

Welcome to your monthly ND update

Under the umbrella ND



A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

AJ Locashio, Executive Director

This month we're celebrating Autistic Advocacy Month! We're sharing guides, worksheets, and fresh perspectives across our social medial channels and here in our monthly newsletter.

At the end of April, we're launching our first volume of "The Neurodivergent's Self-Advocacy Survival Guide"! After lots of discussions with the neurodivergent community last year, we began to write this book, and are very excited to share it with you all.

The book empowers neurodivergent people as they navigate a world that doesn't always understand neurodiversity. It equips you with the tools and confidence to advocate for your needs and rights effectively. Our hope is that it, and the online community that goes with it, provides a platform for all of you to share your unique experiences and insights. You are not alone on your journey.

In the meantime, we'd love to hear from members of the community. How are you experiencing Autistic Advocacy Month? What are you appreciating, and what would you like to see more of?

Let us know!

Welcome to Umbrella ND. We're really glad you're here.

What to Expect from This Newsletter

Each month, you can expect:

- Updates on Umbrella ND programming and upcoming events
- Educational content rooted in community experience
- Resources curated for and by neurodivergent people
- Perspectives from across our community, including from our co-founder Jessica and other community members and collaborators

Umbrella ND is a neurodivergent-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We believe neurodiversity is so much bigger than Autism and ADHD — and that community and growth can coexist.



Umbrella Opens Doors

Meet Our Team

Umbrella ND is growing, and we want you to know the people behind the work.

AJ Locashio

is one of our founders and is our executive director. Fun fact about AJ: They play TTRPGs (table top role playing games) every weekend.

Learn more about AJ and the rest of our team here:

<https://umbrellaopensdoors.org/our-team/>

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Autistic Advocacy Month is Here!

Autistic Advocates United is transforming April into **Autistic Advocacy Month** — a community-led campaign that moves beyond awareness and acceptance toward something better: advocacy.

We're sharing new resources, perspectives, and ideas with the community almost every day!

Follow us on [Linkedin](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) to see everything we're doing.



Autistic Advocacy Month

**2026
Logo Contest
Winner!**



Stay Connected!

Find us @UmbrellaOpensDoors across social media and on BlueSky
@UmbrellaOpensDoors.org.

If someone forwarded this newsletter to you — welcome!

You can [sign up](#) to receive future issues directly.

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Hey Jessica,

I'm ADHD and am constantly getting distracted by social media, tv, youtube - everywhere I look I get sucked in. I've tried blocking it all out, but I can't seem to do it. Even when I have big projects at work that need to be done, I find myself scrolling on my phone. How can I stay more focused?

- Distracted



Hey, Jessica!
I'm curious...



Dear Distracted,

What you're describing isn't a willpower problem... It's an access problem. These platforms are engineered by teams of people whose entire job is to keep you on them, and your ADHD brain is a particularly good target for that. So the first order of business is eliminating access, not white-knuckling through temptation. Freedom (<https://freedom.to/>) and Cold Turkey (<https://getcoldturkey.com/>) allow you to block distracting sites across your devices on a schedule, and Cold Turkey's locked mode means the block cannot be reversed until the timer expires.

Read the rest of Jessica's response [here!](#)

About: "Hey, Jessica. I'm Curious..."

A space where Curiosity > Judgment. Always.

"Hey, Jessica. I'm Curious..." is an advice-style column written by Umbrella ND co-founder **Jessica Jahns**. Every month, Jessica answers real questions from community members. Work stuff. Relationship stuff. How to handle the situation where you know something is wrong but everyone else seems fine with it. Whatever you've been carrying around and haven't found the right person to ask.

If you're wondering about it, it belongs here.

You can even ask anonymously and she'll give you a real answer.

Got a question? Ask here: <https://forms.gle/mVcSPuRjwyigtj8G8>

We can't wait to see what you're curious about!

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What “Advocacy” means for Organizations

For four decades now, organizations have engaged in performative recognition of Autism and the challenges faced by the Autistic community. Unfortunately, all too often it starts and ends there - a rote “awareness” exercise that changes nothing. With Autistic Advocacy Month, we are working to shift that narrative. We know that when organizations meaningfully and consistently create environments that are supportive of Autistic employees, great things happen:

- Retention rates of Autistic employees - often low due to burnout and misunderstandings - go through the roof; when supported, Autistic employees are among the most loyal individuals in the workplace.
- Productivity skyrockets. Some organizations have reported that their supported Autistic employees are twice as productive as their peers.
- Innovation and creativity across teams increases dramatically as the free flow of ideas from brains that literally think different is empowered and celebrated.
- Teams with at least one autistic employee report team-wide productivity improvements of 30% and higher.
- Employee engagement and satisfaction goes up among all employees: broad practices that support Autistic employees benefit all.

[Read the full article here!](#)

These sorts of results don't appear from any other employee engagement initiative...

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Opening Doors for Neurodivergent Belonging

We're not just another nonprofit talking about neurodivergent people – we're neurodivergent people creating the community we've always needed. Founded by and for the ND community, Umbrella ND is where authentic voices lead the way, rules get challenged, and everyone belongs.

umbrellaopensdoors.org



Sneak Peek...



What's Coming in 2026?

Self-Advocacy Survival Guide

This year, Umbrella ND is launching the **Self-Advocacy Survival Guide** — a comprehensive resource designed by and for neurodivergent people. More details are coming soon!

Community Resources page

We are also building out our **Community Resources page**, a curated space where you can find tools, organizations, and opportunities that are genuinely neuro-inclusive. If you know of something that belongs there, reach out.

Support Our Work:

- [Donate](#)
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- [Share Your Story](#)
- [Attend Events](#)



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