

Opening Keynote Session

Granting Access: Dismantling Ableism and Embracing Autistic Identity Haley Moss, JD

Session Description:

Storytelling has so much power for young people on the spectrum – but the ways our stories are often told leave us silenced or unheard. This happens because ableism is pervasive in our culture. Ableism often can be internalized by people with disabilities in a way that negatively impacts our own self-worth, self-esteem, and decisions to share our identities with the world. Those same attitudes also are grounded in stereotypes that hold us back throughout our lives. How do we get rid of barriers to access to be more inclusive and allow autistic people to fully be themselves and advocate? Join Haley for a candid conversation where she tells her own story – all while attendees learn about ableism, neurodiversity, and how access is a form of care and compassion that benefits us all.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify what ableism is, as well as three distinct subtypes of ableism
2. Create a sense of identity, community, and care through access and breaking down barriers
3. Challenge our own experiences with ableism and stereotyping on the basis of disability
4. Guidance for everyone on how to be a strong advocate and ally when working with neurodivergent people

Haley Moss is a neurodiversity expert, lawyer, and the author of five books that guide neurodivergent individuals through professional and personal challenges. She is currently a speaker, consultant, and neurodiversity advocate for organizations and corporations that seek her guidance in creating an inclusive workplace and a sought-after commentator on disability rights issues. She has won multiple awards, from Forbes 30 Under 30 to ABA Making a Difference and much more. The first openly autistic lawyer in Florida, Haley's books include *Great Minds Think Differently: Neurodiversity for Lawyers and Other Professionals*, *The Young Autistic Adult's Independence Handbook*, and *Talking The Talk About Autism: How To Share And Tell Your Story*. Her articles have appeared in outlets including the Washington Post, Teen Vogue, and Fast Company. Haley's life experiences, advocacy, and dedication guide her to leave the state of inclusion better than she found it.