

Julia Ryan Psychology

EMPOWERING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



"A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to."

- Brene Brown



AUGUST, 2025



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BELONGING



The past six weeks of running our day program for autistic teens have been nothing short of true career bliss. Each day has been filled with walks, sharing drawings or photos of beloved pets, doing crafts and playing games, trying out new activities, and embarking on small adventures, offering activities and experiences that spark joy and confidence, that scaffold skills, and that offer natural exposure within the safety of a trusting relationships.

Yet above all, the highlight has been witnessing the benefits of creating the right conditions for growth. Throughout these weeks, we have celebrated their strengths and interests, affirming the importance of embracing their authentic selves. We have supported their self-advocacy, affirming their understanding of themselves and natural ways of seeking regulation. By establishing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment that truly respects individual differences, where everyone belongs and needs are met, I have seen meaningful change unfold before my eyes. Watching teens engage with activities and with one another, expressing themselves and forming connections, has been profoundly rewarding.

As I return to “normal,” I will hold these memories close. When I feel pressured to get faster results, or feel I should be doing more, these memories will offer me the strength and resolve to always meet my clients where they are and respect their pace and needs, so that they know they have a place of belonging with me, unconditionally.

The Power of Identity-Affirming Mental Health Support



RESEARCH SHOWS

Mental health outcomes improve when individuals feel *understood, accepted, and supported* in environments that adapt to them, rather than expecting them to adapt.

Therapy That Affirms Identity Improves Outcomes

In one therapy program, neurodivergent individuals (diagnosed & self-identified) began treatment with higher rates of **Anxiety, Depression, and Self-harm** than neurotypical peers.

After receiving identity-affirming mental health treatment, **ALL groups** showed similar improvements.

[Link to Full Study](#)

Resilience Grows in Supportive Environments

A review of 176 studies found that neurodivergent resilience is closely linked to:

- Strong social support
- Inclusive, adaptive environments
- Self-understanding

These external supports were just as important as personal traits in promoting well-being.

[Link to Full Study](#)

Identity Affirmation Fosters Self-Acceptance

Autistic children (ages 8-14) who learned about autism through a strengths-based, autistic-led program showed:

- More confidence
- Stronger sense of belonging
- More positive self-talk
- Better communication about their needs

[Link to Full Study](#)

Research consistently shows that:

Inclusion

Affirming Relationships

Strength-based Support

improve mental health and resilience.

Support that reflects who a person is builds a foundation of self-worth, trust, and resilience.

From early childhood through adulthood, being understood and valued fosters confidence, strengthens communication, and deepens connection.

Identity-affirming mental health support nurtures wellbeing by helping individuals feel seen, valued, and empowered to navigate the world as their most authentic selves.

TEAM UPDATES

ANGÉLICA



We are very pleased to announce that one of our longest-standing team members, Angélica, is starting her practicum with us! Angélica has spent many years getting to know our clients and supporting various aspects of the clinic and our services. Angelica will be offering counselling and psychotherapy services under the supervision of Drs. Christina Amico and Julia Ryan!

SERVICE UPDATES

THERAPY

Immediate availability in person or virtual ages 16+ with Erin or Jayson, including for parenting support, mental health and navigating neurodiversity.

ERIN SHAHEEN



[Biography](#)

JAYSON YUNG



[Biography](#)

REGISTER NOW

SERVICE UPDATES

ASSESSMENT

We are **closed** for new requests for all ages while we work to serve clients on the waitlist and re-open with a shorter wait time and more efficient intake procedures.

Update: We will work through the fall to shorten our waitlist and will likely re-open in January 2026.

Please consider seeking services with one of our **recommended** colleagues or checking back in the fall, as we anticipate reopening for new assessment requests in September.



ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- [Connections Psychology \(child, adolescent, adult\)](#)
- [Jeremy Doucette \(child, adolescent, adults\)](#)
- [Dr. Marc Bedard at CFIR \(adults\)](#)
- [Dr. Lyndsay Evraire \(child, adolescent\)](#)
- [Sherwood Psychology \(child, adolescent\)](#)
- [Ivanova and Associates \(adults\)](#)
- [Centre Dimensions \(adults\)](#)
- [Dr. Melodie Lemay-Gaulin \(adults, virtual\)](#)
- [Dr. Gayle Goldstein \(adults, virtual\)](#)

SERVICE UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS



CLICK THE REGISTRATION BUTTON FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER

SEPT
3

Wednesday, 12pm-1pm

Taylor's Group for Neurodivergent Parents

Join Taylor's parent support group to connect and share experiences with other neurodivergent parents



SEPT
6

Saturday, 9am-4pm

Saturday Youth Group Intake Day

See our space, meet our facilitators and let us get to know your youth!



