

Welcome to your monthly ND update

Under the umbrella ND



A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

AJ Locashio, Executive Director

April was a big month. We showed up for Autistic Advocacy Month every single day sharing resources, perspectives, and a few things that maybe made you think. And now we get to look back at what we built together, and look forward to what comes next.

What comes next? The Neurodivergents' Self-Advocacy Survival Guide (SASG, pronounced "sausage") is here. Not almost here, it's really here! You can order your copy today! I could not be more excited and proud to finally get this thing into your hands. This book was written with the community, not just for it, and it shows.

We also have some other things cooking: sensory tips, an annual field guide to go alongside the survival guide, and the return of Jessica's advice column—this month featuring one of the most relatable workplace situations I've ever read.

All of that, plus: what does it actually mean to keep Autistic Advocacy Month going after April ends? We have thoughts.

We are so glad to be in this community with you!



Umbrella Opens Doors

Meet Our Team

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

Becca Lory Hector

is a board director. Fun fact about Becca: She adores her ESA whose name is Sir Walter Underfoot.

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

umb-nd.org/team

What to Expect from This Newsletter

Each month, you will get some or all of the following:

- Updates on Umbrella ND programs 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.

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The Neurodivergents' Self-Advocacy Survival Guide (SASG) is Here!

After months (okay—years) of community conversations, drafts, and more drafts, Volume 1 of the Self-Advocacy Survival Guide (SASG) is officially available to order!

This is a book about navigating a world that was built around a neurotype that only rarely exists. It's practical, it's honest, and it's grounded in real community experience—because it was built from real community experience.

Inside, you'll find:

- Frameworks for understanding the barriers you're actually facing (not just the ones people assume you have)
- Tools for identifying your advocacy strengths — and knowing when and how to use them
- Strategies for the moments that feel most impossible: healthcare, employment, systems, relationships

Get your copy now: umb-nd.org/SASG1

And there is more coming SOON!

SASG - Community Journey 2025 holds writings from the community because self-advocacy often comes through stories!

Get notified when it's released in a few weeks.

The Neurodivergents' Self-Advocacy Survival Guide

Foundations



Stay Connected!

Find us @UmbrellaOpensDoors across social media and on BlueSky
[@UmbrellaOpensDoors.org](https://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 autistic and my boss is constantly criticizing how I communicate. He says I just need to learn to be a better communicator, but he won't tell me what that means. Now he's saying that "expert communication ability" is required for my job, and that how I communicate is "upsetting" my teammates — though again, he can't seem to explain why. What do I do?

~ Confused



Hey, Jessica!
I'm curious...



Dear Confused,

What you're describing is one of the most frustrating experiences a neurodivergent professional can have: being told you have a problem, but not what the problem actually is. Let's unpack what's happening here and what you can do about it.

First, recognize the real system failure.

Your boss is experiencing a communication breakdown and is naming you as the cause. But here's what he's missing: communication is a two-person system. Every message passes through four distinct points: your intention, your expression, his reception, and his interpretation.

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: [**umb-nd.org/Jessica**](https://umb-nd.org/Jessica)

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



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Autistic Advocacy Month: Recap + What Comes Next

We Showed Up Every Day

April was Autistic Advocacy Month, and Umbrella ND showed up for it. We shared resources, spotlights, perspectives, and tools across all of our channels every single day.

If you followed along: thank you. If you missed some of it: it's not going anywhere. All of the resources we shared during April can be found at:

UmbrellaOpensDoors.org/Resources

But It's Not Just a Month

Here's the thing about "Autistic Advocacy Month": the word "Month" is doing a lot of heavy lifting. The reality is that Autistic people navigate a world that wasn't designed for them every single day—not just in April.

So what does it mean to keep the momentum going?

- Keep sharing the resources. Pass them to a friend, a coworker, or a family member who might need them.
- Keep the conversations happening in your: workplace, healthcare settings, and community spaces.
- Stay connected. Our newsletter, social channels, and community trainings are all built to support ongoing advocacy—not just a one-month sprint.

Umbrella ND will continue building resources to support sustainable advocacy and sharing them for free. Check in frequently to see what's new. If you have a resource or know of a good one that we can share, let us know! umb-nd.org/share

Autistic Advocacy Month ended in April. The work did not. We're here for all of it, and we're glad you are too.

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Sensory Tip of the Month

Layering sensory input intentionally. If you're finding it hard to focus or regulate, try identifying one sensory channel you can control right now — sound, texture, temperature, scent — and adjust just that one thing. Small, deliberate changes are often more effective than overhauling your whole environment at once.



What's Coming?



SASG: Community Journey 2025

You can't really have a survival guide without a first hand experience field guide and that's exactly what you are going to get. Community Journey 2025 is coming and we are collecting community experiences and stories for

Want to share?

There are many ways to share your story or experience. Writing, Video, Art, whatever works for you!

Share today at:
umb-nd.org/share

Support Our Work:

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