

# Speaker Bios for ADHD and Autistic Minds conference

## Jessie Aiton (She/Her)

Jessie has a background working in radio production, as she is passionate about people and helping them to tell their stories. After finding out she was autistic in her mid-thirties, Jessie took the plunge and decided to share some of her own story. She is known for her ability to connect with people; and her words bring comfort and laughter to many.

Instagram: [@jessieaiton](https://www.instagram.com/jessieaiton)



## Ebony Birch-Hanger (She/Her)

Ebony is a Special Education Teacher, Teacher of the Deaf, Education Consultant, Public Speaker, Neurodevelopmental Therapist, Kodaly Music Specialist and Yellow Ladybugs Ambassador. She has been a popular speaker at previous Yellow Ladybugs events with her combined lived and professional experience offering practical and insightful strategies to support autistic individuals. Ebony has used her professional knowledge to gain greater understanding of her own thought patterns and executive functioning challenges and looks forward to sharing her experiences during this conference. Her number one belief is that people are only limited by the limitations placed on them by others.

[Ebony Birch-Hanger \(ebonybirchhanger.com\)](http://ebonybirchhanger.com)

<https://www.personalisedapproaches.com>

[Ebony Birch-Hanger - Speaker | Facebook](#)

<https://au.linkedin.com/in/ebony-birch-hanger-90820987>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVFJ7Y3zHrchL0prJdm7mIA>



## Frances Brennan (She/Her)

Frances was herself diagnosed with Autism and ADHD in 2020 at the age 30. Frances sought this diagnosis after struggling through her teen years labelled as “oppositional” and “disruptive” by her school teachers and support staff. Frances loves to share this journey with the young people she works with and takes every opportunity to show young people that they can achieve with the right supports in place, regardless of diagnoses and the boxes other’s try to put them in!

Frances’ hope is that if we raise awareness of the presentation of Autism in females, we may prevent the overrepresentation of young autistic women in the mental health sector, who are either misdiagnosed as having mental health issues or develop mental health issues as a result of living without diagnosis and understanding of their neurodiversity.

[The Speech Tree – Paediatric Speech Pathology](#)

[The Speech Tree | Facebook](#)



## *Louise Brown (She/Her)*

Lou Brown is a Curtin University PhD candidate, a non-practicing Registered Nurse and ADHD coach, and a lived-experience advocate. She is also an Appointed Director on the Australian ADHD Professionals Association (AADPA) board and an ADHD Consumer Advisor and Co-researcher attached to a Deakin University research team. Lou co-authored the paper, *It's Time to Bridge the Gap - Understanding the Unmet Needs of Consumers with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Systematic Review and Recommendations*. Her personal research aims to improve the outcomes of children with ADHD by examining the use of an ADHD parenting framework based on integrative methodology.

As a tireless ADHD advocate, representing AADPA, Lou co-authored the *Talking about ADHD* guide which was endorsed by the World Federation of ADHD and authored a free downloadable book for children called *Some Kids*. She has presented ADHD workshops and spoken at conferences on ADHD all around Australia and in the UK, and has appeared in multiple television interviews and online and print publications, sharing her lived, clinical and academic experience with the aim of fostering understanding and awareness of ADHD.

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)



## *Amanda Buckland (She/Her)*

Amanda (AKA Autistic Pride Mumma) is a registered and openly-Autistic and multiply-neurodivergent psychologist with substantial clinical and life experience, and mother to two differently Neurodivergent teens. Being late-identified as Autistic herself, Amanda has a unique set of knowledge, skills, working from an Autistic and Neurodivergent-empowering, trauma-informed, holistic approach. She has also worked in several secondary and primary Schools since 1998, providing counselling, assessment and therapeutic support to young people, their families, and educators.

