

AVENUES FOR AUTISM LAUNCHES CRITICALLY NEEDED NAVIGATION SERVICES PROGRAM.

The area's leading referral and information source for families affected by autism will provide directions to available programs, financial assistance, and government benefits.

Toledo, OH (February 10, 2023) - In its most recent community needs assessment, area nonprofit Avenues for Autism identified a critical concern: the staggering complexity of accessing autism services. Providers, caregivers, families, and individuals voiced frustration with identifying local services, finding professionals specializing in autism care, and learning how to maneuver through various support systems. In response, Avenues is launching Autism Navigation Services, the region's first autism-specific counseling center.

Autism Navigation Services offers individually-tailored support services to area residents with autism and their families, from understanding the initial diagnosis to exploring independent living options. Highly trained, licensed specialists serve as primary resources for families seeking available therapies, medical treatments, equipment, financial assistance, and government benefits. Autism Navigation Services provides most of its counseling online through convenient, secure telehealth conferencing.

"We recognized coordination of autism services as an urgent need," explains Mike Ariss, president of the Avenues for Autism board of directors. "Individuals with autism often seek assistance from multiple providers, all of whom have different rules regarding qualifying for—and paying for—their services. Avenues' Autism Navigation Services can help families avail themselves of those programs."

Alexis Eggenberger is the program director of Autism Navigation Services. She is also the parent of a child with autism.

"I had worked in the autism services field for twelve years when doctors diagnosed my daughter with autism," says Eggenberger. "As a licensed therapist, I always thought I would know just what to do. But nothing prepares a parent for an autism diagnosis."

Eggenberger has seen firsthand how easily families without the proper guidance can get lost in the health and social service sectors. "When that happens, parents experience delays receiving early intervention assistance for their children," she adds.

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Alexis Eggenberger
Director, Autism
Navigation Services

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Avenues for Autism Board

In addition to providing directions to available programs and financial assistance, Autism Navigation Services offers parent coaching, family therapy, and individual skill-building sessions for autistic adolescents and adults. The Avenues for Autism website includes a client portal for scheduling appointments and an online Navigation Guide identifying organizations offering services to individuals with autism.

Financial support from the Greater Toledo Community Foundation, the Dana Open Presented By Marathon, and the Robert Tyner Memorial Fund contributed to making the Autism Navigation Services program possible.

“Our goal is to be the area’s premier referral and information source for families,” says Stacy Harper, Executive Director of Avenues for Autism. “Thanks to our donors, we established Autism Navigation Services and moved Avenues closer toward that objective.”

Information Webinars

Director of Autism Navigation Services, Alexis Eggenberger, will explain the program, preview the electronic client portal, and present the online Navigation Guide in a free 30-minute webinar. Families can choose from one of the following sessions:

Wednesday, February 15 @ Noon

Thursday, February 16 @ 7:30 pm

Tuesday, February 21 @ Noon

Saturday, February 25 @ 10:00 am

Go online to register:
avenuesforautism.org/webinars

or email Ali Cousino at:
acousino@avenuesforautism.org

About Avenues for Autism

Avenues for Autism is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to expand opportunities that enrich the lives of individuals and families affected by autism. Avenues works with individuals affected by autism—as well as their families and caregivers—throughout Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. The late Bob and Suzy Tyner, parents of a child with autism, founded the organization in 2004 to spare other parents from the challenging path they encountered trying to help their son.

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