3rd and 4th grade for 12 years and currently serves as the Intervention Specialist for Petal Elementary School. In her role as Intervention Specialist, Mrs. Reed works closely with the positive behavior specialist to meet the needs of students who struggle academically as well as behaviorally in the regular education classroom.

**Mrs. Anita Knott**

Mrs. Anita Knott, LMSW received several degrees from the USM, which included a BS degree in Biology in 1992, a MS degree in Family and Consumer Studies in 1994, and a MSW in 2007. Mrs. Knott is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Social Work degree from Barry University. Her work includes community mental health & alcohol/drug clinician, foster parent trainer, and a Positive Behavioral Specialist for the past 15 years, with the last five served in the Petal School District. Mrs. Knott has experience working with students with autism and helping teachers with interventions and strategies to provide a more productive learning environment.

**Ms. Kaitlyn Perry**

Ms. Perry graduated from WCU with a BS in Physical Education and a Minor in Biology, a MED, and EDS in Emotional and Behavior Disorders. She has been in the public-school setting for 7 years working in a variety of special education classrooms. Kaitlyn has experience working in inclusion and Alternate Diploma settings with a wide range of special needs. She has also worked for TEAAM Autism assisting in all camp activities and camp communication. She is currently the Behavior Specialist in the Petal School District at Petal Elementary. Ms. Perry has experience working with students with Autism, teaching social skills and helping teachers with interventions and strategies to provide a safe and productive learning environment for everyone.

**Mr. Garrett Yeager**

Mr. Yeager, M.S., BCBA, LBA graduated with his master's degree from The University of Southern Mississippi. He has provided behavior analytic services to a wide range of clients including ages ranging from 2-18 years old in clinical, community, and school settings. He has most recently focused on services aiming to reduce challenging behaviors in clients 8-16 years old. Mr. Yeager currently serves as the Director of ABA Services at The Autism Center of North Mississippi in Tupelo, MS. He teaches adjunct ABA classes at WCU and is the President of Behavior Analyst Association of Mississippi.

# NOTES

Sponsored by