[Autistic Pride Mumma | Facebook](#)

[Neurodivergent Psychologist | Facebook](#)



## Yael Clark (She/Her)

Yael is an Educational & Developmental Psychologist who works mainly with OCD and Anxiety in Autistic children and ADHDers. So much has changed in 20 years since she was trained to assess and diagnose Autism, and in the last couple of years her approach to this work has been transformed by the identification of herself and her children as being Autistic ADHDers. Yael provides consultancy and training to psychologists and other allied health professionals about clinical practice within the neurodiversity affirming framework. She is on the steering committee for the AAPi neurodiversity interest group and is involved in several research projects as both a professional and a lived experience consultant. Yael admins three online professional development groups for Australian Psychologists, Allied Health and Medical Professionals, with a total membership of almost 4,000. Yael's current spin is support and advocacy for Autistic and ADHD Psychologists.

<https://www.facebook.com/YaelClarkPsychologistSupportingParents>





## Cherie Clonan (She/Her)

Cherie is an award-winning digital marketer, who is passionate about the difference best practice social media marketing can do for businesses and organisations—big and small.

What's more? Her proven track record of bringing significantly increased social engagement, community growth and transforming social accounts, now sees her directing the most talented team of social media marketing professionals via her Melbourne-based digital marketing agency, The Digital Picnic.

Socials: [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)



## Annie Crowe (She/Her)

Annie is a proud Neurodivergent late-diagnosed Autistic/ADHD woman with complex mental health. She is passionate about invisible disabilities and mental health advocacy. Annie currently works as a Government Lawyer and is a new mum to a beautiful little boy. She has always been invested in social justice and studied international human rights law at Oxford University. Her law thesis examined gender and work culture in Australian private law firms. Annie chaired the Women in National Security (WiNS) Network for the Institute for Regional Security in 2015, holding many panels and networking events for women in a male dominated field. Recently, she has started her own blog and stream of consciousness podcast sharing her lived experiences and thoughts as a Neurodivergent woman in the hope to end mental health stigma and raise understanding and acceptance of neurodivergent minds. Annie has written for Women with Disabilities Australia on gender discrimination in autistic diagnostic criteria. She is currently writing a book for pregnant Neurodivergent women – something she wished existed when she was expecting.

Instagram @nd.millennial <https://www.instagram.com/nd.millennial/>

Blog [www.neurodivergentmillennial.com](http://www.neurodivergentmillennial.com)

Podcast <https://open.spotify.com/show/6I1JXN3Zk1vX9F4kjELW6?si=31afab4573cd49f4>

Thesis <https://lr.law.qut.edu.au/article/view/574/561/view.html>

Women with Disabilities Australia article <https://wwda.org.au/blog/the-future-of-neurodivergence-gender-bias-and-hopes-for-the-upcoming-dsm-5-update/>





## Allison Davies (She/Her)

Allison Davies creates online resources for parents, educators and support staff and works with schools to deliver professional development around the topics of childhood brain development and the use of music as a regulatory tool. She is an independent liberatory scholar currently exploring the gatekeeping and classism of the social construct 'musical vs non musical'. A former Registered Music Therapist of 16 years, Alli left the Allied Health industry in 2021 in order to align her work more deeply with culturally responsive practices and to switch her focus from individual change to socio cultural change.

Alli is an autistic person with attention, sensory processing and executive functioning difficulties. She works within a neurodiversity framework that favours deep acceptance and regulation over assimilation and intervention and shares her lived experience of autism openly within her seminars, workshops and conferences as part of her 'emotive storytelling mixed with science' approach to education.

[Website](#)



## *Gemma Duggan (She/Her)*

Gemma is a neurodivergent person who owns an educational therapy and consulting business supporting neurodivergent children and their parents. She parents a fabulous Yellow Ladybug who has ADHD and GAD. Her mission is to advocate and educate about neurodiversity so that all people have what they need to succeed in any way they choose.