SEPT
7

Sunday, 12pm-1pm

Poe's Group for Queer & Neurodivergent Parents

Join Poe for a parent support group to connect and build community among parents



SEPT
9

Tuesday, 4pm-5:30pm (continues on Sept 16th)

Finding Employment (Neurodivergent-affirming)

Join inclusion specialist and autistic woman, Megan Pilatzke, to learn how to build your CV, search for jobs, and nail the interview.



SEPT
13

Saturday, 9am-4pm

Saturday Youth Group

First day and deadline for deposit
Join us for varied activities and social connections!



SEPT
15

Monday, 12pm-1pm

Rob's Parent Group for Fathers

Join Rob's welcoming and supportive group for fathers navigating parenthood and processing neurodivergence



CONTACT [JULIA@DRJULIARYAN.CA](mailto:julia@drjuliaryan.ca) FOR QUESTIONS

SERVICE UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS



CLICK THE REGISTRATION BUTTON FOR
MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER

SEPT
16

Tuesday, 4:30-5:30pm

Neurodivergent Meet Up for Adults

Join Dr. Julia on a neighborhood walk to enjoy nature, share facts or interests, and get to know each other.



SEPT
17

Wednesday, 12pm-1pm

Taylor's Group for Neurodivergent Parents

Join Taylor's parent support group to connect and share experiences with other neurodivergent parents



SEPT
18

Thursday, 7pm-8pm

Louise's Group for Parents Processing New Diagnoses

Join Louise's parent support group to connect and share experiences navigating a new diagnosis.



SEPT
18

Thursday, 12pm-1pm (continues on Sept 25th)

A Neurodivergent-Affirming Sleep Workshop for Parents

Join Erin for an information-packed 2 part neuro-affirming sleep workshop for parents of children ages 4-7 who want to move beyond one-size-fits-all sleep approaches.



SEPT
19

Friday, 9am-12pm (continues on the 20th and on Oct 3rd & 4th)

Empower Parents: Support and Strategies for Parenting Your Autistic Teen with Confidence (Middle School)

Join Dr. Kelly Weegar and Joanne Doucette in an encouraging space to gain skill-based guidance and support



[CLICK HERE FOR OUR FULL UPDATED FALL PROGRAM BROCHURE](#)

CONTACT [JULIA@DRJULIARYAN.CA](mailto:julia@drjuliaryan.ca) FOR QUESTIONS

FEATURED RESOURCES

PREPARING FOR BACK TO SCHOOL!

AUTISM ONTARIO BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

CLICK HERE

AUTISM ONTARIO SCHOOL RESOURCES

CLICK HERE

**LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF
ONTARIO EDUCATION RESOURCES**

CLICK HERE

CADDAC SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR ADHD

CLICK HERE

ANXIETY AND BACK TO SCHOOL

CLICK HERE

GENEVA CENTER AUTISM SCHOOL SUPPORTS

CLICK HERE

IF YOUR CHILD HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN ASSESSED BY US, PLEASE REACH
OUT TO CHRISTINA.QUAILE@DRJULIARYAN.CA TO FIND OUT ABOUT OUR
NEW SCHOOL NAVIGATION SERVICE



FEATURED RESOURCES

NEURODIVERSITY AND WORK

WORKTOPIA: ACCOMMODATION IDEAS

CLICK HERE

AUTISM ALLIANCE CANADA

CLICK HERE

CANADIAN CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIONS

CLICK HERE

LIVE WORK PLAY (IN PERSON OTTAWA)

CLICK HERE

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

CLICK HERE

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS!

CLICK HERE





Are you a Parent who is also Autistic?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Autistic fathers are particularly encouraged to participate!

The **CARE Lab** at **Carleton University** is interested in hearing from Autistic adults about their experience with parenting and seeking a diagnosis.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Adults 18+ who recently received an autism diagnosis or self-identify as Autistic
- Diagnosis or identified as Autistic after seeking a dx for their child

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

- Complete a questionnaire (~20-30 minutes)
- Participate in a one-on-one interview (~45-60 minutes)

WHAT DO I GET?

You can receive up to \$25 in eGift Cards for your participation

INTERESTED?

To participate, please contact:
AutismLab@carleton.ca

or scan the QR Code below:

