

**Fact vs. Fiction: Identifying evidence-based practices in  
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

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**Session Description:**

In the past few years, there have been many news stories about autism. News stories have included prevalence rates, causes, and interventions for autism. Some of these stories in the media and social media have led to confusion about the causes of autism and effective treatments for autism. This presentation aims to discuss evidence-based practices for autism. We will define evidence-based practices and discuss how this relates to autism. We will discuss current knowledge about autism and help identify what misinformation about autism exists. We will present strategies on how to analyze information about autism such as how to know if an intervention has strong evidence. We will discuss ways to determine if information could be misleading. We can help identify where to find trusted sources about autism research. Together, we empower participants to critically evaluate information about autism.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Define “evidence-based practice” and apply the term to ASD
2. Identify ways to analyze information about ASD
3. Recognize where to obtain accurate, evidence-based sources on ASD

**Sylvia J. Acosta**, PhD is a licensed psychologist and Professor at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (CDD). She obtained her doctorate in counseling psychology at Colorado State University. She trained at the University of Southern California Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (USC CHLA) for both her internship and postdoctoral fellowship in child clinical psychology, including providing clinical services for children with mental health conditions and disabilities. For the last 15 years, Dr. Acosta’s career has focused on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). She has conducted clinical services (diagnostic assessments and interventions for autistic individuals and their families) and is up to date on the evidence-based practices and interventions in ASD. She is bilingual in English and Spanish and is a native New Mexican.

**Jessica L. Garcia**, PhD is a postdoctoral psychology fellow at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (CDD). She received her doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Houston. She trained at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center Houston for her internship. Much of her clinical training has focused on working with justice-involved youth and individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, including Autism Spectrum Disorder.