[www.dreamcatchertutoring.com](http://www.dreamcatchertutoring.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/Dream-Catcher-Academic-Therapy-110372866974960>



## *Raelene Dundon (She/Her)*

Raelene is an Autistic/ADHDer Educational and Developmental Psychologist and runs Okey Dokey Childhood Therapy, a large paediatric allied health practice in Melbourne, with her Neurodivergent husband Andrew. She is also the mother of 3 adult Neurodivergent children. Raelene has extensive experience working with Neurodivergent children and their families, as well as typically developing children, providing educational, social/emotional and parenting support.

Raelene regularly presents workshops for parents and professionals on topics related to supporting children with additional needs in the classroom and in other settings, and has presented at International Conferences in Macau, Singapore, Prague and Edinburgh, as well as conferences in Brisbane, Sydney, Cairns and Melbourne.

Raelene is the author of 4 books published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, with her fourth book "PDA in the Therapy Room: A Clinician's Guide to working with children with Pathological Demand Avoidance" released in February 2021.

<https://www.facebook.com/OkeyDokeyChildhoodTherapy>

<https://www.facebook.com/raelenedundon>





## Summer Farrelly (She/They)

Summer Farrelly is 15-year-old Autistic Advocate, Public speaker, Inclusion & Education Consultant, Artist, Animal Assisted Learning Program Creator & Facilitator and Animal Therapies LTD Ambassador.

For the last 5 years Summer has been sharing their personal insight and perspective as someone who navigates daily challenges and barriers related to Autism ,Dyslexia, ADHD, PTSD, Depression and Anxiety.

Webpage <https://summerfarrelly.com.au/>

Facebook <https://m.facebook.com/Chickens2love>

Email [hello@summerfarrelly.com.au](mailto:hello@summerfarrelly.com.au)

Instagram [@autistic\\_perspectives](https://www.instagram.com/autistic_perspectives)



## Kristy Forbes (She/Her)

Kristy Forbes is an Australian based autism & neurodiversity support specialist with experience working with clients both nationally and internationally.

This includes neurodivergent people and their families; and professionals who wish to support them, such as educators, psychologists, paediatricians, allied health professionals, support workers and integration aides.

Her work is informed by her extensive professional experience as an educator (Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary teaching), as an integration aide to children with social, emotional and behavioural differences, and as a childhood behavioural and family support specialist.

Kristy has degrees in Political Science, Education, Literature, Film and Art and is currently studying Psychology and a specialisation in human rights and antidiscrimination law as a Juris Doctor candidate.

Her most valuable insights, however, come from lived experience.

Kristy is formally identified autistic, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) as well as being a parent to four neurodivergent children.

[Website](#)





## *Emma Goodall (She/Her)*

Dr Emma Goodall is an autistic author, advocate and adjunct research fellow at the University of Southern Queensland. She runs Healthy Possibilities, a consultancy offering personal life coaching alongside continuing professional development for educators and families and NDIS services (many with a link to interoception). Emma speaks internationally on the topic of interoception and is a widely published Author.



## Jane Hancock (She/Her)

Jane is an experienced presenter and advocate at Autism Actually. In addition to being a trained Secondary Mathematics/Science teacher, Jane also has a Master's degree of Inclusive Education for Autistic students.

From 2008 to 2012, Jane was a member of the Victorian team for the Positive Partnerships project; a Federal-government initiative aimed at supporting school aged Autistic students.

Jane is the Assistant Director of the Learning Diversity Department at Whitefriars College, and loves teaching mathematics in creative and visual ways.

Jane is the parent of Shadia, and is passionate about sharing her professional and personal understanding of Autism in order to inform other teachers. Jane was also identified as Autistic in 2020.

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## Shadia Hancock (They/Them/Theirs)

Shadia is the proud owner and founder of Autism Actually, and ambassador for Yellow Ladybugs. They are currently studying Bachelor of Speech Pathology, with the long-term goal of specialising in AAC, Autism, language development, and animal-assisted therapy. Shadia was diagnosed with Autism at the age of three, and Generalised Anxiety Disorder at the age of 14. Being non-binary, they enjoy discussing the intersectionality of Autism and gender diversity.

Website: <https://www.autismactually.com.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/autismactuallyau>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/autismactuallyau/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/autismactually>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AutismActually>

Tumblr: <https://autism-actually.tumblr.com/>



## *Joanne Hatchard (She/Her)*

As a Neurodiverse Family Therapist Joanne assist parents/carers and teens understand what it means to be neurodivergent. She has strong focus on executive functioning as she sees that as the first layer of expectations and stressors that creates anxieties, frustrations and conflict within the individual and families. Utilising her Masters of Social Work education, life experience as a neurodivergent women and lived experience as a mum to a son who is neurodivergent Joanne developed Better Being Me into providing online training, family therapy, podcast and masterclasses. She aims to have every neurodivergent woman and child to feel safe and comfortable enough to drop masking, talk more about the inner monologue and ask for the things they need to function.

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/betterbeingme\\_bbme/](https://www.instagram.com/betterbeingme_bbme/)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Betterbeingme>





## Chloe Hayden (She/Her)

Chloe is an autistic woman & has ADHD. She works as a passionate advocate, is an actor, recently starring in Heartbreak High, YouTube artist, horse rider, Tiktoker, singer & is an award winning international public speaker. As a Yellow Ladybugs ambassador, she is excited to be a part of our conference again this year.

[Chloe Hayden – Different, not Less \(princessaspian.com\)](https://princessaspian.com)

[Chloé Hayden - YouTube](#)

[Chloé Hayden | Facebook](#)

[Chloë Hayden \(@chloeshayden\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)





## Darren Hedley (He/Him)

Dr Darren Hedley is a Senior Research Fellow at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University, and current Suicide Prevention Australia National Suicide Prevention Research Fellow. His research investigates health, wellbeing, and suicide prevention in autism.

<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc>

<https://www.suicidepreventionaustralia.org/>



## Melody Howlett (She/Her)

Melody Howlett is an ADHDing autistic, registered social worker, relationship therapist and respectful relationships educator and advocate. She has worked across schools, community organisations and specialist family violence services in youth work, gendered violence prevention and therapeutic trauma recovery, teaching gender-diversity inclusion and equity, consent and respectful relationships skills, including healthy attachments and boundaries and distress tolerance tools. She also works in private practice as a relationship therapist supporting people of all neurotypes to build more acceptance, healthy boundaries, helpful communication, understanding and meaning into their current and future relationships. Increasingly, she also supports other ADHD and autistic folks to foster positive self-identities and strengths-focused approaches following diagnosis. She is personally obsessed with celebrating neurodivergent ways of relating and differences in communication style and types of play, and believes that relationships and communication education need not stigmatise, shame or seek to change neurodivergent personalities or style differences.

instagram: [@melodyhowlett](https://www.instagram.com/melodyhowlett)



## *Katie Koullas (She/Her)*

Katie is our conference host and the passionate creator and CEO of Yellow Ladybugs – an autistic led charity dedicated to supporting autistic girls, women, and gender diverse individuals. Being part of a neurodivergent family, and accessing a range of mental health services, Katie will share both her lived experience and represent the wider community, in order to deliver much needed change in this space. Katie has presented at many conferences, been nominated for Australian of the Year for her advocacy and worked hard to create systemic change with the state and federal government to better support neurodivergent individuals. Her career has been a windy road of discovery, like many fellow ADHDers can relate to, including professional roles as accountant and tax advisor, marketing and events manager, HR and recruitment advisor and even a university teacher! But her favourite role has been working alongside her neurodivergent team and helping YLB grow to make as big of an impact in the community and for her community as possible. She is also passionately obsessed with cat and kittens, anything that sparkles and Golden Girls.

[Yellow Ladybugs](#)

[Yellow Ladybugs, Autistic Girls & Women | Facebook](#)

[info@yellowladybugs.com.au](mailto:info@yellowladybugs.com.au)



## *Rhiannon Lowrey M.Ed. Gc.ER (She / Her/ Hers)*

Rhiannon Lowrey Holds multiple Post Graduate degrees from Monash University and Is currently the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator at Emmaus College. Rhiannon is an accomplished speaker and has presented at multiple Mathematics Conferences and Hosted and presented at the Victorian Literacy and Numeracy conference in 2016. She has been a teacher for 12 years in both Primary and Secondary Education. Rhiannon has recently completed research into Twice Exceptionality (2e) focusing on how teacher can identify and support 2e learners in current Victorian classrooms. Rhiannon has a diagnosis of ASD and has 2 children with ASD and ADHD, giving her a unique perspective into the obstacles of students who are on a similar journey. She is a passionate advocate for students with additional needs. Rhiannon loves to help students to advocate their needs, empowering them to take control and communicate effectively, embrace their different and authentically function in a neurotypical world.





## *Gilly McKeown (She/Her)*

Gilly is currently a PhD candidate in the area of autism and physical activity/sport. She also has great interest in many other areas of autism research, specifically mental health. She also has degrees in Speech and language therapy, Disability studies and Family studies. She is on the advisory board for a state autism advisory committee and member of an organisation targeting the stigma of autistic people. She has an academic publication regarding traumatic brain injury, with more to be published relating to her PhD research.

<https://www.facebook.com/neurodivergentresearcher>

[www.instagram.com/neurodivergent\\_researcher](http://www.instagram.com/neurodivergent_researcher)

<https://neurodivergentresearcher.com/>





## *Sandhya Menon (She/Her)*

Sandhya Menon is an Au/ADHDer psychologist. She is the author of *The Brain Forest*, a children's book on neurodiversity, and *The What's Up Flip Chart*, which helps children identify their stressors and communicate their needs non-verbally. She runs Onwards and Upwards Psychology in Yarraville, Melbourne, which conducts assessments and supports parents via short-courses to understand autism and ADHD from a neuro-affirming perspective.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/onwardsandupwardspsych/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/onanduppsych>



## Veronika Miller / Gothic (They/She)

Veronika/gothic loves video games dancing frogs and adventuring. They say, nothing will ever stop me from reaching my full potential and I want to share my passion for living a life with the world <3 🐸

[Instagram](#)



## Josephine Moon (She/Her)

Josephine Moon is a former teacher and now best-selling author in Australia and overseas. As part of the family business, she is the founder of Actually Autistic Care, driven by a vision to connect autistic individuals with autistic therapists for optimal outcomes. After a lifetime of difficulties, she was finally late-diagnosed as autistic at 45. She loves living on acreage in the Noosa hinterland in Qld with her neurodivergent husband and son and their large animal family. She has had a lifelong passion for horses and is lucky enough to share her life with six of them.

Web: [www.josephinemoon.com](http://www.josephinemoon.com)

Insta [@josephine\\_moon](https://www.instagram.com/josephine_moon)

Facebook [www.facebook.com/JosephineMoonAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/JosephineMoonAuthor)



## Mandar Nelson (She/Her)

Mandar is a Melbourne-based illustrator and designer whose deep and insatiable curiosity is rivalled only by the torment of a toddler who has recently learned the word 'why'. Innovative and irreverent, she is equally likely to let loose a little bit of alliteration, weird a personalised patois patched together from predominantly pop culture, and to use big words good. Third generation autistic/ADHD and raising two members of the next to be even louder and prouder of it, Mandar's vivacity brings all the peeps to her yard, without ever having to make milkshakes. It's this joy de vivre that makes her an engaging speaker who revels in sharing her wide spectrum of experience from a wild, colourful ride of a life. With a deeply personal understanding of how important positive self-identity is, Mandar is passionate about creating resources to help inspire and empower others to embrace their place in the neurodiverse universe.

INSTA [@the.gold.squirrel](https://www.instagram.com/the.gold.squirrel)



## *Nichola Parody (She/Her/Hers) and Heidi*

Nichola Parody and Heidi Parody, Mother and daughter, and creators of Heidi and Me. Our Neurodiversity Journey.

This team is dedicated to raising awareness, challenging stigma, and sharing their journey of neurodiversity, parenting, self-advocacy and self-discovery.

Heidi and Nichola run their own Facebook page, which has followers from all walks of life, and across the world. They love their work, and the feedback they receive from people they have helped throughout their own journeys.

[Facebook](#)





## Jess Rowlings (She/Her)

Jess Rowlings is a qualified speech & language pathologist and researcher who was diagnosed with both autism and ADHD as an adult. She is the CEO and co-founder of Next Level Collaboration, a social enterprise which runs programs to support neurodiverse children in developing collaborative skills and social connection through cooperative video games. In her spare time, Jess enjoys playing video games and crafting.

Twitter is [@jessrowlings](https://twitter.com/jessrowlings).



## *Aimee Schook (She/Her)*

Aimee has a background in education as both a teacher and in leadership focusing on students with diverse needs. Now she has taken her knowledge and passion for the area to open her own business. Being Autistic herself Aimee has a unique insight into how to best support others who are neurodiverse.

Links: [UniqueMe - Neurodiversity Consultant \(facebook.com\)](https://www.facebook.com/UniqueMe-NeurodiversityConsultant) [www.unique-me-neurodiversityconsultant.com.au](http://www.unique-me-neurodiversityconsultant.com.au)



## *Dr Alberto Veloso (He/Him)*

Dr Alberto is a specialist Child and Family Psychiatrist and General Paediatrician. He is a fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and the Royal Australian College of Physicians. He is passionate about Child and Family Mental Health with a particular focus on understanding and assisting the emotional development of children and adolescents. He has specialist training in the assessment of mental health disorder including Mood disorders, Bipolar Disorder, Psychosis, Substance Abuse Disorders, PTSD, Eating Disorders, ADHD and also supports many neurodivergent and autistic clients and their families. Dr Alberto is passionate about using connection-based strategies, driven by the attitude of Playfulness Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy to support and promote good mental health.

[Family Psychology Melbourne | Relational Minds](#)

[info@relationalminds.com.au](mailto:info@relationalminds.com.au)



## Ruby Wiggins (She/Her)

Ruby is sixteen years old, she loves musical theatre, creating art, reading, writing, fashion and speaking up about issues that are important to her.



## *Dannielle Wilson (She/Her/Mum)*

Dannielle Wilson is an enthusiastic neurodivergent parent, educator and student teacher who is passionate about integrating Neurodivergent and autistic culture into education and mainstream society. She uses her special interest in education psychology as well as evidence based, trauma informed practices in her every day interactions in the classroom, university, Scouts and personal life to create an inclusive environment for all. You will most often find Dannielle in the comments section supporting others and giving advice and encouraging people to use their empathy, compassion and in managing boundaries and expectations to overcome when times are tough.

[Dannielle Wilson - Neurodivergent Educator | Facebook](#)

[Dannielle Wilson \(@shewhowearsmanyhats\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/DannielleWilsonND/>

IG: [@shewhowearsmanyhats](#)





## Sonny Jane Wise (They/Them)

Sonny Jane (they/them) is multiply neurodivergent - or more specifically, an Autistic ADHDER living with Bipolar and Borderline Personality Disorder. They're also an internationally recognised lived experience educator, consultant and advocate who's passionate about neurodiversity and supporting professionals and organisations to better support and understand neurodivergent individuals.

Sonny Jane is also a former peer support specialist with experience in developing and implementing peer support programs and guidelines and is also the founder and director of a non-profit community centre for LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent individuals on Kauria Land.

[www.instagram.com/livedexperienceeducator](https://www.instagram.com/livedexperienceeducator)

[www.facebook.com/livedexperienceeducator](https://www.facebook.com/livedexperienceeducator)

[www.livedexperiencecounsellor.com](https://www.livedexperiencecounsellor.com)

