



# AUTISM IN GIRLS AND WOMEN

A PANEL DISCUSSION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017 • 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**NEUROSCIENCE CENTER (NSC)**  
6001 EXECUTIVE BLVD • ROOM 7102



National Institute  
of Mental Health

OFFICE OF  
AUTISM RESEARCH  
COORDINATION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

# Recent advances in research suggest that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) presents differently in males and females.

As a result, researchers are seeking to understand the biological differences between ASD in males and females, as well as reevaluating the effectiveness of diagnostic tools and treatments for females on the autism spectrum. Meanwhile, girls and women with ASD are sharing their stories in order to increase awareness among researchers and the general public. This panel discussion will present three different perspectives on understanding ASD in girls and women.

Dr. Kevin Pelphrey will be speaking on biological aspects of sex differences in ASD, Dr. Pamela Ventola will be speaking on observable differences in phenotype between girls and boys, and Ms. Zoe Gross will be speaking on personal and community experiences related to ASD in girls and women.

## AGENDA

**1:00 PM - 1:10 PM**

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

#### **Susan Daniels, Ph.D.**

*Director, Office of Autism Research Coordination,  
National Institute of Mental Health*

*Executive Secretary, Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee*

#### **Tamara Lewis Johnson, M.P.H., M.B.A.**

*Health Scientist Administrator, Office for Research on Disparities  
and Global Mental Health, National Institute of Mental Health*

*Chief, Women's Mental Health Research Program*

---

**1:10 PM - 1:30 PM**

#### **Kevin Pelphrey, Ph.D.**

*Carbonell Family Professor*

*Director, Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Institute  
at George Washington University and Children's National  
Medical Center*

---

**1:30 PM - 1:50 PM**

#### **Pamela Ventola, Ph.D.**

*Assistant Professor, Yale Child Study Center*

---

**1:50 PM - 2:10 PM**

#### **Zoe Gross**

*Director of Operations, Autistic Self Advocacy Network*

---

**2:10 PM - 3:00 PM**

### **QUESTION AND ANSWER PANEL DISCUSSION**

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



### **KEVIN PELPHREY, PH.D.**

*Carbonell Family Professor*

*Director, Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Institute at George Washington University and Children's National Medical Center*

Dr. Kevin Pelphrey is the Carbonell Family Professor and Director of the Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders Institute at George Washington University (GW) and Children's National Health System (CNHS) in Washington, DC. The Institute serves as a focal point for translational research and comprehensive clinical services for people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). His program of research investigates the brain basis of neurodevelopmental disorders to develop biologically-based tools for detection, stratification, and individually tailored treatments. Dr. Pelphrey is also the Principal Investigator of the NIH ACE-Multimodal Developmental Neurogenetics of Females with Autism network. This Network has generated a comprehensive, multi-level (gene-brain-behavior) data from large and diverse cohorts of young women and men with ASD. Dr. Pelphrey joined the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee as a public member in 2015. He is the father of a son and a daughter on the autism spectrum.



### **PAMELA VENTOLA, PH.D.**

*Assistant Professor, Yale Child Study Center*

Dr. Pamela Ventola is a clinical psychologist and Assistant Professor at the Yale Child Study Center. Her clinical work and research program focus on behavioral treatment for ASD, specifically, Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). She also has a strong interest in girls and women with ASD. She has conducted several studies on sex-based differences in treatment response, and she is currently collaborating with Dr. Kevin Pelphrey on a multi-site study related to the neurogenetics of females with ASD. Dr. Ventola is heavily involved in the clinical components of this multi-site program. Additionally, she is commencing a study with Dr. Pelphrey to assess the effects of oxytocin as an enhancer of response to PRT. Evaluating sex-based differences to this combination treatment is a key aim of the new project.



### **ZOE GROSS**

*Director of Operations, Autistic Self Advocacy Network*

Zoe Gross is Director of Operations at Autistic Self Advocacy Network. Previously, she worked as a special assistant at the Administration for Community Living, and as a policy analyst on Senator Tom Harkin's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee staff. In 2012, Zoe created the annual Disability Day of Mourning vigil, a national, cross-disability event which commemorates the lives of disabled people murdered by their family members or caregivers.